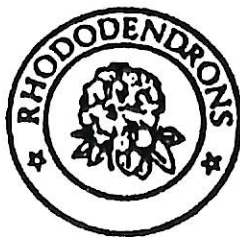


The Royal Horticultural Society

The Rhododendron, Camellia and Magnolia Group



Bulletin 69 ~ Winter 1998-99

Forthcoming Events

March 16, 17	Early Camellia and Rhododendron Competition, Westminster	April 28	Executive Committee Meeting 2.00p.m., Westminster
March 17	Group Executive Committee Meeting, 2.00 p.m. Westminster		Annual General Meeting 4.30p.m. New Hall, Westminster.
April 13, 14	Main Camellia Competition	May 25 -28	Chelsea Flower Show
April, 27, 28	Main Rhododendron Competition		

Chairman's Notes

To begin these notes I want to pay a tribute to Alan Hardy who has done so much over the past thirty years to ensure that the Group has flourished and indeed progressed to the healthy state that we are in today. During these years Alan has served on the executive committee and held almost all of the offices at the helm of that committee. He has helped or led the Group through some very difficult times and I know that he would be the first to say how much he has enjoyed the work.

I also want at this stage to offer a very big thank you to Alan's wife Carolyn who has given tremendous support to the Group over the past years.

Alan resigned/retired from the Committee at the AGM earlier this year and the Committee has unanimously agreed that we should offer him Honorary Life Membership in recognition of his great service to the Group. I am pleased to be able to report that Alan has accepted our offer.

Over the past years it has been my pleasure to chair the Royal Horticultural Society's Ornamental Plant Show Schedule Committee which meets just once a year in the Autumn, to consider the many competitions for trees, shrubs and hardy plants that the Society organise at Vincent Square throughout the year. Our duties vary from the costs of judges and stewards, availability of vases and benching, prize money, the wording of guidance notes for exhibitions in the schedule and careful consideration that we are offering the correct classes at the right time of the year. We also look extremely carefully at the number of entries for each class and I am pleased to be able to report that we have an ever growing support for the tree, shrub and plant classes. Many of these exhibits are choice and rare and add much to our shows.

We have one major worry, however, and that is the entries for the two rhododendron competitions - also the responsibility of the Committee - which sadly are

invariably very low and present us with much cause for concern. The Early Rhododendron Competition is held in mid March and is often affected by adverse weather conditions and the main competition is held at the end of April or the beginning of May. There are also early and late camellia competitions where extra exhibitors will again be very welcome.

I want to make a plea that more of you enter these competitions, they are very much our shows and if you can find just a few trusses or sprays they would be welcome and would make all the difference. Very knowledgeable stewards are on duty to help and assist so why not have a go? If you are not already receiving the schedule write for a copy to the Shows Department, The Royal Horticultural Society, P.O. Box 313, Vincent Square, London, SW1P 2PE or telephone 0171 630 7422

There is much activity planned for the continual redevelopment of Battlesdon Hill at Wisley. Many of you will be aware that most of the top tree canopy was lost in the gale of 1987 and the replacement trees are now of reasonable size. It is now time to consider the replanting of the middle layer, such as rhododendrons, camellias, pieris and Japanese maples and a representative collection of rhododendron species is required. The Group's Executive Committee has agreed to present Wisley with a collection but considered that we should initially ask members if they had any surplus species of plantable size, say 40/45cm or 45/60cm. Offers to me please.

Lastly I want to thank all of you who kindly wrote to me earlier this year when I was experiencing a rather difficult time.

Editor's Notes

Just below this you will find details of our proposed Spring Tour. For many years now, Valerie Archibold has provided us with a wealth of enjoyable and instructive tours and autumn weekends, now she has retired and we shall miss her organising powers sadly. To say a small "thank you", during the Autumn Weekend we presented her with a cheque with which to make her

own choice of something to remember us by and I understand she has chosen a book on orchids. In the absence of any volunteers to take on this challenging task, we have looked at several tour operators who specialise in gardens and this year we have decided to ask Boxwood Tours to put together a programme for us, mainly due to their choice of several private gardens as well as the "big guns".

You will notice that there are changes to some of our usual routine and I would welcome any comments you may like to make, either good or bad, I promise you they will all be given serious consideration by the Committee and by Boxwood if there is a majority decision for some things to be changed. Please this time, get out your pens and WRITE!

Spring Tour 6 to 10 May 1999

We have chosen Sussex for its wealth of good rhododendron gardens and also many nurseries which members may like to visit whilst in that area.

This is their provisional programme :

We will stay at The Winston Manor Hotel, Crowborough, a medium sized hotel within walking distance of Crowborough and with a reputation for good food.

Thursday ~ start at 2.00 pm from The Winston Hotel, Crowborough. Afternoon visits to Sheffield Park and Clinton Lodge.

Friday ~ Leonardslee, High Beeches and Nymans. Three very good rhododendron gardens of considerable stature - possible to visit all three in one day as they are very close to each other.

Saturday ~ Three private gardens in W Sussex - Hammerwood House, Malt House & Berri Court.

Sunday ~ Wakehurst Place, Duckyls & Borde Hill.

Monday ~ a morning visit to Moorlands, a private water and woodland garden nr. Crowborough. The tour will finish at the The Winston Manor Hotel.

Please note that at present we have not included lunches in the overall price as we feel many members may prefer to choose their own size of lunch! However places to buy lunch have been organised. If you feel strongly that you would prefer to have a simple set pub lunch provided please mention this when first contacting Boxwood, this would add approximately £40 to the overall cost, and if that should be the majority wish, Boxwood will do this, but it must be either for all or none.

Also please note that the tour starts midday on the Thursday so that members travelling from afar may wish to arrive the night before and would need one night's extra accommodation, this should be mentioned early.

The price will be around £318.00 inclusive of VAT, with a single supplement of £45 as levied by the hotel. This will include half board accommodation for 4 nights, entry into all the gardens listed and coaching starting and finishing at the hotel.

All members interested, please write direct to Boxwood Tours, 'Rhiw', Llanbedr, Gwynedd LL45 2NT

Obituary

Margaret Jennings died on 21 September at the age of 89. Many of us will have visited her delightfully idiosyncratic garden at Gellideg in the hills between Llanelli and Carmarthen. However, what few of us knew was that she was one of the last survivors of the outstanding lady racing drivers of the thirties. Her triumphs included being one of the MG works team at Le Mans for the 1935 twenty-four-hour race, the coveted Coupe des Alpes and winning the 120 mph badge at Brooklands in 1935. She had other triumphs in this male-dominated sport and those of us who were driven by her will remember that she maintained her competitive spirit to the last! Her many friends will miss her company and knowledgeable participation on our annual tours.

Cynthia Postan

Species Rhododendron Plants for Sale.

Our member Lady Anne Cowdray, who owns a beautiful garden which she opens to the public, has numerous rhododendron seedlings - mostly from a China expedition she helped to sponsor. They are 4/5 years old, well grown and now planted in open ground. People are not accustomed to buying rhododendrons in this area which is mainly alkaline, so as she has no more room for them in the garden, she is offering them at £5.00 each.

Please contact Lady Anne Cowdray, Broadleys Gardens, Devizes, SN10 5JQ for a list. Collectors' notes are also available.

Hunt for an Old Rhododendron Hybrid

Late in the last century, Sir J. T. Dillwyn-Llewellyn of Penllergaer, near Swansea, crossed *Rhododendron thomsonii* with *Rhododendron griffithianum* to produce the hybrid 'Pengaer', fore-runner of the collection of clones known as 'Cornish Cross',

'Pengaer' received an Award of Merit in 1911 and may well surpass later crosses in both colour and number of flowers per truss.

Although it is hoped for find 'Pengaer' growing in the currently derelict garden at Penllergaer (restoration is, I hope, pending) I would welcome information regarding the whereabouts of any rhododendron hybrid considered to be 'Pengaer'. Please contact me, Geoff H. Taylor, Pant-yr-Holiad Garden, Rhydlewis, Llandysul, Ceredigion, SA44 5ST

Members' Autumn Week-end

We arrived at the Roebuck Hotel, Forest Row, on the Friday evening and were pleased to have our new Chairman, John Bond among our party.

After dire forecasts of bad weather for the Saturday we awoke to a clear dawn but a red sky and at breakfast our worst fears were realised as rain began to fall steadily. However, not too daunted we arrived at our first garden, Wakehurst Place, complete with water-proofs and umbrellas.

After the enormous loss of trees in the hurricane of 1987, the aspect as we walked down from the car park had totally changed, but we were pleased to see still there an old favourite, *Magnolia wilsonii*.

The new development of this large area is the Tony Schilling Asian Heath Garden which displays heathland shrubs from the mountains of Taiwan, the Chinese Himalayas, Japan and Korea. The final plantings were made last year, ten years after the hurricane.

We noticed as we walked past the Heath garden that much work and imagination had gone into improving the water courses which further down spread out to form the water garden. Where there was once the Japanese Water Garden, now there is a huge planting of *Iris ensata*, donated by a generous Japanese benefactor. We also saw the Bog Garden which displays marginal and aquatic plants in a series of terraces, and an area which is in the process of being cleared of that invasive plant Japanese Knotweed. Heavy rain now cut short our walk and returning towards the Mansion, we walked through part of the S. Hemisphere Garden, planted with many rare trees from Australia and S. America.

Our Ranger told us of the Seed Bank, Kew's Conservation Section based at Wakehurst, where many plants in danger of extinction, when their habitat is destroyed, are stored as seed. This is a project of international importance.

Walking through the Winter Garden we had a glimpse of *Rhododendron nobleanum venustum* in full flower and in the Walled Garden, many herbaceous plants were still in bloom.

Our afternoon visit to Nymans was foiled as it had closed due to the severity of the weather, so we returned to the hotel for a discussion group.

At teatime we welcomed Archie Skinner and his wife. Archie who was to give the evening lecture before dinner, was Head Gardener at Sheffield Park at the time of the 1987 hurricane and after tea we were soon looking at his excellent slides of this beautiful garden which is now restored to its former glory. We listened to a most instructive and interesting lecture, and afterwards we all had a very pleasant dinner and evening together.

The next morning we had the chance to see Sheffield Park for ourselves, Nigel Davis, the Head Gardener, very kindly allowed us into the Park an hour earlier than the public - a great advantage - and accompanied us round.

On our way down to the lakes we were all impressed by two Fothergillas resplendent in their glowing colours, and two Monkey Puzzles (*Araucaria araucana*) beautifully clothed to the ground. We also saw the brilliant colour of *Enkianthus perulatus* and *campanulatus*, and the yellows and scarlets of numerous *Nyssa sylvatica*.

Beyond the lakes a rising hill had been cordoned off to protect a new wild flower preserve, and skirting this we made our way through a boggy woodland, later to reach paths flanked by Rhododendrons Loderi and Angelo and other hybrids of this genus. All this interspersed with splendid Betulas and Sequoiadendron reaching high into the sky. Threading our way back toward the entrance we saw one of the outstanding trees of the garden - *Pinus montezumae* with the most lovely blue needles which droop gracefully from its branches.

Finally we made our way to the very comprehensive collection of Ghent azaleas, - a National Collection - before enjoying a splendid lunch in the handsome Oak Hall the private dining room at Sheffield Park.

After lunch we thanked Nigel for a most enjoyable and interesting morning before setting off homewards.

Valerie Archibold

Branch Reports

South West Branch

90 members and guests met at RHS Rosemoor on November 7. The day started with the usual well supported Plant Sale. We then visited the propagating area on the invitation of John Weston, Superintendent of the garden. Lunch was taken in the restaurant.

In the afternoon John Bond gave a lecture, profusely illustrated with slides, on 'Woodland Gardening'. He described the needs of a woodland from the acquisition of the land, to development (thin and then thin again), and then to the choice of plants suitable for such a site. Peter Garwood gave the vote of thanks.

As I drove out of the gates at Rosemoor I was preceded by a car filled with cheerful members, chatting and laughing, with their carboot crammed with rhododendrons nearly obscuring the rear window. They had had a good day!

Alun Edwards

N. Ireland Branch

This group has started up again under the Chairmanship of Mr. Patrick Forde. Our first meeting was in April at Seaforde, we had a look at the Nursery and then Patrick took us on an interesting walk around the extensive grounds to see all the new planting.

Our autumn meeting took place in October. Mr. John Gault of Limavady gave us a very informative talk on the propagation, planting and care of rhododendrons. Also how to cope with various problems of pests and diseases.

After some much needed refreshments (our members are scattered over the whole of Ulster and some had travelled a fair distance) Mr. Boomer from Brookhill Camellias, gave us a short talk on which varieties of camellias did well in our rather damp climate! We then had quite a few questions from the floor. The meeting was well attended, it was nice to see old friends and encouraging to welcome new members.

In the spring we have arranged a meeting in conjunction with the Irish Garden Plant Society - a Rhododendron workshop ~ which will take place in April. Then in May we have two gardens to visit near Portadown.

Peak District Branch.

The well supported events of the Peak District branch continued with a visit on Saturday 10 October, to the astonishing wholesale hybrid nurseries of members Simon and Penny Murch at Osberton Grange (near Worksop). This is growing on a vast scale; we walked through literally acres of plants at all stages of development, being grown for garden centres across the country. There were many interesting cultivars, mostly of recent American origin. Once again the cardinal points of successful culture of these rhododendrons were seen; no shade plus appropriate irrigation and wind shelter. A most delicious lunch was provided by our hosts to whom our grateful thanks were given by David Farnes for a thoroughly enjoyable and amazing day.

S.E. Branch

With reference to the report in the August Bulletin of this Branch's visit to The High Beeches, Anne Boscawen would like to point out that the purpose of the visit, so late in the season, was to identify, confirm and photograph "late flowering hardy hybrid rhododendrons" Mr.

E. Reuthe accompanied the party and the labels on fifty-two of these wonderful old plants were verified.

Mr. Philip Evans was able to add a substantial number of photographs to his records.

Also the rhododendron hybrid mentioned as 'Sarah Bray' is in fact 'Sarah Boscawen'.

New Forest Branch

On Saturday 14 February members met at Jermyns House in the Sir Harold Hillier Gardens to watch the New Zealand video 'The Realm of the Rhododendron'. In return for the use of the facilities at the Gardens, five members from the Group contributed a day's work amongst their rhododendron collection on 7 April, and since then we have continued to develop our connection with the Gardens.

On 15 April 12 members, together with Bruce and Valerie Archibold, visited Abbotsbury sub-tropical Gardens on a joint visit with the Dorset branch of the International Camellia Society. Although it was snowing when we arrived, the weather improved and we were given a tour of the Gardens by the Curator, Stephen Griffiths; numerous camellias were in bloom, and members found interest in the various species rhododendrons.

On the afternoon of Saturday 2 May we visited the gardens of Branch members, Bernard and Letty Perrott and Olwen Bird, in Chandlers Ford. Jennifer Trehane had brought a number of sasanqua camellias in flower for us to see and we were given a talk on the Gardens by Pat Haskell, followed by a guided tour.

On 7 November we were very fortunate to have an illustrated lecture by Keith Rushforth on his visits to Vietnam, a country which was unfamiliar to most of us, and we kept him at Jermyn's House until he had showed us all his slides.

Martin Gates

Rhododendron Hybrids of New Zealand

Kathryn Millar, an overseas member of our Group and a tireless worker for the New Zealand Rhododendron Association Inc. writes to tell us of a book of which she is co-editor: I quote "the book lists 'all', I hesitate to say it, the rhododendrons registered in New Zealand, and also many quality unregistered which are either in commerce, or very good, or have some important provenance which should be recorded for posterity. There are some hilarious stories about why perfectly dreadful rhododendrons were registered for some personal reason or other. We have only 1000 printed, so when they are gone that is that. We hope our price is UK friendly, we know the exchange rate is!"

Crossing the Rubicon

**Rhododendron Hybrids of New Zealand
Price £6 incl. of p. & p. Cheques payable
to Canterbury Rhododendron Society.**

**Orders to Adrian Bliss, 508 Mill Road,
Ohoka, North Canterbury, NZ**

Rhododendron Handbook 1998

This book was reviewed in Bulletin 68 and it has been decided that it should be made available, through the Group to MEMBERS ONLY at the special offer price of £30 post free.

This applies to members world-wide and to any addresses outside the UK the book will be sent by surface mail rate. If members desire it to be sent Air Mail, an additional £5 is requested to partly offset the increased postal charge.

Please send orders to Mr. David Farnes, 5, Pine View, Ashgate, Chesterfield, Derbyshire S40 4DN. Tel. 01246 272105. Cheques made payable to "Rhododendron, Camellia and Magnolia Group," please, or by Visa/Master card/Access giving card number, expiry date, name on card and billing address.

Magnolias in Past Year Books

Lady Cynthia Postan points out that the following Yearbooks also contain articles on Magnolias - but these are now out of print and second hand copies would need to be sought.

1. Ref. p 6 Magnolia articles, No. 43 (1991) p. 22 has a longish article by Karl Flinck on a magnolia breeder in the U.S., called Phil Savage who is very well known over there. Could be of interest to specialists here.
2. No.44 (1992) p.32 has the first part of John Bond's account of the National Collection at Savill Gardens (part 2 in 1994 p.41)
3. No. 44 (1992) p.57 An article about Felix Jury's hybrid magnolias in N.Z., some of which have been introduced here [see No. 49 (1998) p.65]
4. No 48 (1996-7) p.56 An account of the Magnolia Society Symposium at Windsor in April 1996
5. No.48 (1996/7) p.44 Article by Maurice Foster on why *Magnolia campbellii* in Bhutan is white not pink. Good historical references.

All except the last should be in the consolidated index.

Dr. Cox's Garden, Dendles Waste, Cornwood, nr. Plymouth

About a year ago Mrs. Joey Warren let me know that this garden had been rediscovered. She asked if I could find out more about it.

In January 1998 I went to explore. Mrs. Moysey of Higher Hele Farm, Cornwood, was very helpful. In the 1940's she remembers that "in the early summer Dr. Cox would come out from Plymouth with his manservant and a piano and stay at Higher Hele. She had not visited the garden for many years. There had been some lovely pink and red rhododendrons in the garden."

The garden is on Grid Reference SX 612622. It is placed in an oakwood on land now owned by Dartmoor National Park Authority. The farm is accessible by metalled road. From thereon the route follows a farm track northward to a gate at which point the area is signed as a National Nature Reserve, "Dendles Waste" Follow the track round to the left, keeping the stream, Broadall Lake, on your left. After a while the track turns acutely to the right, at the level of a small hut part of a water catchment system. At this point leave the track and follow an ill defined path that goes on up the coombe parallel to the stream. After about 200 - 300 metres through the wood, a dense brake of

rhododendrons is to be found. It covers an area of about 100 metres square. The stream runs through it. At the upper end the stream has been informally dammed to form a short bifurcation in the water flow. On the island so formed grow a number of different rhododendrons. On the east side of the area there is a low moss-covered wall. The area between the wall and the stream is densely overgrown with *R. ponticum*. On the West side across the other stream is more *R. ponticum* and some laurel. When I first saw it I was struck by the fact that there was no extension of the *R. ponticum* beyond the site apart from a very few plants on the banks of the stream. I had to force my way on to the island. There seemed to be some hybrids of *R. arboreum* as quite tall trees and some other hybrids.

There were the remains of a small corrugated iron shed and also two areas that gave the impression that they had been flower beds at one time.

I returned on 7 May. The tree like specimens were just finishing flowering. The trusses were large and of a pale cream colour. One truss was low enough to be cut. The plants that I thought to be the purple *R. ponticum* were just about to open their buds. One truss was open and it was white! I took this truss as well.

I showed the two trusses to Mr. Kenwyn Clapp, who suggested I sent them to Mr. H. Davidian. Mr. Davidian's opinion is that the smaller ponticum-like plant is *R. ponticum forma album*. He advises "look well after this plant. It is rare in cultivation" The other plant he thought might be a hybrid between *ponticum* & *arboreum*.

I have spoken to Mr. Rupert Lane of the Dartmoor National Park Authority. My opinion is that there is no urgent need to clear out any plants unless they show themselves to be purple *R. ponticum*. Certainly the only opening buds when I was there seemed to be white. I did suggest that any plants growing downstream could be removed, they are all comparatively small and it would be an easy task. Some clearing could be done to allow easier access to the area. Luckily *forma album* does not seem to have the invasive habits of its purple relative.

Dr. Cox's garden has some more surprises I am sure. Late April may be the time to see the tree-like plants and mid to late May not only the *R.p. forma album* but also what else is in bloom; and to make records. Mr. Lane and I would be glad of any more information about this site. If anyone can visit it in 1999 and let me know what they find, we would be grateful.

Alun Edwards

Lime Tolerant Rhododendrons?

A rhododendron, growing in a lime quarry, has been used as a rootstock by German nurseries to produce some thirty varieties said to be lime tolerant. They are claimed to grow best in soil with a pH of 5.5-7 but will survive up to 7.5 if some peat or bark is added to the soil. Bristol based Brunel Marketing are promoting the plants in Britain. The plants will have the word 'Inkarho' on their labels.

Time will tell if these plants will really continue to thrive as the lime in alkaline soils gradually works into the planting hole, but gardeners on the 'wrong' soil but hopelessly in love with rhododendrons, may like to experiment with one or two of these plants. If you fall into this category and decide to take the plunge, please do write and tell us what results you get.

Details of your nearest stockist may be obtained from Brunel Marketing 0117 950 7872

Scale on Rhododendrons Under Glass

This spring I noticed scale insects on the undersurface of the leaves of *R. dalhousiae*, *R. johnstoneanum* and *R. indicum*. This same insect was on the leaves of *Cornus chinensis* and a camellia.

I took to removing the insect with my thumbnail which considerably reduced the infestation but recently I referred the matter to Wisley for a better remedy. Mr. A J Halstead, the Senior Entomologist has written to say that my pest is Cushion Scale (*Pulvinaria floccifera*). The remedy is to spray in August with Malathion to catch the young nymphs at the crawler stage.

I should mention that the rhododendrons above, being tender, spend the winter in a greenhouse providing a comfortable environment for the pest.

Whilst on the subject - plant disease is coming to the fore. A bug has attacked the National Pieris Collection at Windsor, also something nasty is threatening camellias, the latter almost certainly brought in on potted plants from Spain. Maybe it is time to reduce drastically the free movement of plants within the E.U.?

T leM. Spring Smyth

If you too are bothered by scale, there is a very good advisory leaflet available from the RHS Wisley which details the various kinds you may have to contend with and the remedies.



**We need a new
HON. TOUR ORGANISER,
or alternatively someone to liaise
between the Group and a
professional tour operator, also an
extra member of Committee ~
IT COULD BE YOU !**

Please think whether you could find time
to help with the running
of our Group.

WHITEHILLS NURSERIES

We can offer a wide range of specie
rhododendrons grown from wild-collected
seed in a variety of sizes as follows :

9cm pots £2.00
1 litre pots. £3.00
2 litre pots. £3.50

Prices include VAT. Carriage extra

Lists available from :

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Scotland DG8 6SL

Tel. 01671 402049. Fax 01671 403106

e-mail: tonyweston@rhodo.demon.co.uk

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE RHODODENDRON, CAMELLIA AND MAGNOLIA GROUP

To be held on WEDNESDAY 28 April, 4.30p.m. at New Hall, Vincent Square.

In accordance with the new Constitution, voting will be by Postal Ballot to elect Committee Members, and to accept any new proposals.

A Nomination Form appears below, and should be completed and returned to the Hon. Secretary by 1 April, 1999. Prospective Committee Candidates must sign the Nomination Form to signify their willingness to serve for three years. A short horticultural C.V. is required. A Candidate must be a member of the R.H.S. as must the Proposer and Seconder.

Alterations to the Committee

Mr. David Farnes has been appointed Vice-Chairman.

Mr. Alastair Stevenson wishes to resign as Hon. Treasurer, a post he has filled with great distinction since 1988. Mr. Christopher Walker has been appointed to take up this position in 1999.

Mrs. Valerie Archibold has resigned as Hon. Tours Organiser, she has carried out this task with great success for some fifteen years.

Major T LeM Spring Smyth has been a valued member of the Committee since 1988, his latest term of office ends at AGM 1999 and he does not wish to stand again.

Mr. John Harsant has volunteered to serve on the Committee and stands for election.

We require one extra Committee member and one officer (the Tours Organiser)

NOMINATION PAPER

**For candidates for election to the Executive Committee.
Please circle the position to which you refer.**

Tours Organiser / Committee Member

Name of Candidate Signature.....

Proposed by Signature.....

Seconded by..... Signature.....