



The Rhododendron, Camellia & Magnolia Group

THE ROYAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

BULLETIN – 80

OCTOBER 2002

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Maurice Foster

Ponticum postscript

Down in the New Forest something stirred. You will recall comments in the last issue on the demonisation of rhododendrons as a whole through misrepresentation of the ponticum issue. Mike Grant, secretary to the Rhododendron and Camellia Committee has received a reply from the Forestry Commission regarding their leaflet reference to 'rhododendron toxicity'. The Deputy Surveyor states that the leaflet we complained about was "aimed at the general public and there is always a problem in trying to explain in simple language something which is in fact quite complex". He went on to admit that the words used were technically inaccurate and apologised unreservedly if this gave offence. On the wider issue, the objection to *Rhododendron ponticum* in the New Forest was because it was an "aggressive exotic species". It was hoped to introduce other less competitive or invasive species of rhododendron and there is no particular antagonism to the genus.

By contrast, the BBC felt "unable to uphold your complaint" in response to a letter from Kenneth and Peter Cox about the "State of the Planet" programme which referred to rhododendrons 'poisoning the earth'. The exchange of letters is published on page 9 and speaks for itself.

It is proposed to hold an international conference on *Rhododendron ponticum* in 18 months time in May 2004 at Sheffield Hallam University and offers of papers, posters, support and sponsorship are invited. (Contact Editor for further details).

I have not seen a statement of conference objectives, but I hope it may provide a more detached, balanced and documented approach, put the ponticum discussion into a proper perspective and remove the misrepresentation and ignorance visited upon the genus as a whole.

A new disease of rhododendrons

A new species of phytophthora was identified as the cause of a disease which killed both nursery and mature rhododendrons in Germany and Holland in 1993. It is *Phytophthora ramorum* known colloquially as 'sudden oak death'. Since 1995 the disease is said to have ravaged forests on the US west coast killing 80-90% of the oaks attacked and a recent press report (Sept) suggests that it has now spread to Californian redwoods. It was also observed on viburnum. Apart from certain west coast *Quercus* spp other major hosts listed by the Forestry Commission are *Lithocarpus densiflorus*, *Arbutus menziesii*, *Umbellularia californica* and *Vaccinium* spp. Possible hosts at risk in Europe are in the Fagaceae, Ericaceae and Lauraceae.

Forestry Commission research suggests European oaks may be more resistant than those of N. America, but other fagaceous broadleaves like European beech may be vulnerable.

continued on page 2



Magnolia 'Daphne'

Philippe de Spoelberch

'Yellow Magnolias' The second article in the series on Magnolias from Mike Robinson is published on page 7.

IN THIS ISSUE	PAGE
Chairman's Notes	1-2
Editor's Notes	2
Seed Distribution; Rhodo '02 Report	3
Tours	3
Members Notes	4
Pruning Camellias – Jennifer Trehane	5
Rhododendrons – New introductions Kenneth Cox	6
Yellow Magnolias – Mike Robinson	7
Letters; Branch Reports	10
Notices; Membership Subscriptions	11
Coming Events	12

The disease causes typical bark cankers, with red /black liquid ooze, drying to black 'tar'. Shoot tips may show sudden wilt and foliage may discolour.

On rhododendrons, the fungus also causes bark cankers leading to twig death; leaves may also be affected without accompanying twig damage.

The disease is notifiable in UK and suspect cases must be reported by law. For rhododendrons and viburnums phone the Plant Health and Seeds Inspectorate in York on 01904 455174 and for trees the Forestry Commission on 0131 3146414.

More details are obtainable from the Forestry Commission or DEFRA and a website:

www.defra.gov.uk/planth/pestnote/sudden.htm

A final note of cheer

To maintain the general theme of complaint and distress, initially I had intended to finish with a friend's definition of gardening, - eleven months of unrelenting hard work followed by one month of intense disappointment - but there is a decided whiff of more agreeable news stealing in from gardens everywhere, which are looking in very good condition... We have to acknowledge that 2002 has been an exceptionally good year for all three genera, that members have hugely enjoyed it and both growth and flower bud set this autumn suggest that next year is likely to be equally good, if not better. Prospects are excellent for 2003. Keep planting.

When did you last visit?



WINDSOR
GREAT PARK

SAVILL
GARDEN

Windsor Great Park

**Renowned woodland garden with
an unrivalled collection of
rhododendrons, azaleas, camellias,
magnolias and much else**

**LICENSED RESTAURANT,
PLANT AND GIFT SHOP**

Open: Mar-Oct 10am-6pm Nov-Feb 10am-4pm

Wick Lane, Englefield Green, Egham
Enquiries: 01753 847518
www.savillgarden.co.uk

EDITOR'S NOTES

John Rawling

'Magnolias in Cornish Gardens'

Please note that copies of this book, reviewed in the last Bulletin can be obtained from: Alexander Associates, 4 South Street, Fowey, Cornwall, PL23 1AR. Tel. 01726 833900.

Pukeiti, New Zealand

2001 was the 50th Jubilee of the foundation of these beautiful gardens at New Plymouth, North Island. There are few places in the world so suitable for growing a wide range of rhododendrons and allied plants. They grow around 2,500 rhododendron species and hybrids, as well as native plants.

As part of their celebrations, they have made a Jubilee Appeal to ensure that Pukeiti remains 'A Garden for All Seasons - A Sanctuary for All Time'.

There are two illustrated books available:

"Pukeiti - An illustrated History", and also

"A Man's Dream - Eastwood Hill", which tells the story of New Zealand's notable arboretum. Each at \$50.

Year Books

Past issues are now stored by and obtainable from Mrs Pam Haywood who has been appointed as "Yearbook Archivist" to handle the stock of past publications for the Group. Details are as below:

The RHS Main Camellia Competition, Spring 2003...

...is to be held over a weekend at Bournemouth on 11-13th April.

The following publications are available to Group Members:

THE RHODODENDRON HANDBOOK 1998

Includes full descriptions of all rhododendron species in general cultivation in Europe and the USA, including Vireyas. 352pp, illustrated. Members (worldwide): **£30** post free. Airmail surcharge: **£5**

THE RHODODENDRON STORY

200 Years of Plant Hunting and Garden Cultivation
Published in 1996 to celebrate half a century of the Rhododendron Yearbook. 224pp, illustrated.
UK Members: **£12** post free. Overseas Members: **£13.50** (Surface mail), **£17** (Airmail).

YEARBOOK Back Numbers

Available for 1979 - 2001, except 1980/81 and 1992.
Prices are *per book* and include UK postage.
Add **£0.50** *per book* for overseas addresses (Surface mail).
1979/80, 1982/83, 1983/84, 1984/85, 1985/86, 1986/87
1987/88, 1988/89, 1990, 1991, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996/97
2000, 2001 **£7.50**
1981/82, 1998, 1999 **£15.00**

Please make cheques payable, in sterling, to:
The Rhododendron, Camellia and Magnolia Group.
Payment can also be made by Mastercard or Visa.
Please quote card number, issue number (if any), expiry date, cardholder's name as it appears on card and address to which the card is registered.

Orders or enquiries to: Pam Hayward, Woodtown, Sampford Spiney, YELVERTON, PL20 6LJ, UK.
Tel/Fax: +44 (0)1822 852122
Email: RCMGPublications@aol.com

Non-members: contact above for prices and availability.

P
U
B
L
I
C
A
T
I
O
N
S

YEAR BOOK REGISTER

I am compiling a register of Year Book availability to help meet Members' needs. Please let me have details of Year Books you wish to buy or sell.

Contact: Pam Hayward, Woodtown, Sampford Spiney,
Yelverton, PL20 6LJ, UK. Tel/Fax: +44 (0)1822 852122
Email: RCMGPublications@aol.com

Editor's address and E-mail address.

Just a reminder that Contributions, Letters, Comment, Articles and News are welcome, and should be sent to John Rawling, The Hon. Bulletin Editor, The Spinney, Station Road, Woldingham, Surrey, CR3 7DD. (Tel: 01883 653341) or E-mail: jr.eye@virgin.net.

SEED DISTRIBUTION

Tony Weston

Next autumn, Alan Clark will be broadening out his area of interest and reaching places he has not hitherto visited. While Alan remains our mainstay provider, we have this year two additional seed providers visiting other areas of Asia. So we should be getting some seed of species not previously offered, as well as a greater variety, so watch out for the next seed list which will reach you at the beginning of the New Year.

We still have a plentiful supply of the 1996 seed which will again be offered free on the basis of one packet for each one ordered at the normal price. I am constantly being told by people who should know that rhododendron seed, if kept refrigerated, will remain viable almost indefinitely – certainly up to ten years; so it should be well worth including some on your order.



Nurseries

SPECIALISTS IN MAGNOLIAS

CH 6575 San Nazzaro/Ticino

SWITZERLAND

Telephone: 091 795 1867

Fax: 091 795 3029

Email: infoeisenhut@bluewin.ch

Internet: www.eisenhut.ch

We offer over 450 species of grafted Magnolias. Among these are some of the latest hybrid Magnolias and selected clones of Magnolia species.

Our full list of Magnolias, Camellias and Wistarias is available on request.

Plants are depatched as one- or two-year grafts and in accordance with import regulations.

In addition, there has been an excellent seed set on Magnolias this year, so there is likely to be a very interesting and wide choice of open pollinated seed available. The popularity of some existing cultivars will testify that these can produce worthwhile results. A practical article on growing magnolias (by the chairman of the group) was published in the 1998 Year Book.

RHODO '02 report

Eileen Wheeler

This Conference, organised and held at the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh was attended by quite a number of our members, and many many overseas professionals and enthusiasts from just about every country where rhododendrons in their numerous guises could be grown.

The keynote lecture given by Kenneth Cox, totally enthralling and with particularly fine and evocative slides, started an action packed three days. No fewer than ten different lectures each day in an interesting mix of the highly technical (taxonomy in all its disciplines, the phylogenetic relationships of rhododendron to other genera in the ericoideae, to give you an idea) to the practicalities of restoring an old precious garden, problems of dealing with introduced exotic species (not only rhododendrons) turned thug, joys and hazards of plant collecting and several excellent lectures on cultivating and producing vireyas.

A workshop, held on the day before the conference and repeated the day after, gave a lot of us the chance to begin to see how the classification of rhododendrons is pursued and to use a powerful laboratory microscope to examine the details of leaf scales and hairs. Later there was a fascinating tour of the Scanning Electron Microscope Suite followed by a visit to the DNA sequencing laboratory, in both cases we were given clear explanations of a very complicated subject by the scientists involved.

Creature comforts were well catered for with tea and coffee breaks and the most delicious buffet lunches, not to mention a fine conference dinner in the splendid surroundings of the Signet Library of Edinburgh.

Tours of the garden and of the extensive ranges of glass houses were fitted in too, in a wonderfully well organised conference. We met many keen rhododendron growers from so many different countries. Our grateful thanks are due to Drs. George Argent and David Chamberlain for all their hard work, friendliness and time given imparting knowledge, well worth travelling the length of Britain for!

TOURS

Valerie Archibold

German Tour – 25th to 29th May 2002

Some 18 members and friends enjoyed a very successful tour of the Gardens and Nurseries of the Ammerland, the growing centre for rhododendrons around Oldenburg, near Hamburg. The group included two from Oregon, USA and four from Moscow, Russia, as well as from around the UK.

We enjoyed the gardens and the hospitality of many famous names, such as Bruns, Hachmann and Hobbie. We were made welcome at the Bremen Botanic Garden and the Oldenburg Castle Garden, as well as at private gardens such as the Maxwald Rhododendron Park and Teufelsmoor.

A full report will appear in the next Year Book.

Spring Botanical Tour 2003 – Belgium

– 30th April to 4th May 2003

The programme has been planned by Mrs Chris Van Pelt, a member of the Belgian Dendrology Society, who will lead the tour. This is a condensed itinerary and interested members should contact the Tour Organiser as below for full details.

A rich variety of gardens are on the itinerary **commencing** with the National Botanic Garden of Belgium, where there will be a guided tour by the curator. After lunch we travel to the north of Flanders to our hotel, a converted 15th Century Priory set in beautiful countryside and forest.

The second day we visit Kalmthout Arboretum. This has been developed into an outstanding collection of trees, concentrating on *rhododendrons* and *acers*. In the afternoon we travel to Essen for a visit to Hemelrik, once a monastery, which now belongs to Jelena de Belder-Kovacic. The arboretum contains the largest private botanical collection in Belgium (together with Herkenrode).

The third day there will be a visit to the private garden of Mr & Mrs Michael Boutin in the nearby village of Vosselaar which has a large collection of *piers*, *rhododendron* (around 300 different species and hybrids) and some remarkable trees. After lunch there will be a visit to the Arboretum of Bokrijk, and later we will probably visit the nearby collection of Mr Tony Suffeleers, an internationally renowned collector of rhododendron species and hybrids.

The fourth day we will visit the beautiful estate of Herkenrode which belongs to the Vicomte Philippe de Spoelberch, President of the Belgian Dendrological Society and a Group since 1990. The 10 hectare garden contains one of the richest collections of trees and shrubs in Belgium. It is also famous for its large collection of Magnolias, some of which may be in flower during our visit. After lunch we visit the garden of Comte et Comtesse d'Ansem-Bourg at Wespelaar.

On the morning of **the fifth day** there will be a visit to the private garden of Antoon Declercq in Nevele, where we shall see around 2000 rhododendrons with other notable shrubs and trees. In the afternoon we will visit the private garden of Albert De Raedt who is a specialist in hardy Ghent Hybrids.

Travel: The best method is being investigated, and travel by train from London Waterloo direct to Brussels is being arranged. However, it may be possible to travel by air or private car, if satisfactory meeting arrangements can be made at the first garden visit.

The cost will be from 700 to 768 Euros, depending on numbers (ca. £460 - £500) excluding travel, lunches, entrance fees and local guides and travel insurance. (Single supp. 270 Euros (ca. £178)).

For full details contact **Mrs Valerie Archibold at Starveacre, Dalwood, E. Devon, Ex13 7HH. Tel: 01404 881221.**

The Magnolia Society International

Members of this Group have been invited join the Society's Tour to New Zealand in September 2003.

The planned tour is from **31st August until 12th or 18th September**, (either 12 or 18 days) starting in Auckland and including many of the best gardens and sights in both the North and South Islands. Visits include Ayrlies, Pukeiti and Mark & Abbie Jury's garden in the North and Dunedin Botanic Garden and Larnach Castle in the South.

The cost will vary according to numbers, but if 30 people join the tour, the cost excluding flights to Auckland will be around NZ\$3,257 (£1007) for the 12 day tour, or NZ\$4,750 (£1,468) for the 18 days tour. (AirNZ flights from London are currently from £811)

Further details can be obtained from **Jim Gardiner, RHS Garden Wisley, Woking, Surrey**, who is seeking people to register their interest as soon as possible.

MEMBERS NOTES

The effect of ferrous sulphate on soil pH

Brian Horrobin

My interest in Rhododendrons goes back twenty years or more when living on the Lincolnshire edge. More specifically our house and garden was built on what felt like a pile of loose limestone. Thus when we bought our first plant – we had made the journey specially to the local garden centre to buy “a red one” and actually came back with Mrs Charles E Pearson – it was immediately consigned to a tub of appropriate compost. And very well it did too as did most of a number of further purchases as the bug started to bite.

A few years on we found ourselves moving to Bury St Edmunds onto Rhododendron growing conditions even more extreme – several hundred metres of porous chalk. The redeeming feature though was a thin layer of clay very locally in and around our garden. However the pH was still 7.0 and the texture varied from putty during the winter to hard unyielding rock in summer. We had to suffer more than the odd “why bother” taunt.

So the container growing continued. But volumes and numbers and the watering started to get out of hand. Losses through root rot were quite regular (don't use dark pots in the sun) and experiments with novel composts resulted in further failures (pine needle leaf mould sounds good but Rhododendrons don't grow in 4 pH medium – add some ground dolomite if you must).

Inevitably all specimens found their way into the garden into a variety of holes dug to all sizes and filled with every possible variation on compost. But the results were not good. Again the watering became an uphill struggle and exploratory excavations around the worst failures revealed that contact between the surrounding clay and fibrous compost were just not good enough for water transmission.

Enlightenment came in a rather unusual way. During a couple of really dry summers - even for east Anglia - not only did the rain water butt give up but the only alternative, tap water, originated in the aquifer conveniently situated down in the chalk. In desperation I tried reducing the pH of tap water by adding a small quantity of ferrous sulphate. It takes a little while to react and settle, usually I left it overnight, but I got a spectacular result anywhere between 7pH and 4pH depending on how much was added. Anyway this technique was used to supplement rainwater for several summers and the results have been quite dramatic with normal growth on all plants. I did have the odd specimen die when using it at too low a pH so now I limit the amount used to achieve just under 6pH.

I think what is happening is that the iron is displacing the calcium in solution precipitating it as insoluble calcium sulphate. It's not as simple as that as this solid is bright yellow in colour and obviously forming some complex salt. However if calcium sulphate is involved the remaining iron in solution will be doing the same thing to dissolved calcium in the soil and as calcium sulphate, or gypsum, is sold as a clay breaker there may be the added benefit of an increase in soil porosity as well as the reduction in pH. Whether the pH reduction is permanent or not I can't really tell. It may be that the effect is similar to that described to explain why Rhododendrons can thrive in the wild in high pH soil so long as there is a high rainfall which continually washes away any dissolved calcium.

I would be interested to hear of any similar experiences members may have had. If anyone tries this be wary of handling ferrous sulphate. Read the instructions on the bag and remember that iron will stain clothing permanently and that the smell will stay on your hands for days. Also it will gradually dissolve any galvanising on your buckets etc so use plastic instead.

Lime tolerant root stocks

– is this the alternative?

Comments from John Harsant, from the Group German Tour

The climate and choice of plants

Three factors, which influence the growing of rhododendrons on the continent, are clear.

The differences in climate between Germany and Great Britain are large – cold winters down to -23°C with the expectation of early morning frosts throughout the year.

The inevitable concentration on hybrids flowering late April and May, bred from “tough” parents.

The markets available for such hybrids are throughout continental Europe and include countries as cold as Sweden and Russia. Most, but not all U.K. hybrids, being too soft for these climates.

It is of interest to note that in the various catalogues the hybrids seem to be listed by reference to the dominant parent and I quote from a sample of these from the Hachmann catalogue; williamsianum, catawbiense, haematodes, dichroanthum, yakushmanum, dauricum, calophytum, calostrotum etc. etc.

Soil Acidity

Much of Germany has soil, which verges on or is alkaline and is not hospitable to many rhododendrons. As a consequence, considerable efforts have been made to produce a rootstock, which is better able to survive in such conditions.

A number of growers have grouped together to find such a stock and have produced a group of stocks under the general name of INKARHO. This is believed to be a series of crosses between Fortunecii and Cunninghams White.

The rootstock is subject to plant breeder's legislation and plants sold on this rootstock command a premium. It is difficult to give absolute figures but it looks like about £1 a plant.

Numerous trials have taken place and are continuing to determine the effectiveness of the rootstock and in certain conditions, where the soil is to a degree alkaline, there certainly seems to be an advantage. I have seen no evidence however to show that there is any advantage in using this root stock for plants which will be grown in soils which already favour the growth of rhododendrons.

Acidity in General

Having listened at length to the German growers and the relevance of the INKARHO root stock, my mind has been concentrated in this direction and in particular, with various plants in my own garden which are not growing as well as they might. Further investigation has shown that those plants, which are not too happy in acid soil, need appropriate attention.

Diseases

We discussed in particular the newly reported but established in places for some years, disease which variously attacks oak trees, viburnums and rhododendrons. It was difficult to discover the extent of this disease in Europe and nurserymen certainly are not anxious to give it a high profile for fear of restrictions to contain the disease.

It appears there are no restrictions in place at the present time, and indeed, it was a joy to see one member of the group going through Customs clutching a large azalea close to them. It would be a very sad day if restrictions were to be placed and therefore I think the threat of this disease should be taken seriously in order that a full knowledge is obtained to enable any possible problems to be contained. (See the Test Report on Inkharo Rhododendrons and Lime Tolerance, in *Gardening Which*, May 2002. Ed.)

CAMELLIAS

Jennifer Trehane

Camellia Pruning at Caerhays Castle and Heligan Gardens

The *x williamsii* camellias are having well deserved attention this year, with the camellia event held at the March RHS show and the celebration of the origination of 'Donation' at Borde Hill the following week.

The huge plants of *x williamsii* camellias dotting the hillside above the Williams family's castle in Cornwall are a testament to the original hybridising work done by J.C. Williams and his head gardener in the 1920's. Covered in bloom from tip to roots in early Spring, they are truly landscape shrubs, especially where gardening on a grand scale is the order of the day. However, since gardening is all about visual appeal and vigorous camellias can get thoroughly out of hand, even in large gardens, the time comes when action has to be taken.



Recovery from pruned old wood

Jennifer Trehane

At Caerhays they have been tackling the problem in stages over the last few years, — with a chain saw. Many of the oldest camellias have been cut almost to the ground and they are responding brilliantly. Those that were pruned in this way a couple of years ago already had some flower buds this Spring on the vigorous young growth that had emerged from the bare trunks. This is especially noticeable on the plants beside the main driveway through the woods. The more compact bushes, with foliage right down to ground level, which will result, will also be welcome cover for the pheasants which were crowding the garden when I was there in early February.

In complete contrast are the camellias at Heligan. Not a *x williamsii* to be seen. The collection there is all *C. japonica*, almost all nineteenth century, with no planting of more recent cultivars, as befits a garden which is very conscious of its origins in that period. (Most have lost their identity and it is a challenge to try to put names to them).

Here some of the camellias crowd over the paths, their thick trunks often spreading out many metres, trying to take their leaves towards the light. In this much smaller garden the management has been very cautious, very conscious of the need for management but anxious to keep the 'old' effect. Pruning is therefore being done in stages, with the sawing out of branches bearing almost entirely yellow leaves, or showing disease symptoms on the bark, being done first. Signs of rotting where limbs have torn off are signs of past neglect and give rise to some difficult decisions now. Just how much should be removed to get back to healthy wood?

Some of the lower, very long, woody branches with just a few flowering branches near their tips are coming out next. Some already have young shoots growing from bare bark near their bases, which need to see the light in order for them to have a long term future. It is an easy decision to prune out old growth beyond them.

Should some of the really tall branches also be taken out? That is a much more difficult decision.

Honey Fungus (*Armillaria mellea*) was causing yellowing on some branches at Heligan, as conducting vessels in the stems became blocked by fungal mycelium. We also found a piece of labelling wire still attached to one such stem, leaving a marked indentation all round it. "Garotted" as one of the young gardeners so accurately put it, all circulation cut off. A tidy cut at the scene of the injury is planned, to finish the deed and allow full recovery of the rest of the bush.

With so many camellias now maturing into large bushes in gardens up and down the country, hard winter pruning of old bushes is, I'm sure, going to be seen increasingly often in the future.

RHODODENDRONS

Kenneth Cox

New Rhododendron Species

R. dekatanum Cowan 1937 H3-4

Height 0.60-1.20m, compact with age. Bark light reddish-brown. Young growth scaly, not hairy. **Leaves** to 5 x 3.3cm, broadly ovate-oblong, apex often emarginate, lower surface scales very unequal, contiguous to their own diameter apart. **Inflorescence** 2-3-flowered. **Corolla** broadly campanulate, 2-2.6cm long, bright lemon yellow. Calyx 6-8mm. **Distribution** S. Tibet, (Ludlow & Sherriff 1360), in rhododendron and bamboo forest.

Although the name will be new to most people, this is not, in fact, a new species at all. We have grown this for many years, acquired from Muncaster Castle, N.W. England and distributed a few plants as *R. sulfureum* aff. Steve Hootman, director of the Rhododendron species foundation, has told us that it is also well distributed under this name in the Pacific northwest.



R. dekatanum

Kenneth Cox

My father Peter Cox was looking again at the plant a few years ago in flower and realised that it matched the type specimen of *R. dekatanum*, collected by Ludlow and Sherriff (L&S 1360) at

Natrapma on the Bhutan-Tibet border at 11,500ft in 1936. It is closely related to *R. sulfureum* but differs in its leaf shape, the greater density of scales on the leaf lower surface, the larger calyx and the larger, more open corolla. It has fine showy yellow flowers and attractive bronze new leaves. It has proved hardy at Glendoick grown in the shelter of a wall, but it flowers in February-March, so is frosted some years. It should be excellent plant for western Scotland, Cumbria, Wales, Ireland and the south west of England. It is a valuable addition to the range of low yellows for moderate climates.

R. lacteum and its relatives: new introductions.

As far as we know, all the *R. lacteum* hitherto in cultivation is from numerous collections on the Cangshan Mountains, behind Dali in northwest Yunnan. Discovered by French collectors and introduced to cultivation by George Forrest in 1910, it has always been a tricky plant to please. Lionel de Rothschild used its perfect rounded trusses of yellow flowers extensively in his breeding program. Many of his hybrids can be seen in British and American collections: the best known are probably 'Mariloo' and 'Lionel's Triumph'. These hybrids are also rather hard to please and prone to powdery mildew infection. *R. lacteum*, and probably its hybrids too, seems to require extremely acid soil and performs better as a grafted plant. Most people find the Cangshan plants are rather prone to chlorosis and seldom have perfect foliage. In recent times, many plants were distributed from SBEC seed and subsequent expeditions. These have turned out to have both blotched and unblotched flowers and are as fine as the earlier introductions, which include the almost unobtainable 'Blackhills' E.C.C. form.

Two expeditions, Alan Clark & co. in 1994 and the other with Peter Cox, Peter Hutchison and Steve Hootman in 1995 introduced *R. lacteum* from a completely new area for the species in North Eastern Yunnan, close to the Sichuan border. These plants are now quite mature, though we have not seen the flowers yet, but what is significant is their relative ease of culture compared to the Cangshan plants. In our open-ground nursery beds at Glendoick, growing in our standard medium with soil mixed with 25% peat and bark, the plants are vigorous, healthy with larger, much deeper green leaves than we are used to. Perhaps these new introductions (C&H 7164) will give us an easy-to-cultivate form of the species.

Four closely related species *R. lacteum*, *R. beesianum*, *R. dignabile* and *R. wightii* form a natural alliance within subsection Taliensia. It could be argued that they should have their own subsection. What they all have in common in cultivation is that they are quite hard to please and seem to do better grafted rather than on their own roots. *R. beesianum* at its best is a magnificent plant with handsome large leaves and very showy full trusses of pink or white flowers. I have seen lots of it in full flower on Bei Ma Shan in Yunnan. In cultivation a few gardens such as Blackhills grow it very well. *R. dignabile* is essentially *R. beesianum* from further west and without the layer of indumentum on the leaf under-surface. I can claim to have been the first to introduce this species in 1995 and 1996 from the Doshong La and other passes in south east Tibet. In the wild it was just as spectacular as *R. beesianum* and here and there were yellow natural hybrids with *R. wardii*. The final member of this group is *R. wightii* from Bhutan and Nepal. This is not the well-known lop-sided trussed vigorous plant grown under this name for almost 100 years. J.G. Millias in his monster tome of 1917 declares it a hybrid and so it undoubtedly is, probably with *R. falconeri*. A fine garden plant but it really should be given a cultivar name to distinguish it from the wild species. As it almost certainly originated at Littleworth, this garden should probably be used in the name: I suggest something with the 'of Littleworth' epithet. The real *R. wightii* is a very different plant and very difficult to establish from seed as a very high percentage die off. As a grafted plant we find it quite easy and vigorous. It has somewhat translucent yellow flowers in early Spring and sticky buds. Indeed these sticky buds are an identifying character shared by 3 out of the 4 species treated here, the exception being *R. lacteum*.

This group of species, while not always the easiest to please, are very fine and with a bit of extra effort make good garden plants.

Kenneth Cox ©2002

MAGNOLIAS

Mike Robinson

“Them Thar Yallers”

Imagine a *denudata* magnolia with the flowers not of white but of yellow crowding the branches and shining in the sun light on one of those glorious clear spring days. Stretch the imagination further and consider a magnolia with the deepest daffodil yellow flowers with green or orange shades - flowering on the naked branches - with frost proof flowers - with large flowers - floriferous on compact growth - with foliage of a good colour - even a “yellow” *Campbellii*?

It was probably the photographs of American hybrids ‘Elizabeth’ and ‘Yellow Bird’ in the 1984/5 yearbook that started the excitement about yellow magnolias, so ten years later, with so many “yellow” magnolias registered and many more new hybrids on trial, has what has actually been achieved justified that early enthusiasm?

Judgement of what has actually been achieved is hampered by a number of things - the lack of an objective evaluation of a complete collection of the new yellows growing under UK conditions - the registration of new yellows seemingly every week - and the hype of enthusiastic growers and nurserymen over the Atlantic in particular. Among the seemingly endless procession of new registrations some taxa inevitably turn out to be disappointing. Names such as “Ultimate Yellow” do not help either.



M. ‘Honey Liz’

Philippe de Spoelberch

The latest craze is for *magnolia* ‘Sunburst’ (Woodsman x Goldstar) which has flower buds of an intense green, but the flowers emerge with the leaves, and while being a good yellow the flowers are not overlarge.

The clear conclusion today is that it is still too early to be definite about which are the best yellow magnolias, but there are a few that are excellent in British conditions. What follows, therefore, is a subjective assessment of what is both good and available, and an “ultimate” recommendation as to what to do next!

How good are they?

Of course the yellow colour comes from the species *acuminata* and its variety *subcordata*, the latter being yellower and of more compact habit. Indeed, for those who want a good *subcordata* ‘Miss Honeybee’ is excellent flowering in Spring and often again in Autumn. The flowers are the same colour as ‘Butterflies’, and not much smaller. They are sometimes hidden in the foliage but the overall effect is good. There are reputedly even better forms of *subcordata* available in the USA.

It should be remembered that in the USA the hybridisation programme to give yellows has had hardiness in view as well as flower colour and size, so most of the yellow taxa flower later than *denudata* and may be more frost resistant

In the 1981/2 yearbook Phil Savage introduced ‘Elizabeth’ as a precocious yellow magnolia, and the photographs in the 1984/5 yearbook show a flower of a darker shade than ‘Yellow Bird’. Photographs can be so misleading! The temptation to publish the best photograph taken under the best possible lighting conditions is irresistible. Though understandable, this is unfortunate, as in the UK at least ‘Elizabeth’ is not yellow, and the flowers fade as they open. However this is a wonderful magnolia, with flowers having beautiful shades of cream throughout their life. It forms a shapely tree and has reached a height of 7m after 15 years at Hindleap. I recommend it to all as a thoroughly first class garden plant.

‘Yellow Bird’ has flowers with only 6 tepals of a greeny yellow, and, unlike the other *brooklynensis* hybrids the flowers open just as the leaves are unfolding - the others flower with the leaves already completely open. It is a small tree - slow growing with me - and will appeal to those who like the flower colour, which should be seen before purchasing. A fine but not outstanding variety.

The photograph of ‘Butterflies’ in the 1991 yearbook is mouth watering, and ‘Butterflies’ is still one of the top three most popular magnolias in the USA. Here it has been disappointing. The flowers are small and, though a good yellow, don’t have the substance or poise of ‘Elizabeth’ or *denudata*. The problem has been made worse because there appear to be two clones in circulation in this country, one with smaller and more strap like tepals - quite nice but nothing like the 1991 photograph. This may be magnolia ‘Stellar Acclaim’. My unhelpful advice is not to purchase ‘Butterflies’ without having seen it, and preferably the plant you are getting, in flower, and you may then not buy it at all.

‘Sundance’ is a pleasant cream with, according to the literature, large flowers. It is said to be floriferous, but the plant I purchased 10 years ago as ‘Sundance’ still hasn’t flowered, so I cannot make a fair judgement.

‘Yellow Fever’ has attractive flowers of a similar shade to, but smaller than, ‘Elizabeth’, but with a pink tinge externally. It is a vigorous upright tree in John Hilliard’s garden in Crawley. A nice plant with flowers of a reasonable size.

‘Yellow Lantern’ is another pale yellow, the flowers appearing with the leaves. It seems to be fast growing when young, though it is said to form only a small tree. It certainly has the advantage of being fastigiate, and will surely find a place in many gardens for this alone.

‘Goldstar’ is different, being an *acuminata* crossed with *stellata*. It has cream flowers of the stellata shape and size and with 14 tepals. It has excellent reddish young foliage but should not be expected to stay as small a plant as the average *stellata*: the plant at Wisley is a small tree growing half a metre each year.

All of the above are available from at least three suppliers in the current Plantfinder. If I could have only one it would still be Elizabeth.

Now to the less available but desirable, and a few newcomers:-

'Lois' is a backcross of an 'Elizabeth' sister seedling with *acuminata*. It was spotted by Maurice Foster in the annex to the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, introduced to Europe by him, and is now becoming available here. It is intermediate between 'Elizabeth' and 'Butterflies' in flower colour and size, and being truly precocious in its flowering is probably the closest approach yet to the ideal of a yellow *denudata* type magnolia. Highly recommended.

The appeal of the other *brooklynensis* hybrids is highly subjective – I like 'Eva Maria' with its curious mixture of yellow pink and purple in the flowers, and it flowers over a long period. 'Hattie Carthan' is similar but with mostly yellow flowers, and has occasional flowers throughout the summer. 'Woodsman' is dark purple with yellow – one either likes or hates it. They are occasionally available, but don't buy without having seen the variety in flower somewhere first.

Much better than reading my prejudices about these magnolias, however, would be to view them all, and others less known to cultivation in the UK. This appears to be a recommendation of the impossible, but it is not so.

All that has to be done is to travel just across the Channel. The magnolia gardens in the Ticino are well known, but the climatic conditions there lead to misleading differences in the colour of magnolia flowers, so one has to look closer to home. Wim Rutten's nursery and garden in Holland, and Philippe de Spoelberch's collection at Herkenrode and at his arboretum at Wespelaar in Belgium give us just what is needed.



M. 'Banana Split'

Philippe de Spoelberch

Philippe has made it his business to evaluate new hybrids whatever their origin, and in his extensive collections of acer and rhododendron there are 1200 magnolias with 200 different taxa. In particular he has a collection of over 30 named yellows and many more seedlings on trial. A few of the outstanding hybrids have been released for propagation to Wim, and are slowly appearing in other UK nurseries. Of these, 'Daphne', 'Banana Split' and 'Honey Liz' are outstanding and should produce flowers of the colours shown in British gardens. 'Limelight' is another promising clone from Philippe.

It is because the gardens in Belgium are so exciting that the Group is organising its Spring Visits to Belgium in May 2003, when the magnolias and rhododendrons should be at their best. So much better than seeing photographs of yellow flowers is to see the flowers themselves.

Do join us: it will be an unforgettable experience.

LETTERS

Bud Blast

Dear Mr Foster,

Dec. 2001

I have been reading the Bulletin and notice that no one answered your query about Bud Blast, so I thought I would write and tell you that here at Broadleas it has never been a problem. After discussing it with my gardener, Carl Bishop, it seems he only knows of one rhododendron that suffers from it every year and that is *R. 'Diane'*, (*campylocarpum* x 'Mrs Lindsay Smith') according to my records, which may not be very reliable! We think the reason that we suffer so little from bud blast may be because we spray twice a year with Nimrod-T against powdery mildew, which we do suffer from. Could the Nimrod-t affect bud blast?

For your information we have about 100 specie rhododendrons and about the same number of Hybrids.

Lady Anne Cowdray

Devizes, Wiltshire

Dear Editor,

Dec. 2001

Returning to England in 1979 after a spell overseas,

I found that a specimen of *R. 'Fastuosum Flore Pleno'*, planted ten years previously, had grown to flowering size but was suffering severely from bud blast. It seemed to me at the time that since this condition recurs, year after year, the infection must reside in the plant tissue, and that removing buds would be ineffectual. On the other hand there was a reasonable possibility that the fungus might be confined to the upper parts of the shoots. Accordingly I cut off the top growth to within an inch or so above the soil level and consigned it to the bonfire. It was several years before flower buds re-appeared, but these were completely free from bud blast, and been the case up to the present.

On the face of it this treatment seems rather drastic but in fact the hardy hybrids usually respond well to cutting back, and regrow as a nicely symmetrical plant. So in the end there may be a double advantage to be gained.

John Lancaster

Balcombe Forest, Sussex

Bud Damage

Dear Editor,

I was interested in Lady Anne Cowdray's letter on bud damage to her *R. rex* and *R. hodgsonii*. We have similar damage on *Magnolia 'Leonard Messel'*, situated near dense shrubs. So far we are not troubled by squirrels, probably because our garden is new with very little tree cover, as yet. We think our problem is caused by birds, most likely sparrows, who like the cover of the nearby shrubs. This year we covered *M. 'Leonard Messel'* with dark cotton, which seemed to do the trick, but not to be outdone, the culprits damaged buds on nearby Camellias and *R. yakushimanum*. Next year we shall try cotton on all nearby special shrubs.

Mrs Joyce Bunce

Somerset

R. ponticum

I reproduce below an exchange of letters between Peter & Kenneth Cox and the BBC over the television programme 'State of the Planet' and its reference to 'poisoning the earth' by rhododendrons.

Dear David Attenborough,

As two of the world's foremost experts on rhododendrons, my father and I would like to complain strongly about the content of the 29th November BBC programme in the 'State of the Planet' series in which you claimed that rhododendrons poisoned the earth.

Introduced plants are indeed a problem in almost every country in the world and the programme is entirely justified in drawing this to the attention of the television-viewing public. *Rhododendron ponticum* is indeed a major environmental problem in milder and wetter parts of the British Isles and we have written extensively about the dangers of planting it in some areas. However, we have two major objections to the content of the programme in the way it discussed rhododendrons.

1. There are 900 species of Rhododendron. Only 1 species *R. ponticum* has had any significant impact on the environment in the UK. The programme made no such distinction and implied that all rhododendrons were problematic. This is very much not the case. It is rather like using the example of one disease-causing bacterium to claim that all bacteria are harmful.
2. It is stated that rhododendrons 'poison the soil for a period of 7 years' through the function of an associated fungus. With 50 years experience between us, this is the first time we have ever heard such a claim. And all evidence we have observed indicates that this is patently untrue. In the wilds of the Himalayas and China, rhododendrons are almost always found growing in mixed forest or moorland in association with many other plants. On moorland, rhododendrons grow in association with *Primula*, *Meconopsis*, *Lilium*, *Cassiope*, *Gaultheria*, *Lloydia*, *Salix*, *Berberis* and many perennials and shrubs. In woodland, they grow with *Picea*, *Abies*, *Larix*, *Quercus*, *Tsuga*, *Clematis*, *Berberis*, *Deutsia*, Bamboo, *Rosa* and hundreds of other genera. The plants grow cheek by jowl and there has never been any claim made for rhododendron roots affecting the soil in any way. I would like to know exactly what evidence you use for your claims. While it is well known that plants such as Eucalyptus do use excretions from their roots to inhibit other plant growth, such mechanism does not exist in rhododendrons.

The BBC prides itself on accuracy. Indeed the following extract from the BBC producer guidelines on the subject: "all the relevant facts and information should be weighed to get at the truth of what is reported or described". In the case of your programme, this was not, in our opinion, followed.

You are, I'm sure, aware of your status as a powerful voice on the BBC. We are both therefore greatly dismayed to see such wild and unsubstantiated claims being made. Interestingly, on the BBC's own gardening website there is a very balanced and accurate assessment of the *R. ponticum* debate which, while recognising that this particular species "is considered a pest by conservationists" does not make wild claims for the rest of the genus.

While you may not like rhododendrons, many people do and many people's lives are dependent on growing and looking after them. Your claims about rhododendrons were nothing better than irresponsible and unsubstantiated scaremongering which will have caused a great deal of damage to the rhododendron business and many gardeners feel unnecessarily guilty about the plants in their garden. Rhododendrons are a significant genus of ornamental plants, widely grown in historically important collections in this country and your programme has dealt most unfairly with them.

Yours sincerely,

Kenneth & Peter Cox

Glendoick Gardens,
Perth, Scotland.

BBC Programme complaints Unit

State of the Planet, BBC1, 29th November 2000

Further to Dina Gold's letter of 22nd December, I am writing to let you know that we have now managed to complete our investigation into the matter you raised. In the course of our enquiries we have consulted Dr David Chamberlain of the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, and Dr Rod Gritten, Ecologist with the Snowdonia National Park, who acted as adviser to the programme-makers.

I can sympathise with your concerns. I note, however, that you accept *R. ponticum* is a major problem in milder and wetter parts of the British Isles, and that the status of this variety as a pest, and the fact that wild growth in this country consists almost entirely of it, are confirmed by the extract you quoted from the BBC website. I think the fact that it was this form of growth, not artificial cultivation, which was being talked about was evident from the programme. The theme was how the natural environment can be damaged by alien species which have "infiltrated some of our seemingly unspoilt wilderness", and the location under examination in this section was clearly an example of such an area. I do not believe the programme misled the audience about the properties of rhododendrons in general or implied that those growing in their natural habitat caused damage to surrounding vegetation.

Turning to the more complex issue of the alleged poisonous fungus, Dr Chamberlain has advised us that *R. ponticum* can indeed have a severe effect on natural vegetation, as was illustrated in **State of the Planet**. In a natural woodland setting such as that illustrated, he says *R. ponticum* suppresses competitors by casting deep shade, altering the soil and exerting an allelopathic effect. While he knows of no evidence that the allelopathic effect is caused by the mycorrhizal fungus which is associated with all rhododendrons, he does not specifically exclude that possibility. There is, however, an allelopathic effect from *R. ponticum* which is independent of the fungus. The salient point, on which both Dr Gritten and Dr Chamberlain agree, is that in the wild *R. ponticum* does inhibit the growth of other plants. So, although I feel the explanation given in the programme could have been more cautiously phrased, I do not feel the essential point about the behaviour of this variety when growing wild in Britain was inaccurate.

In these circumstances, I do not feel able to uphold your complaint. Thank you, though, for writing to me and allowing me the opportunity to address your concerns. I hope you will at least feel they have been carefully considered.

Yours sincerely,

Fraser Steel

Head of programme complaints, BBC.

BRANCH REPORTS

New Forest Branch

Robin Whiting

Our first visit in late March was to the Sir Harold Hillier Garden and Arboretum. The curator Mike Buffin escorted us round the garden showing us some very fine magnolias including a superb Vulcan. In Brentley woodland under the rare oak *Quercus rysophylea* was a lovely *R. sherriffii*. A truss from this plant had deservedly won first prize at the early Rhododendron competition, a week before our visit. Further on in the woodland, was another prizewinner *R. sperabile wehlsiense*.

After seeing more fine species rhododendrons, Mike took us to the Ghurka Memorial Garden. The flowers on *R. barbatum* were past their best but a *thomsonii* grown from a Roy Lancaster seed collection was outstanding.

The second visit was to a private garden in Broadstone, Dorset. This garden was started about 50 years ago, slopes to the south and is furnished with a good collection of the older hybrid rhododendrons, and other fine shrubs. A small stream flows through the lower part of the garden.

This provided an ideal location for some splendid candelabra primulas and other water side plants under the shade of acers and the rhododendrons. A superb 'Royal Mail' was displaying itself to perfection.

Wessex branch

Miranda Gunn

Good news for Camellia lovers.

Graham Ferguson has been given about 50 choice named varieties of camellia, in 10 litre pots by Derek Strauss, following the closure of Stonehurst Nurseries. These will be on sale at the Wessex Branch Members Afternoon at Ramster on Sunday October 27, at a price of £18 with half the proceeds going to the Group. Graham is kindly going to over-winter any plants that are left, with a view to offering them to Members at another location in the Spring.

Norfolk Branch

Jane Idiens

The Norfolk Branch had two meetings this season. The first was a visit to Sandringham Gardens, on 23rd May. Over 30 enthusiasts enjoyed a tour led by Martin Woods, the Head Gardener. It is a fine, mature garden, with many fine trees, some unusual, including a number of different magnolias. The planting around the lake was looking very fine. Martin mentioned a point of interest to sufferers from honey fungus: in one particular bed which had the problem, Pieris were planted some years ago, and so far they are thriving.

He also took us across the road into the Walled Garden - an area not normally visited. It is the old kitchen garden. The scale of the area enclosed thus is very extensive - far too large for a present day undertaking. It was decided to keep the overall shape and layout, which is impressive enough, and to put open areas down to grass paddocks.

On 11th June a smaller party visited a private 11 acre garden overlooking the sea, at West Runton, by kind permission of Mr & Mrs C. Clark. This dramatic site, full of ravines which provide shelter from northerly winds, was laid out and planted in the 60s and 70s, by Dr. & Mrs J.Chappell, and much of the original planting survives. I was fortunate to obtain Mrs Chappell's original plan and plant list, and she was able to be present. Members who were so inclined could indulge in some detective work, to establish what remained. This was not an easy task, but we did have some modest success. An early season meant that some of the garden's chief glories were over, but some photographs taken in May gave members some idea of what had been.

Peak Branch

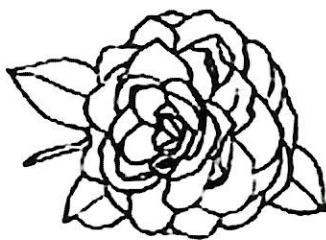
David Farnes

Our early spring meeting on 15th March gave members a pre-season chance to view the Lea Rhododendron Gardens, and be shown round by Jonathan Tye. The gardens have expanded and developed over the last fifty years well beyond the confines of a disused gritstone quarry. More than twenty different rhododendron species and hybrids were in flower in the bright morning sunshine.

In the afternoon we were shown around the Chatsworth House glasshouses by head gardener Ian Webster who generously gave up his whole afternoon to show us areas of the estate not open to the public. The camellias were at their very best, having provided a multitude of blooms at the RHS Early Camellia Show a few days previously (and won many prizes for the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire). The areas shown included the far woodland where we were astonished to see some enormous rhododendrons, including several splendid *R. barbatum* in full flower

The recent highlight of the year has been the celebration of Mrs Tye's (senior) 100th birthday on August 17th. She was presented with a suitable card with messages from 35 members and friends.

*Camellias from the purest
white to the richest red.*



CAMELLIA GROVE

GOOD RANGE OF HYBRIDS & SPECIES,
AUTUMN AND SPRING FLOWERING FORMS
LARGE COLLECTION OF SPECIMEN PLANTS

MAIL ORDER, PLANT CENTRE & EXPORT
SEND 2 X 1 STAMPS FOR AVAILABILITY LIST

WE ARE OPEN BY APPOINTMENT ONLY FOR OUR
UNDIVIDED ATTENTION & ADVICE,

Tel: 01403 891143 Fax 891336

MARKET GARDEN, CYDER FARM, LOWER BEEDING,
HORSHAM, W.SUSSEX RH13 6PP.

EMAIL: CGRCMG@HORTIC.COM

ONLINE ORDERING AT:

WWW.CAMELLIA-GROVE.COM

*Rhododendrons & Azaleas
for the connoisseur*

LODER PLANTS



OVER 800
HYBRIDS & SPECIES
RHODODENDRONS
PLUS
200 FORMS OF EVERGREEN AZALEAS,
150 FORMS OF DECIDUOUS AZALEAS
LARGE COLLECTION OF SPECIMEN PLANTS

MAIL ORDER, PLANT CENTRE & EXPORT
SEND 2 X 1 STAMPS FOR AVAILABILITY LIST

WE ARE OPEN BY APPOINTMENT ONLY FOR OUR
UNDIVIDED ATTENTION & ADVICE

Tel: 01403 891412 Fax 891336

MARKET GARDEN, CYDER FARM, LOWER BEEDING,
HORSHAM, W.SUSSEX RH13 6PP.

EMAIL: LPRCMG@HORTIC.COM

ONLINE ORDERING AT:

WWW.RHODODENDRON.S.COM

Our informal association with the Rhododendron Group of the Northern Horticultural Society (Harlow Carr) continues on 12th October, with a joint lecture when Mr Jim Fuller recounts his adventures in Bhutan. In early May, two of our members joined the Northern Group on their spring garden tour, thus furthering our links with them.

NOTICES

Joey Warren

Minutes of the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING held on Tuesday 23rd April.

Chairman – Mr M.C.Foster

There were 19 members in attendance.

Apologies were received from Mrs V.Archibold, Mr C.E.J.Brabin, Mr D.N.Farnes, Mr J.D.Harsant, Dr R.H.L.Jack, Mr J.Sanders and Mr I.T.Stokes.

Minutes of Annual General Meeting 2001, which were published in the August 2001 Bulletin, No.77, were agreed and were signed by the Chairman.

Chairman's Report – Copy enclosed.

Treasurer's Report – Mr Walker passed round copies of the Accounts and the Balance Sheet for the year ended 31st October 2001. (Copy enclosed)

It had been another satisfactory year for The Group. The surplus of just over £3,000 compared with just over £1,200 in the year 2000.

Expenditure on plant collections appears less than last year because it excludes more recent plantings, but it is actually about the same. There has been no additional expenditure in the period and the cash position is healthy. Subscriptions remained steady, though it must be realised that ours is an ageing membership, and the new promotion on membership is very timely. Seed sales have increased compared with the previous year, but there is now less stock of seeds. The Group needs to continue to develop membership growth in order to maintain its satisfactory position.

Election of Officers and Committee Members – The Secretary had received by post 38 completed voting forms which confirm the Officers in post, and re-elected Mr John D.Harsant and Mr Alastair T.Stephenson to the Committee for a further 3-year term.

Appointment of Auditors – The RHS Auditors were re-appointed.

Any Other Business –

1. The John Bond Plant Collection at Abbotsbury Gardens

A report has been published in Gardener's World Magazine, The Garden and also in the Journal of The Institute of Horticulture.

2. The Rhododendron Show The future of the Rhododendron Show was discussed. Mr Hillier told the meeting that the RHS are planning to move some Shows out of London, and that next

year the Main Rhododendron Show will be held in Bournemouth on 11th/12th May 2003, which is a weekend. The June, July and August Shows are already out of London. The Early Rhododendron Show will be on Tuesday/Wednesday, 4th/5th March 2003 at Vincent Square. The Daffodil Society have decided to hold their Competition at Wisley.

Date of Next Annual General Meeting – 29th April 2003.

N.B. Please see the enclosed loose sheet for nominations to the committee for the next AGM in April 2003.

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Miranda Gunn

It's that time of year again already, and **subscriptions are due on November 1st.**

For yet another year there has been **NO INCREASE** in your subscription, it remains at £15 for members in UK and Europe, and £17.50 for the rest of the World.

Full details and methods of payment are listed on the enclosed separate sheet.



GLENDIOICK™
GARDENS LIMITED

Glendoick, Perth PH2 7NS, Scotland

70 page colour catalogue and colour price list available now. Plants can be collected or sent worldwide. October-1st April. Send £2 for a copy.

EXCITING ITEMS THIS YEAR INCLUDE:

Newly collected in south east Tibet, *R. lanatoides* and for the first time, *R. dignabile*. Two fine new plants for indoors or milder gardens, the yellow *R. leptoclodon* from Vietnam and *R. dekatanum*. We also grow all sorts of wonderful plants such as Camellias, *Sorbus*, *Nomocharis*, *Meconopsis*, Lilies, *Kalmia latifolia*, *Omphalogramma*, etc etc.

2 NEW BOOKS AVAILABLE THIS YEAR:

The Encyclopedia of Rhododendron Species – (Second Edition)
by Peter A. Cox & Kenneth N.E. Cox

Due to popular demand, a **Second Edition** has been published featuring all of the original material as well as **three additional pages** featuring new species introduced since 1997. These include *R. monanthum*, *R. platypodum*, *R. miniatum*, *R. gongshanense* and several others.

Price £75 plus postage. £6.50 (UK) £8.50 (Europe and rest of the world.)

FRANK KINGDON WARD'S RIDDLE OF THE TSANGPO GORGES

New edition, Edited by Kenneth Cox, Antique Collector's Club, 2001

Original text by Frank Kingdon Ward, edited by Kenneth Cox.
Additional material by Kenneth Cox, Ken Storm Jr. and Ian Baker.

Price £35 plus £5.50 (UK), £7.50 (foreign) postage & packing.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS – Autumn 2002 and Spring 2003

Date	Organiser/branch	Event	Contact
October			
Oct 6th	Cornwall Garden Soc.	Plant Sale	Joey Warren
Oct. 17–20th	Group/ICS	Autumn Weekend in Cornwall	Alun Edwards
Oct. 27th	Wessex	Members' afternoon at Ramster	Miranda Gunn
November			
Nov. 2nd	South East	Lecture – Archie Skinner “Beautiful plants in beautiful gardens”	Mike Robinson
Nov. 9th	South West	Plant sale, lunch and lecture by Dr David Chamberlain.	Alun Edwards
Nov. 12th	Norfolk	Lecture on garden design, Tim Leese.	Jane Idiens
Nov. 16th	Wessex	Lecture – Deciduous Azaleas	Malcolm Nash
Nov. 16th	New Forest	Lecture - M. Baron, South East Tibet	Martin Gates
Nov. 19th	Group	Executive Committee	Joey Warren
2003			
March			
Mar. 6-9th	ICS	Annual Congress & Tours, Jinhua, China	ICS
April			
April 5th	South East	Plant sale and silent auction.	Mike Robinson
April 11-13th	RHS	Plain Camellia Competition, Bournemouth	
April 27th	South East	Annual Show	Mike Robinson
April 27th	Wessex	Visit to members' gardens	Malcolm Nash
April 29th	Group	Group AGM & Executive Committee	Joey Warren
April 29-30th	RHS	Main Rhododendron Competition	
April 30-May 4th	Group	Botanical Tour to Belgium	Valerie Archibold
May			
May 1-4th	ARS	Annual Convention, Olympia, Washington.	ARS
May 31st	South East	Ghent Azalea Day at Sheffield Park & High Beeches.	Mike Robinson
June			
June 1st	Wessex	Annual Show at Ramster	Miranda Gunn

The Tour to Germany

See the brief report under ‘TOURS’ on page 3



The Group at Hachmann's Nursery.
Centre: Herr Holger Hachmann



The Group enjoyed the hospitality of Elisabeth Hobbie, seen here with one of her father's several unnamed *R. wardii* x *discolor* hybrids growing at her nursery.

Photos John Rawling