

The Royal Horticultural Society

The Rhododendron, Camellia and Magnolia Group



Bulletin 70 ~ Spring 1999

Forthcoming Events

April 13-14	Main Camellia Competition, New Hall Westminster	May 7-9	Malvern Spring Gardening Show, Malvern
April 27-28	Main Rhododendron Competition, New Hall, Westminster	May 25-28	Chelsea Flower Show
April 28	Executive Committee Meeting 2.00p.m. followed by Group Annual General Meeting at 4.30p.m. New Hall Westminster	June 4-6	Scotland's National Gardening Show
May 6-10	Group Spring Tour.	June 16-20	BBC Gardeners' World Live NEC Birmingham
		July 6-12	Hampton Court Palace Flower Show
		July 22-25	RHS Flower Show, Tatton Park

Chairman's Notes

Almost as I lifted my pen to draft these notes I received the terribly sad news that Alan Hardy had died. We all knew that he was desperately ill but his incredibly brave approach to his problem allowed him to live reasonably normally over the past months, thus perhaps lulling us all into a false sense of his well being.

Alan has done so much for the group over the past thirty years and I certainly wish to write much more about him and his achievements in the near future.

The British and British gardeners in particular, invariably begin a conversation with comments upon the weather, so keeping true to type here is my effort:-

Rain seems to have dominated our lives over the past several months and there is no doubt that we are very wet as I write these notes at the beginning of February. No doubt by May or possibly June the story will be very different and we shall be considering irrigation. This will also almost certainly be necessary in the low rainfall areas and particularly on the fast draining Bagshot Sand soils that I garden on. For our beloved rhododendrons, whilst they certainly should not sit in water, must always be cool and moist at their roots.

My friends and acquaintances will all be aware of the great value I place upon foliage and to a lesser extent stems of rhododendrons, particularly during the long winter months. I am also a great advocate of appropriate companions for our rhododendrons at all levels. In view of this I paid two visits to the Valley Garden here in the Great Park just after Christmas to view the hamamelis which were in great form. The plantings are very much at random and well spaced and they really played a great role in the sombre winter woodland. I should add that both visits were made on grey sunless days, which I believe was a great advantage for bright sunshine tends to reduce the value of yellow and gold flowers. I should also point out that a little winter attraction such as the Witch Hazels goes a long way so don't overplant winter subjects.

The best of the hamamelis available are *H. mollis* (beware of poor forms - it is perhaps best to buy a plant in flower.) *H. mollis* "Pallida" is still for me the best by far and now incidentally considered to be a form of *H. x intermedia*. Of the many other *H. x intermedia* forms available the golden *H. "Barmstedt Gold"* and "Westerstede" are superb and *H. "Arnold Promise"*, with much paler flowers is outstanding. There is an excellent orange *H. x intermedia* "Jelena" and a good red *H. x intermedia* "Diane" but neither has the same effect in the landscape as the yellow selections.

I visited a woodland garden in the south recently and found selections of *Camellia x williamsii*, notably the first class *C. x williamsii* "St Ewe", providing the same effect. These plants were also well spaced at random and were just perfect when taking a winter's walk.

The arrival of this bulletin on your doormat will coincide with early spring in the garden, I trust this year will be happy and floriferous for you all.

Editor's Notes

I only wish to add my own tribute to Alan Hardy. Always knowledgeable, both of plants and the Group, courteous and so very helpful to new Committee members, he was a lovely person and will be sadly missed by us all.

Just as we go to press also comes the sad news of the death of Sir Giles Loder, another who has rendered much to the world of gardening and rhododendrons in particular. Full appreciations of the lives of these two great men will appear in the next yearbook, a place where they will be more permanently recorded than this ephemeral newsletter.

Spring Tour, 6-10 May

There are still some places left on this tour to the gardens of Sussex. There will be visits to some of the great gardens of this area, together with a number of private gardens, a potent and fascinating mixture. We shall be staying at the very comfortable Winston Manor Hotel which has an award winning team of chefs. Price £318 per person with a single room supplement of £45. Any members who would like to join please ring Boxwood Tours on 01341 241 717

Treasurer's Note

Year Book Sales.

Copies of the current Year Book are available for any members with retail outlets at their gardens and we would be very keen for them to be stocked and prominently displayed. They are available at a wholesale price — details and supplies from the Treasurer, Alastair Stevenson Tel: 0181 7427571, Fax 0181 987 8728, or e-mail, stevensonmpa@compuserve.com

Year Book Editor's Notes

Year Book Photographic Competition

The competition will once again be run for the year 2000 edition and a prize of £25 is offered to the winner. If you have a print or slide of a rhododendron, camellia or magnolia taken by you and which came out rather well, why not look it out and enter it? If it wins or achieves 'runner up' status, it will be printed in the 2000 Year Book and the pleasure will be shared with the whole of the Group. Remember this is a competition restricted to members of this Group only, and a good variety of entries thus increases the opportunity of illustrating the Year Book with photographs of some plants that have particularly interested our own members. A maximum of three photographs per entrant.

So please help make the 'Millennium' competition a real success. Prints or slides are equally welcome, and the subject matter may be in your own or a friend's garden, in a garden open to the public here or abroad, or in a natural habitat, or indeed under glass or indoors. The sole judgement criterion is the picture's success as a photograph, but please do enclose a note of the name of the plant and where the photograph was taken, and any background information you think might be of interest. Entries by June 30 1999 to:- Philip D. Evans, Painswold, Broad Street, Cuckfield, West Sussex, RH17 5LL

The Year Book - Rhododendron Camellia and Magnolia Notes

Since becoming Editor I have realised this is a popular section of the Year Book. However its success is dependent on interesting items being submitted by Members of the Group. I would therefore like to say that short items from Members (or indeed others) concerning interesting experiences in growing, or any other aspect, of any of the three genera, are sought and are very welcome for consideration for publication. Disc, typescript or manuscript are all equally acceptable and supporting photograph(s) if available. Potential 'Notes' to be considered for the 2000 Year Book must be delivered to me before the end of June 1999. Address as the above paragraph.

Philip Evans.

What's in a Name? Rhododendrophiloi.

Have you ever seen the elegant roundel at the head of this Bulletin before? Was your father, grandfather, great uncle perhaps, ever awarded a medal like this (made of gold or of other precious metal) for excellence in cultivating that exotic shrub, the rhododendron? If so, we should like to hear from you. Your relation might have been one of that select band of Rhododendron Lovers, for that is what the Greek letters mean, who

formed the original Rhododendron Society. The Rhododendron Society (see 'The Rhododendron Story, 1996, p 188) was in the 1920s a pioneering group of gardeners, botanists and plant collectors devoted to the introduction and cultivation of what was then a largely unknown, but rapidly expanding, genus. They considered themselves to be an elite with a mission. They met regularly, corresponded with each other and from 1926, published, albeit privately, a series of "Notes" in which they recorded their experiences "in the garden" so to speak, and also supported the intrepid collectors who provided them with new material.

One of the most active of the Founding Fathers was Gerald Loder, later Lord Wakehurst, who (apart from writing the memorandum that recommended changing the hitherto secret "Society" into an "Association" for the many), presented his fellows with a die, of which you see a reproduction above, specially designed for its purpose. The designers were carefully chosen. Sir Herbert Maxwell drew the typical rhododendron truss and, because English gentlemen of that generation naturally had had a classical education, the wording and lettering was in Greek. Who better to coin the new word than Dr. M.R. James, Provost of Eton and King's College, Cambridge, author of the memorable "Ghost Stories of an Antiquary", although there is no evidence that he himself was a rhododendron lover! Mr. Loder presented the die to the Society in or about the year 1922 (see "The Rhododendron Year Book" No.12, 1958, p.16)

So far so good. But the subsequent history of this hypothetical medal remains something of a mystery. What was the medal awarded for? Who received one? And how many were awarded? The clues are few and tentative. While researching the early history of the Society I was informed by Mr. Derek Frazer Jenkins that his father-in-law, Admiral Walker Heneage Vivian of Clyne Castle, Swansea, had been awarded just such a gold medal. It is now in the possession of the Admiral's grand-daughter.

Up to the present I have not been able to trace any others, although a similar but not identical medal was awarded in 1926 to Messrs. Robert Gill's Himalayan Nursery at Penryn, Falmouth. If any member can add anything to our knowledge of this intriguing matter, do please write to me at 84, Barton Road, Cambridge, CB3 9LH.

Cynthia Postan

Branch News

S.W.Branch

At RHS Rosemoor, on 7 November last year, the Branch held its Autumn meeting (see report in previous bulletin)

At this meeting John Bodenham and Reg. Pohlmann arranged a display stand of some *Vireya* rhododendrons. The plants shown were in full bloom and looked both beautiful and magnificent. There was also a fine presentation about the cultivation of this section of rhododendron.

The display encouraged me to visit both John Bodenham and Reg. Pohlmann and of course the visits made me succumb to the temptation to start to try to grow *Vireyas*. I have ordered some plants said to be easy to cultivate (i.e. they are tough enough to resist the inexperienced grower and some degree of maltreatment). Cultural information appeared in Bulletin 64, April 1997 and further details can be obtained from John Bodenham, Hunter's Lodge, Wembury Wood, Wembury Plymouth, Devon PL9 0DL

Alun Edwards

N. Ireland Branch

24 April - A Rhododendron Workshop at Rowallane, Saintfield. This event is in conjunction with the Irish Garden Plant Society.

23 May - Mr. & Mrs. Hunter are opening their garden at 19 Calverstown Road, Portadown to the branch.

10-13 June, Belfast Garden Festival. John Gault from Limavady will have a stand displaying rhododendrons - all members are welcome for a chat.

Andrena Duffin.

Norfolk Branch

The autumn meeting of the Norfolk Branch was held on November 11th. Tony and Helen Gammage, two members from Attleborough, gave a talk and showed slides of their trip to the foothills of the Himalayas last Easter. This was full of interest, and though the season was too early for much in the way of rhododendrons, we did see some, together with dramatic views of a distant Everest. We were left in no doubt about the physical challenge of the trip, and the problems associated with altitude. Discussion afterwards proved equally fascinating. Two of the company provided a little gardening history between them. Godfrey Welham had been a gardener at Howe Hill from the 60s to the 80s, and was able to tell us about the early days there. Peter Gill, who is Tim Leese's assistant at the Walled Garden at Holkham Nurseries, described how he had started that garden almost from scratch back in the 60's. We also had a visiting expert on garden history and design present. Gerald Randall, who has just completed a series of lectures on this subject for the local W.E.A., is a mine of information about historic and interesting gardens all over this country and abroad, together with a very rich archive of slides.

We are planning two meetings for the Spring - a private visit to Stody Lodge, to see their lovely gardens, courtesy of Mrs. A MacNicol, and later in the month a walk around Sheringham Park in the company of John Bond. We are delighted to have the opportunity to benefit from his knowledge and expertise. His advice and suggestions will be most welcome.

Jane Idiens

S.E. Branch

On Saturday the 19 October, the most atrocious day of 1998 - a small group of particularly hardy members visited Bedgebury Pinetum. Despite the daunting conditions we enjoyed a fascinating tour conducted by Colin Morgan, the Curator. We are resolved to return this year - but having made sure of the weather first!

Later in November, Herb Short came to give us a most interesting account of the restoration of the historic camellia collection at Chiswick House.

For our spring garden visit Mrs. Miranda Gunn, the Chairman of the Wessex Branch has kindly agreed to be our host at Ramster, which offers a brilliant display of rhododendrons and azaleas in May. We shall assemble at Ramster, 1½ miles south of Chiddingfold on the A283, at 2.30pm on Saturday 29 May. The entry fee is £2.50 per person. There is a good pub, the Ramsnest, just opposite the entrance to the garden, for those who wish to meet for refreshment before the visit.

John Hilliard

This year's S.E. Branch Show will be held on Saturday, 17 April at Handcross Park School Handcross, W. Sussex. The show will be held in the school's large, new, airy dining hall. This will accommodate all classes and is more conducive to displaying show entries.

Following this most successful event of recent years, the show is again being sponsored by **Phostrogen** and supported by leading specialist nurseries. A trophy will be awarded by **Phostrogen** for the best rhododendron. The best magnolia and best camellia will also be awarded trophies and prizes will be presented to all class winners.

Entry is free and anyone wishing to take part or visit the show should contact Barry Haseltine on 01342 713132 as early as possible. An added attraction is that Handcross Park School holds the National Collection for Cherry trees, many of which should be in bloom at the time of the show.

N.Wales & N.W. Branch

The first Branch Meeting of the session was held on Saturday 9 November, 1998. The speaker was Dr. Brenda McLean, author of "A Pioneering Plantsman - A. K. Bulley and the Great Plant Hunters". Members spoke appreciatively of Dr. McLean's orderly compiled and well presented talk. She is at present researching information on George Forrest, in preparation for an authoritative biography of this prolific plant collector.

The Branch met for a social on 16 January, 1999 when plans were discussed for holding a local show at the home of Mr. & Mrs. Ted Brabin on the 1 May.

The programme of visits to local members gardens will include Dr. K. Slatter's Hinderton Lodge and Mr. & Mrs. T Brabin's Rosewood, Puddington with the added attraction of the show at Rosewood on Saturday, 1 May as stated above.

The visit to gardens in other regions will take place on the 7 to 9 May and will be to West Scotland gardens, notably Brodick and Benmore.

Ken Hulme

New Forest Branch

On Sunday, 21 March, we have been invited to see a member's garden at Alderholt, near Fordingbridge. David Peck's principal interests are magnolias and camellias.

On Saturday, 1 May, we have arranged to visit Peter Chappell's garden and nursery at Spinners, Boldre in the New Forest.

Members also have the opportunity to participate in two visits arranged by the Dorset branch of the International Camellia Society. On Wednesday, 14 April, there is a chance to see Studland Bay House garden and on 16 June a visit to Forde Abbey.

Martin Gates

Wessex Branch

Our annual competition will be on Saturday, 22 May at Ramster. Staging begins at 2.00pm, judging by John Bond at 4.00pm

Miranda Gunn

Membership Secretary's Notes

Membership Directory

Please make the following alterations:

Changes of address, tel. no. etc.

Mr Brent McKenzie: e-mail address now:
brentmckenzie@clear.net.nz

Mr T J Vince, Beech House, Woodhouse Rd.,
Hawkechurch, Axminster, Devon, EX13 5UG

Mr J G Hillier, VMH: Amend Tel.No. to read 01794
368813

Mr Alan Drake: insert (RHS No. 5495857)

Mr Robin Whiting: insert e-mail address:
robin@whiting34.freemove.co.uk

Mr & Mrs Hugo White: Amend to read Admiral Sir
Hugo & Lady White.

Lt.Col.E T Bolitho: Amend to read Col.E T Bolitho,
OBE; Amend tel.no. to read 01736 363106, and
add: Garden Open Mar-Oct.

Mr M J Stone: Amend tel.no. to read 01822 853285.

Deletions

Mr G. Alan Hardy VMH, Hythe, Kent (deceased)

Mr F S Butt, Northwood, Middlesex (deceased)

Mr William Smith, Harrogate, Yorkshire (deceased)

Mrs. Barbara Kerr, 25 Woodford Terrace, Christchurch,
New Zealand (resigned)

New Members

Mr. P.R. Betteley, 2 Charterhouse Road, Orpington,
Kent BR6 9EL

Mr. Bengt Carlsson, c/o Swedish Rhododendron
Society, Matildebergsgatan 42 J, Molndal 431 38,
Sweden

Mr Kjeld Dideriksen, Skovparken 1, DK-2990, NIVAA,
Denmark,

Dr. James Ellis, 14187 Pheasant Run, Holland MI 49424
USA

Mr. Herman C. Gehnrich, 164 Chichester Road,
Huntington, NY 11743 USA

Mr. John Hammond, 51 Sandy Lane, Prestwich
Manchester M25 9RD

Mr. Jonathan Hooper, Ugadale Cottage, Saddell,
Campbell Town, Argyll, PA28 6QR

Mr. Steven Hootman, 2662, 51st Av. SW Seattle WA
98116 USA

Dr. Brenda J. McLean, 11, Claremont Rd. West Kirby
Wirral, L48 5EA

Mr. Ray Redford, Fairbank, 39 Rectory Road,
Farnborough Hants. GU14 7BT

Mrs. X. Rodriguez, Casilla 26 Requinoa, VI Region Chile

Mr. Charles Sale, 5414 Indian River Drive, N
Vancouver, BC V7G 1L3 Canada

Mr. George Spinks, 167 Cavendish Meads Sunninghill,
Ascot, Berks SL5 9TG

Mr. Dale C. Sullivan, 7519 S E Harold, Portland, OR,
USA

Mr. Geoff H. Taylor, Pant yr Holiad, Rhydlewis,
Llandysul, Ceredigion SA44 5ST

Mr. & Mrs A. R. Wild, Frosbury Farmhouse, Gravetts
Lane, Worplesdon, Guildford, Surrey GU3 3JW

Dr. Hanns-Herbert Wuthe, Sturenhagener Weg 39,
Danischenhagen, D - 24229, Germany

Seed Distribution Scheme

Errata:

List No. 98026 should read: Rh decorum BPT 90G x decorum
BPT 98LA.

List No.98376 should read 98370

New Seed received since publication of Seed List

98568 Rh. <i>degronianum</i> var. <i>yakushimanum</i> x Rh. citriniflorum	1.75
98569 Rh <i>calophytum</i> x Rh <i>strigillosum</i>	1.75
98570 Rh <i>sutchuenense</i> x Rh <i>strigillosum</i>	1.75
98571 (Rh <i>brachycarpum</i> x Rh <i>fortunei</i>) x Rh. <i>fortunei</i>	1.75
98572 Rh <i>insigne</i> x Rh <i>degronianum</i> var. <i>yakushimanum</i>	1.75
98573 Rh <i>sutchuenense</i>	1.75
98574 Rh <i>oreodoxa</i> var. <i>fargesii</i> (Cox) x Rh <i>geraldii</i>	1.75
98575 Rh <i>molle</i> subsp. <i>japonicum</i> x <i>luteum</i> hybrid	1.75

The scheme remains popular with members, and stocks seem to be holding out reasonably well. To date of writing (15th February) we have received orders from 90 members for a total of about 1500 packets, and the orders continue to pour in by post, fax and e-mail. I said I would deal with them strictly in order of receipt but this puts members outside Europe at a disadvantage compared to the rest. So when I sent out the 1998 seed I treated orders from outside Europe as having been received four days earlier than they actually were to compensate for the longer delivery time of the list.

Thanks to Bruce Archibold who is doing the packeting and Daphne, my wife, who helps me with the mailing, we were able to post the seeds earlier this year than we did last. We are, of course, greatly indebted to Alan Clark who goes to China each year and brings back an ever-varying assortment of seed depending on which province he goes to and for burning the midnight oil meticulously cleaning the seed - in itself a time consuming exercise - so that the packets you receive contain 100% seed free of husk and other rubbish.

Tony Weston

Rhododendron "Jocelyne"

Our member Donal O'Sullivan is most anxious to obtain a plant of this old Exbury hybrid (*lacteum* x *calophytum*) which was never bred up for sale. If anyone does own a plant and would be willing to supply a plant, layer or cutting material, please get in touch with Mr. O'Sullivan at 1, Calderwood Heights, Donnybrook, Douglas, Co. Cork, Ireland.
Tel. 021 892648

Reciprocal Visit England/Holland

Mr. Tijs Huisman, who is President of the Dutch Rhododendron Society and a member of the Group, is planning to visit S.E. England in the first week of May and wonders whether any member living in that area would care to offer him and his wife hospitality for that visit, either on a bed and breakfast or rent of a cottage basis, or preferably for a return visit to Holland. They have a long list of rhododendron gardens they wish to visit and somewhere between London and Brighton would be their choice for a base. If you would like to help, please get in touch with Mr. Huisman, at Hoofdweg 34, Nijensleek, 8383 EG Holland. Tel. +31 521 383046
e-mail: t.huisman.rhodo@consunet.nl

POSTAL VOTE

In accordance with the new Constitution dated 30th September 1998, elections will be held by Postal Ballot. This change, from voting in person at Annual General Meetings, was made to include the Membership in the running of the Group.

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Wednesday, 28 April 1999, at 4.30pm at New Hall, Vincent Square. It is hoped that you will come, but please complete and return the Voting Form by 26 April, 1999.

The Executive Committee comprises 7 Officers, 7 Elected Committee Members, and the Chairmen of active Branches.

The Officers are confirmed in their appointment by election; initially for a 3 year term of office, and thereafter annually.

They are:

Chairman	Hon. Treasurer
Hon. Secretary	Hon. Membership Secretary
Hon. Yearbook Editor	Hon. Bulletin Editor
Hon. Tours Organiser - position vacant.	

The Vice-Chairman is appointed from within the Committee.

Branch Chairmen are appointed for 3 years, and thereafter confirmed by election annually within their Branch.

The Elected Committee Members also serve for a 3 year term of office, and may then seek re-election.

Major Tom Le M. Spring Smyth, who has completed his latest 3 year term of office, is not seeking re-election. He leaves a vacancy.

The other mid-term Committee Members are:

Mr. David N. Farnes (Vice Chairman), Mr. Martin D. C. Gates, Dr. Robbie H. L. Jack, Miss Cicely Perring, Mr. Ivor Stokes.

CV's of members proposed to join the Committee as Elected Members appear overleaf.

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THE RHODODENDRON, CAMELLIA & MAGNOLIA GROUP OF THE R.H.S. VOTING FORM ~ Annual General Meeting, 28 April 1999

Please signify your vote with a tick for approval in the appropriate box.

OFFICERS:

Hon Treasurer

Mr. Christopher Walker

☐

Secretary

Mrs. Josephine M. Warren

☐

Hon. Membership Secretary

Mr. C. A. (Tony) Weston

☐

Hon. Year Book Editor

Mr. Philip D. Evans

☐

Bulletin Editor

Mrs. Eileen Wheeler

☐

PROPOSED COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Mr. John D. Harsant

☐

Mr. Alastair Stevenson

☐

There are TWO vacancies, PLEASE VOTE FOR TWO PEOPLE

Please return your completed Voting Form to Hon. Secretary, Mrs. Joey Warren, Netherton, Buckland Monachorum, Yelverton, Devon PL20 7NL, to arrive 48 hours before the AGM, that is by 26 April, 1999, making due allowance for postal delivery.

John D. Harsant, Heswall, Wirral

I have grown rhododendrons for 30 years and have about 300 in my garden. I grow both species and hybrids, in particular maddenia. Recently Dr.H.A.McAllister of Neww has given me some 50 batches of seed mostly collected by Keith Rushforth and I am growing these on for distribution. Overall I have had good results and have many good plants. Ken Hulme and I have over the last few years propagated quite a few plants from cuttings and these also have been distributed, the payments made all going to our local Branch. I am interested in the project to catalogue the major collections in the UK initiated by the RBG Edinburgh.

I took my degree in mathematics at Cambridge and I practice as an actuary.

Alastair Stevenson

Alastair Stevenson first joined the Group Committee 10 years ago and has been the Hon. Treasurer for the past seven years. He is now relinquishing this post to "spend more time with his family" (daughter Christina is now 9 months old), but is keen to continue an active involvement with the Group.

Alastair is the third generation to serve as an RHS committee member and was brought up the son of a chrysanthemum nurseryman in West London. He learned much at his father's side, in the fashion of a Victorian garden apprentice, with dead straight rows and even spacing paramount! He is a very keen amateur gardener at home and the allotment in Chiswick and continues the family tradition, growing chrysanthemums for competition.

Both Alastair and his wife Jan have recently successfully passed the first stage of the RHS' professional exams, having studied at Capel Manor for the past two years.

Alastair is a great supporter of the RHS and the Group as an integral part of it. His vision for the Group is to see an increasing membership, exchange of knowledge between professionals and amateurs and more active involvement of the Group in plantings and informative labelling of collections.

Chris B. Walker, Shepley, Huddersfield **(due to become Treasurer)**

Academic & Professional Qualifications:

MA (Oxford) Literae Humaniores
Institute Of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales (ACA)
Chartered Institute of Taxation (ATII)
Chartered Insurance Institute (ACII)
Six Years in practice as Chartered Accountant
Currently self-employed Insurance Broker.
Horticultural Background
Enthusiastic amateur (no formal horticultural/botanical training)
Active member of Peak District Branch.

PLEASE COMPLETE
THE VOTING FORM OVERLEAF.