



# *The Rhododendron, Camellia & Magnolia Group*

THE ROYAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

BULLETIN - 91

[www.rhodogroup-rhs.org](http://www.rhodogroup-rhs.org)

JULY 2006

## CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Mike Robinson

### Chairman's Report to the AGM 13<sup>th</sup> June 2006

The Group membership has slightly increased this year, but continues to hover about the 800 mark. Our new membership secretary, Rupert Eley, has worked very hard to achieve this, and we are particularly grateful to him and to Pam Hayward, who has spent many hours chasing up those who are tardy in renewing their membership. It is important to streamline this process, and plans to do this will be debated at this AGM.

Martin Gates has again done sterling work as treasurer, and it will be seen that the Group's reserves have risen once again. Profit from the Seed Exchange has been good, and one of our major financial outlays - the cost of producing the year book - has fallen. Sales of publications have thrived, largely because of Pam Hayward's adroitness in negotiating special deals on new books with publishers.

The financial position enables us to consider reducing the subscription temporarily if a way to streamline collecting it can be found.

It is too soon to assess the effect of introducing the payment of travelling expenses for committee members.

Thanks to more very hard work by Chip Lima, the seed exchange has prospered this year even in the absence of any new collections by Alan Clark. We are continuing to look for means of reducing our dependence on one collector, and were pleased to be able to subscribe to Keith Rushforth's 2005 expedition to NE India. The new approach of dividing the job of sorting and labelling seed on the one hand, and its distribution on the other, has proved a success and has permitted the seed list to be updated through the season on the website for the first time.

The increasing number of regulations affecting both collection and distribution of wild collected and other seed is beginning to be a worry: however at present there appear to be few problems for members outside the United States. Chris Weddell at Wisley is assisting us by providing up to date information on, for example, CITES regulations. Members should watch the bulletin to see if there any developments affecting them.

*continued on page 2*



Magnolia 'Elizabeth' at Dartshill Gdn., British Columbia.

See report on page 5.

Photo: The Editor

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The Group website has been completely re-written, and is more attractive, with much faster download speeds, and space to add more content has thus been created. The number of members contributing to the site, and the number using it, however, remain somewhat disappointing, even though the number of 'silver surfers' is said to be increasing. Ways of promoting and adding to the site need to be considered.

The Group's publications continue to thrive. The Bulletin is now established as an attractive and reliable way of providing topical information, views and photographs, and the yearbook maintains its traditional purpose and high standards of scholarship. This year it contained more pages than ever, and this was achieved at less cost. The revenue contributed from advertising has risen again. We are profoundly grateful to Philip Evans, Pam Hayward, John Rawling and Brian Wright for their efforts in making our publications so attractive to a world wide audience. Brian is stepping down from the job of advertising manager; he is one of those people who can always be relied upon, and has done the advertising job quietly and ably for many years: the Group is very grateful to him.

This year the Group embarked on its most ambitious spring tour ever: the cost was twice as high as any previous tour, and support was therefore not as immediate or as great as desired: we have to thank Arena Travel for being willing to proceed with the tour with fewer participants than they initially thought was viable. The tour of Canada and the USA was superb, very largely due to the self-sacrificing efforts of Charlie Sale, who ensured that we were able to see almost every noteworthy private garden (and restaurant) in the area.

However we have decided not to embark on such an expensive tour in 2007: the plan at present is to visit Ireland. We hope that there will be sufficient support for another expensive tour – this time to Yunnan – in 2008.

For the future, we are both very pleased and relieved to have the services of Judy Hallett as Tours Organiser: her efforts in organising the autumn tour, which is already oversubscribed, are a very good omen for the future.

Perhaps the Group's major success this year has been the response to the appeal for funds for a Ph.D. at the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh. With such generosity from members I shall be asking, at this AGM, for approval for the group to commit funds to this project from its reserves. About £18,000 per annum for the three years the project will take has been promised so far. Subject to acceptable assurances from RBG Edinburgh about the continuation of rhododendron studies after the PhD has been completed the promised funds will be released to them in the next few days. The Ph.D. is likely to start towards the end of 2006, and regular reports will be sent to the Group. We are very grateful for support from other societies in this appeal, particularly the Scottish and Australian rhododendron societies.

The 2006 main rhododendron competition was at Borde Hill in April, for the last of its three years there. The experiment of moving this competition out of London, due largely to this Group's initiative, has been a success.

Next year, and probably for the following 2 years, the competition will be at RHS Rosemoor. I hope that the principle of moving it round the country has finally been established in the collective mind of the RHS; without the support of the SE and SW branches, and Barry Haseltine and Alun Edwards in particular, the Group could not have achieved this result.

It is with great regret that we bid farewell to Robbie Jack, who has served on the Group committee for very many years. His wise assessments of difficult situations and his sound financial and other advice will be sorely missed, and I want to take this opportunity of thanking him on behalf of us all. Fortunately he assures me that he will keep on exhibiting rhododendrons, and he will continue to serve on the RHS Rhododendron & Camellia Committee so will not be far away.

On the other hand it is a great pleasure to welcome Eric Annal and Andy Simons on to the committee. Eric is already doing great things in helping to establish friendly relations with the Scottish Rhododendron Society, and his moves towards establishing a collection of vireya species are inspiring. Andy is one of the world's foremost authorities on camellia species, and adds greatly to our expertise in that genus.

The strength of the Group, and what marks it out from the RHS committees, is its branch activities. I am happy to report that the health of the existing branches is excellent, and have much enjoyed my visits to three of them in the last twelve months, and especially the propagation day in Cornwall. Setting up new branches has not proceeded well, with East Anglia falling into abeyance, and insufficient support for a new branch in the West Midlands. So often, however, the formation of a branch depends on the activity of one individual or couple, so we must live in hope.

Finally the relationship between the Rhododendron & Camellia Committee and the Group remains unresolved, with no reforms of substance being suggested in the recent report on the future of the RHS committees. It is now clear that any initiatives will have to come from us, and joint meetings to formulate a policy are under way. I hope to resolve the long standing uncertainties about this matter before the next AGM.

*M.L.A. Robinson, June 2006*

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## EDITOR'S NOTES

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John Rawling

### OBITUARIES

Sadly, we have to report the deaths of two well known personalities in the world of our three genera.

#### Warren Berg

It is very sad to have to report the death of Warren Berg., who, only last year, was presented with the Loder Rhododendron cup for 2004 by the Royal Horticultural Society.



In the citation for the award by the Society's Rhododendron & Camellia Committee, Sir Richard Carew Pole Bt., President of the RHS, stated that the award "...reflected the enormous contribution that you personally have made to the advancement of horticulture and especially to the hybridising of rhododendrons. From your plant discovery and seed collecting trips to China and Bhutan and your own introduction, you have brought forward some of the very best plants available."

"Your work has inspired a whole new generation to the joys and delights of the rhododendron and I am sure it will come as no surprise that you are held in such great esteem by fellow enthusiasts and horticulturists across the world and particularly here in the United Kingdom. The RHS applauds you on your achievement"

The Group visited his interesting collection and garden only in April on their Tour to Canada and North West USA. He was very unwell at that time and sadly was not able to meet us.

### Sir Peter Smithers

1913 – 2006

Sir Peter Smithers had a fascinating career, as a diplomat, as a politician and as a botanist. He also served as an intelligence officer, and it is believed, provided inspiration for Ian Fleming's James Bond.

Among his many interests, he was a keen amateur botanist. He grew more than 2000 species of cactus at his Winchester home, which he transferred to Strasbourg on his appointment to the Council of Europe. Before leaving Harrow School he had purchased a Plant Ledger and by 1993 he had made 32,147 entries!

In his retirement, he built a house overlooking Lake Lugano, Switzerland, and planted there the best of each cultivar that he could find (famed for his Magnolias) – over 10,000 plants, none a duplicate.

His lush photographic images won 8 Gold Medals from the RHS. He was also awarded the gold Veitch Memorial Medal

His philosophy as a gardener was "It shall be a source of pleasure to the owner and his friends, not a burden and an anxiety." He published an account of his work in 1979, *'Adventures of a Gardener'*.

Peter Smithers was lucky to achieve his ambition when he wrote "It would be nice to end life surrounded by the beauty which is my garden ...As long as memory lasts, my garden will remain with me, like my own past life, a delightful dream which I once dreamed here on this mountainside."

With acknowledgements to the obituaries of Sir Peter Smithers published by *'The Daily Telegraph'* and *The Western Morning News*

See also the short obituary of **Michael Jurgens**, who died last Autumn, - printed on the back page.

## RHS Tatton Park Flower Show 2006

Wed. 19<sup>th</sup> July – Sun. 23<sup>rd</sup> July

### Do visit our stand at the Show!

John Harsant with his many helpers will be there at the Group Stand. Do visit them at the Show.

### Chelsea Flower Show

**Our congratulations** go to **David Millais** on another excellent display of rhododendrons at the Chelsea Flower Show. I understand he was awarded a (second ) **Silver Gilt** medal. *(Although I personally thought it deserved Gold! - Ed.)*

## PLANT EXCHANGE

### A NOTE FROM OUR Plant Exchange Organiser

Stephen Lyus at - [emailslus@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:emailslus@yahoo.co.uk)

The enclosure of the **Surplus Plant List** with the Year Book reminded members of this excellent facility for obtaining interesting and rare plants (at a fraction of the retail price). Many of the listed plants are still available.

Members are reminded that an up to date list is always available from our **web site**, the address of which is shown in the banner on the front page of this bulletin.

'Now that all of our plants have put on their Spring growth, is it not a good idea to consider giving your best ones more space and passing the remainder on to new homes?'

**Contact Stephen by email (above) or at:**

13 Manor Drive, Surbiton, Surrey, KT5 8NE.

## Rhododendrons & Azaleas for the connoisseur

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**Joint Rhododendron, Camellia & Magnolia Group  
and ICS Autumn Tour 2006**  
- 21<sup>st</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> September

There has been an excellent response to the Herefordshire weekend:, thirty three people have signed up. Delegates will receive detailed information for the tour in August.

**Spring Tour 2007**

**Sunday 13th to 18th May**

We plan to visit Ireland in May 2007 – where we shall visit some of the spectacular rhododendron gardens of South and West Ireland. Details in November *Bulletin*.  
*Judy Hallett*, Honorary Tours Organiser

**NOTE FROM THE EDITOR**

**I still need your letters, reports from branches,  
articles etc, to keep the members up to date!**

**So, please send me your letters and  
copy for the November Bulletin by 12th October.**

**Please send to:**

**John Rawling, Hon. Bulletin Editor,**

**The Spinney, Station Road,**

**Woldingham, Surrey, CR3 7DD.**

**Tel. 01883 653341 or E-mail: jr.eye@virgin.net**

**Why The No Show?**

**It's Good For Your Camellias!**

As a dedicated competitor at the RHS and ICS spring Camellia shows I often find myself pondering why so few members of the Group (or ICS) choose to show? Camellias offer one of the easiest entries into this area of horticulture, but of much greater importance is that showing provides a focus to the culture of your plants that is generally lacking: a focus that can greatly enhance your horticultural skill and hence the enjoyment of your plants.

Shortly after opening time I am to be found patrolling the show benches looking how my blooms have fared under the 'sage' considerations of the judges. During this time one hears phrases from the public (and group members) along the lines:

"I can never get my flowers that big", "Mine is never that colour", and even "My Camellia does not flower"

Inevitably a polite response about soil type or amount of sunlight is offered as a solution, the real answer is to understand your plants requirements from day 1 or indeed select a plant to which you can give the correct conditions.

One tends to acquire a Camellia on impulse, put it in the ground (or pot it up) stand back with a smug grin and expect it to burst into flower, when it does not it's either a "bad plant" or "I can't grow Camellias". When one is growing for more than ornamental purposes - i.e. for showing, and you know that only a 6 inch formal double will win the prize - one is motivated to understand the plants requirements and most importantly to adapt your cultural technique to improve the performance of your plant.

I can say categorically that since I started showing Camellias my skill in growing them has improved beyond all recognition and now the measure of my show success is not how many first or second prizes I achieve but the knowledge that I have produced a more perfect and complete set of entries than the previous year.

Whilst I accept that most of you will choose not to leap into the competitive arena, I would strongly recommend that you consider it because you will learn more things about your plants than any other way.

Below are the five rules I follow for successful Camellia culture:

1. Follow the saying "spend as much or more on the hole as you did on the plant". Soil preparation is key to **sustained** successful flowering.
2. Feed your Camellias: for spring flowering varieties start to feed as soon as the new growth has broken and stop at the end of June.
3. Water your Camellias: Any check to growth after the end of June will reduce flower quantity and quality.

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The following publications are available to Group Members and are sold in support of the Group:

**RHODODENDRONS & AZALEAS**

**A Colour Guide – Kenneth Cox** SEE REVIEW

Full Price: **£29.95** Member's Price: **£24.50**

Postage: UK **£4.50**, Europe **£8**, Rest of World **£15** (Air)

**HARDY RHODODENDRON SPECIES –**

**A Guide to Identification – James Cullen**

496pp, illust. Full Price: **£35** Member's Price: **£23.50**

Postage: UK **£5**, Europe **£8**, Rest of World **£15** (Air)

**International RHODODENDRON REGISTER and  
CHECKLIST Second Edition – RHS 2004**

Full Price: **£90** Member's Price: **£75**

Postage: UK **£7.50**, Europe **£8**, Rest of World **£12** (Air)

**THE RHODODENDRON HANDBOOK 1998**

Includes full descriptions of all rhododendron species in general cultivation in Europe and the USA, including vireyas. 352pp, illust. **NOW £19** post free. Airmail: **+£5**

**THE PACIFIC COAST RHODODENDRON  
STORY – Portland Chapter ARS**

Softback, 163pp. Traces the history of rhododendron growing, hybridising and hybridisers in the Pacific NW from 1792 – 2001. Well illustrated. Now available direct from the UK. **£20** post free. Airmail: **+£5**

**THE RHODODENDRON STORY**

224pp, illust. **£15** post free. Airmail: **+£5**

**YEARBOOK Back Numbers**

Available for 1946 – 1971, 1980 – 2004. Please enquire.

Please make cheques (Sterling) payable to:

The Rhododendron, Camellia and Magnolia Group.

Payment may also be made by Mastercard or Visa – please include expiry date and security number.

Contact: Pam Hayward, Woodtown, Sampford Spinney, YELVERTON PL20 6LJ, UK. Tel/Fax: +44 (0)1822 852122

E-mail: RCMGPublications@woodtown.net

06/06





Perhaps you may be able to match this!

Photo: Andrew Simons

4. Prune your Camellias: Camellias do not need pruning to flower but experience indicates an open growing bush produces bigger flowers, it is often said prune so that a Blackbird can fly through the plant. Prune during flowering and use them for decoration!

5. Disbud your Camellias: Two types of disbudding are available, the hardened competitor disbuds to one bloom per stem, I prefer simply to thin congested groups of buds down to one or two.

**Note** that I have not put down a rule for position or Sun and Shade, in the UK I generally consider position to be irrelevant as ambient temperature seems a greater factor than Sun or Shade.

**Editors Note:**

**Words from the expert!**

**So, why don't you try this? Good Luck!**

## RHODODENDRONS (incl. Camellias and Magnolias)

### Members Notes

John Rawling

#### The Group Tour to the Pacific North West

##### A short personal report.

Some 24 members and guests set off for Vancouver and North Western USA to see many of the finest gardens in that part of the world. In the 16 days we set out to visit (at least) 35 gardens plus a wine tasting; a mammoth task, and those completing the course deserve a medal. However, the gold medal should go to Charlie Sale in Vancouver, for putting all of this together and providing us with a detailed and amusing introduction (and personal commentary) to every garden we visited. I hope he hasn't lost too many friends over our invasion. Every garden owner and curator was so welcoming and generous to us that I believe it cemented rather than spoilt a friendship.

My personal choice of the highlights of this hectic tour must include visiting Glen Patterson's exquisite roof garden (visited after our long flight and extended day flying from Heathrow to Vancouver), and we much appreciated the delicious buffet.

We commenced our tour the following day with three intensely different gardens ending with the carefully planted and fascinating Charlton/Sale garden. A delightful steep and rocky hillside with many rare and exciting plants.

**Every garden was enjoyable** and it is difficult to leave any out, but amongst the many visits that followed I mention those that appealed to my particular taste.

The University of British Columbia Botanical Garden was excellent and by the number of photographs I took it rates amongst the best. Certainly an attractive garden and arboretum with many unusual shrubs and trees - vsee the photo below.



Mellodendron xylocarpum

Photo: The Editor

The Dartshill Garden – a personal collection by Mrs Darts including a very fine Magnolia Elisabeth (see front page) and a large and diverse collection of rhododendrons – we really needed more time for this one, but we had a ferry to catch!

When we reached Victoria on Vancouver Island, we were delighted with our visit to Carmen Varcoe's varied collection of plants and their planting.

Next morning we were taken to the immaculate Abkhazi Garden with its very interesting history and foundation by Princess Peggy Abkhazi. It had been built on a rocky hilltop site amongst suburban gardens and every opportunity had been taken to use the contours to make a beautiful and restful garden, its lawn forming a winding 'river' across the hillside.

The next day, I particularly enjoyed Ruth & John Trelawny's woodland garden and the contrasting garden of Elaine & Dave Whitehead. On travelling by ferry to the USA, going through Immigration procedures - being photographed and fingerprinted, we travelled to Warren Berg's garden and I was impressed by his carefully laid out garden. It was very sad to find him too ill to be able to meet us.

Next day we were warmly welcomed by Jim Barlup to lunch and shown his methods of hybridising - and saw some of the trials on the outcomes. It was nice to have blooms of some his hybridisation successes decorating the lunch table!

I much enjoyed the next day, travelling to Whidbey Island and seeing the flourishing Meerkerk Gardens. This was



followed by Frank Fujioka's with its careful arrangement and pruning of plants to create a 'perfect' garden. He had also grown some very fine acer palmatums. in many leaf colours, in red, pink or green

It was interesting to hear of the local method of deterring deer from devastating their gardens, by spraying with a mixture of garlic and egg yolk!! Not attractive for the first week, I was told, but effective!

It was good to make contact with the ARS Portland Chapter at Crystal Springs Rhododendron Garden (with a delightful lunch) and with the ARS Tualatin Valley Chapter at their Flower Show. The latter was an intensely fought competition between local members and included a Class of very interesting Oregon raised hybrids.



**Best Truss**

'Best Truss in Show' at the Tualatin Valley Show R. 'Indian Summer'

Photo: The Editor

My last personal choice in Oregon was a visit to the Van Veen Nursery. Being an inveterate propagator myself, I enjoyed and learnt a lot from the nursery which roots rhododendron to order and by the thousand, with hundreds of species and hybrids. It was said that they "...can grow roots on a broomstick."

My last choice garden is in California, the Quarry Hill Botanical Garden at Glen Ellen. This garden is a hilly "Asian woodland" and is claimed to have 'one of the largest and most diverse collections of temperate plants in the world'. It has been carved out of Californian natural wild woodland and includes several landscaped quarries, one into a flowing waterfall and river valley. A fascinating collection of plants for conservation, all raised from wild collected seed from China, Japan, India, Taiwan and Nepal.

A very exciting and delightful tour. Not enough time in many gardens but this is **an encouragement for us to visit this area again, and soon.**

See also the Group Photograph on the back page.

## LETTERS

**We welcome another interesting letter from our Bibliophile correspondent!**

John Sanders

## "Lo and behold - life is full of surprise!"

My references to two publications - 'Thai Magnoliaceae' and 'The Species of Rhododendron in Japan' - in recent Bulletins has initiated some interesting correspondence from our widespread membership. None more surprising than the recent arrival of a package from our only member in Thailand - namely Thinakorn Komkris.

He very kindly sent me an extract (twenty six pages) from a publication 'Advanced Thailand Geographic' - Volume 6 - No. 43 - September/October 2005 entitled 'Rhododendrons of Thailand'. The complete article is printed in the Thailand language with the exception of the title and bibliography which are in English! Fortunately he has added a few of his own comments - also in English - which permit the identification of the various species depicted in the superb full-page colour photographs.

To whet your appetite the list includes the following ten species which are to be found in Thailand as: *Rhododendrons: longiflorum; microphyton; ludwigianum; veitchianum; malayanum; arboreum subsp. delavayi; moulmainense; surasianum; simsii; and lyi.*

He informs me that *surasianum* and *ludwigianum* are the only two endemics and that the author (Chaiyant Pichiansuntorn - I hope I have made a reasonable attempt to decipher the correct spelling!) lists a new and recent recording for *longiflorum* var. *longiflorum*.

I don't know how one goes about locating a copy of this article but given the opportunity it is worth scrutiny for the colour images alone.

John Sanders

Devon

## COLLINGWOOD INGRAM'S RHODODENDRONS

I am currently researching the rhododendrons introduced by Collingwood "Cherry" Ingram during the middle years of the 20th century with the intention of contributing an article to the yearbook in due course. He is responsible for the registration of 97 hybrids and numerous (exact figure unknown as yet) named forms of species. Although these plants received many AMs, I am finding it extremely difficult to track down and record examples still growing in UK gardens. I would be most grateful to hear from anyone who can offer me any help in this respect.

Please contact me by post (postage gladly refunded), telephone or email.

Pam Hayward, Woodtown, Sampford Spiney, Yelverton, Devon PL20 6LJ.

Tel: 01822 852122

E-mail: pam@woodtown.net

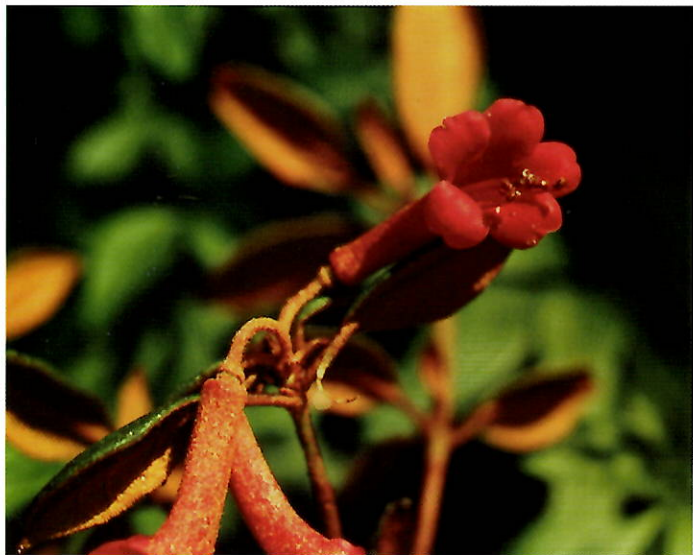
Dear Editor,

Having recently joined the Group, I was interested particularly in the article and photographs on *R. burmanicum*, and in the increasing range of vireyas.

I spent several happy years at RBG Edinburgh as student gardener and glasshouse foreman. I well remember Mr Davidian wandering through the Rhododendron House (circa 1962!), and the numerous large plants we moved to help landscape around the soon-to-become Gallery of Modern Art under guidance of the then Curator Eddie Kemp (Wee Man!).



It does seem incredible that with Dr Argent and Mr Chamberlain retiring and not to be replaced, the continuity in research at RBG would be broken. I shall certainly be contributing to the fund on this.



*Vireya R. beyerinckianum*

The enclosed slides, taken around 1962/3, on which I would welcome some clarification. I am really a beginner on rhododendron names now, certainly after the numerous changes since I left RBG; the slide of *R. burmanicum* was taken at Brodick Castle, Isle of Arran (I think) but the *R. beyerinckianum* is certainly from RBG amongst the relatively few Vireyas at that time. I would welcome any assistance from the experts, which would be helpful. Although, I shall in fact be visiting RBG in late April/May, so maybe they would be the ideal 'identifier'?

I shall hope to join in the various Group activities within the South East Branch and elsewhere in due course, and maybe even meet a few past acquaintances whose name I recognise from the members' list.

Hilary C. Newman.

East Peckham, Tonbridge, Kent

## BRANCH REPORTS

### New Forest Branch

Robin Whiting

We enjoyed a shared visit with the International Camellia Society to Abbotsbury Sub-tropical Gardens on the last day of March. The Curator Steve Griffith showed us round during the morning and was kind enough to take us further into the 20 acres after lunch. The sea is half a mile away and this and a shelter belt of trees generally keep Abbotsbury warm. Even so the temperatures dropped to -3 C this last winter. The garden dates from 1765, when it was the kitchen garden for the Countess of Ilchester who lived in a castle on the beach. The garden suffered damage from very strong winds in the 1990's, so a new shelter belt has been planted. Many of the very large camellias have been cut back hard in order to let in more light and rejuvenate the plants. Steve told us that at first, he was reluctant to take a saw to the Camellia reticulata 'Captain Rawes' but it is recovering slowly from this treatment. A severe shock to the old gentleman! The display of camellias and rhododendrons was not as good as might have been expected because of the late season.

*Magnolia campbellii* was a particularly magnificent sight.

Early May took us to Hydon Nurseries and Garden where Arthur George and his charming wife welcomed us. Arthur told us the history of the garden from when he took on the 25 acre site in 1959. Shortly after starting the nursery, he had the good fortune to be offered many of the very fine rhododendrons and azaleas from the famous garden at Tower Court as a result of its closure. In our tour of the garden we saw many of these plants. *R. fulvum* in particular was superb with its very fine dark foliage and thick cinnamon indumentum.

The original greenhouse is still used for all the propagating. We were given a demonstration of an unusual and very interesting technique of propagation, which can only be described as half cutting and half graft. Two larger greenhouses contained one and two year old plants. Deer are a major problem in the garden so young plants are protected in lath houses until large enough to be grown on in open ground.

We were all impressed by the very high quality of the plants in the nursery, particularly as Mr and Mrs George only have one full time gardener and a part time lady to help them.

### Overseas Branch

Miranda Gunn

#### A NOTE FOR OVERSEAS MEMBERS

I have now taken over as Chairman of the International Branch, in place of Michael Jurgens who sadly passed away last year. As Overseas Members are such an important part of our membership, it would be nice to have a short piece in each Bulletin reflecting your news and views.

Of course this would depend on your willingness to e-mail me with anything that you think would be of interest to our members.

When I was Membership Secretary, several of you sent me photos of plants and told me what was flowering in your part of the world. So please let's continue this. Just e-mail me with short accounts of any unusual plants of our three genera which you may have, photos would be welcome, or accounts of the sort of season you have had, or places you have visited and would recommend. Problems, too might be aired, we have such a huge fund of knowledge amongst our members that someone might know the answer.

As the next Bulletin appears in November, I am particularly looking to members in the southern hemisphere to start things off.

So please, e-mail me on [Miranda@ramsterweddings.co.uk](mailto:Miranda@ramsterweddings.co.uk) and I will pass them on to the Editor.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Miranda Gunn Ramster, Chiddingfold, Surrey, GU8 4SN

### Peak District Branch

David Ives

Further to the photograph of an attractive pink and white rhododendron in the last bulletin (photo by Brian Horrobin), I received the same helpful message from:

Mrs George of Hydon Nurseries, (by telephone);

Mr Jim Inskip, of Cobham, Surrey, by e-mail, and

Mr Slocock, of Slocock Nurseries, by letter.

They all agreed that it was a sport from Cynthia, which originated at Slocock's, named 'Janet Ward' (PC:1974)

It is available from both nurseries.



## South West Branch

Pam Hayward

SOUTH WEST BRANCH SHOW 22nd April 2006,  
RHS Garden, Rosemoor.

After the long winter and with recent frosts fresh in my mind, it was with trepidation that I drove to Rosemoor on the 22nd April. Remembering the marvellous event we had staged in 2004, I feared we might be about to disappoint. Not a bit of it! Despite the mutterings in the car park, a fantastic display was coming together inside, brought from across our extensive branch area.

Under the calm guidance of our Chairman, Alun Edwards, 123 entries to 15 classes of rhododendrons, camellias and magnolias were meticulously arranged for Dick Fulcher and Malcolm Pharoah to run their critical eyes over.

Stewarding for rhododendron expert Dick Fulcher gave me a chance to see 'how it's done'. Taking each entry, methodically awarding points for five criteria, totalling and then looking again at the whole class, he made a sound judgment every time.

Class 1 – *Any Elepidote species*, 1 truss, produced 14 entries ranging from *arboreum* to *tsariense* 'Yum Yum'. It really was no contest – Terry Vince's brilliant *thomsonii* was streets ahead – it simply leapt off the bench! Second and Third places went to Philip Evans for his crisp *fulvum* and sumptuous *niveum*.

Class 2 – *Any lepidote species*, 1 truss, attracted 7 entries. First, awarded to Barry Starling's bright-eyed *racemosum* 'Rock Rose' was an easy choice. Second also went to Barry, for *cephalanthum* 'Winifred Murray'. Philip Evans took Third for his lovely *augustinii*.

Class 3 – *Loderi Group Hybrid*, 1 truss, was unsupported, the season being so late.

Class 4 – *Any hybrid of which one parent is an elepidote species*, 1 truss, had 11 truly eye-catching and complementary entries. Terry Vince swept the board taking First, Second and Third for his dazzling 'Choremia', 'May Morn' and a ravishing *dichroanthum* hybrid bought many years ago as *arboreum*!

Class 5 – *Any hybrid of which one parent is a lepidote species*. Three entries produced three prizes but the First awarded to Barry Starling's perfect *lutescens* x 'Arden Fairy' should not be underrated – this is an inspired cross which must be named and distributed. Second and Third went to John Bodenham's 'Lochinch Spinbur' and a *rubiginosum* x *ciliatum* marrying dark foliage with palest-pink flowers.

Class 6 – *Any species or hybrid of section Vireya*, 1 truss, mustered 7 entries – not all from John Bodenham! He earned First, Second and Third prizes indisputably, he is supreme! The *alborugosum* awarded First could have taken Best in Show for its perfection of form and sheer out-of-this-world quality. His glowing *zoelleri* took Second and a dusky-pink beauty, unimaginatively called 'M72 Hybrid' Third.

Class 7 – *Any rhododendron species or hybrid, not a vireya, grown under glass*, 1 truss. Four totally dissimilar entries presented Dick with a real challenge but the fragrant maddenia hybrid, entered by Richard Robinson, overpowered him to take First. Barry Starling's *vialii* took Second and John Bodenham's *xanthostephanum* Third.

Malcolm Pharoah, head gardener at Marwood Hill, took on the camellias and magnolias, ably assisted by steward Jane Keatley.

Class 8 – *Camellia japonica, any cultivar, 1 bloom*. From 20 entries, Michael Smith's perfect 'Desire' caught Malcolm's eye to gain First, followed by Arthur Nancarrow's 'Wonderland' and a devastatingly dark 'Bob Hope' from Mrs. Colman.

Class 9 – *Camellia japonica, any 3 cultivars, 1 bloom of each, 3 vases*. Despite being the only entry, Arthur Nancarrow's unusual triple of 'Mrs. Lyman Clark', 'Lady Vansittart Sport' and 'Kuma Saka' well deserved its award.

Class 10 – *Camellia reticulata, any cultivar, 1 bloom*, managed two entries with First awarded to Arthur Nancarrow for 'Captain Rawes' and Second to Alex Hill for 'Carolyn Snowden'.

Class 11 – *Any hybrid of which camellia reticula is a parent, 1 bloom*, produced 9 entries. Arthur Nancarrow triumphed with an irresistible 'Miss Tulare'. His 'Phyl Doak' was Second and Alun Edwards' recently planted 'Francie L' pleased him no end by gaining Third!

Class 12 – *Camellia x williamsii, any cultivar, 1 bloom*, widened the field to 16 entries. Arthur took First with 'Pink Bouquet', Barry Starling's 'Anticipation?' gained Second and Alex Hill's 'Duchess of Cornwall' Third.

Class 13 – *Camellia x williamsii, any 3 cultivars, 1 bloom of each, 3 vases*, attracted three entries. Arthur's outstanding triple: 'Elsie Jury', 'Pink Bouquet' and 'Brigadoon' were placed first, followed by Philip Evans' 'E.T.R. Carlyon', 'China Doll' and 'Water Lily' and Richard Robinson's 'Anticipation' and un-named pair.

Moving on to the Magnolia Section, Malcolm was faced with 14 diverse contenders for Class 14 – *Any magnolia species or hybrid, 1 bloom*. Ranging from *stellata* to 'Star Wars' this was no easy task but John Marston's man-sized 'Apollo' eventually took First for its absolute quality of form. Michael Smith gained Second and Third for his double cream 'Manchu Fan' and opulent 'Galaxy'.

Terry Vince remarked that anyone who enters a magnolia deserves a prize regardless! His fantastic *cylindrica* Seedling gaining First in Class 15 – *Any magnolia, species or hybrid, 1 spray, not to exceed 30 inches from top of vase* – was a triumph. To successfully display a horizontal flowering branch vertically is some achievement! The blooms were shapely and pristine with the winning edge over the Second placed entry – an elegant spray of 'Heaven Scent' from Alex Hill.

Class 16 – *Any michelia or manglietia, 1 spray, not to exceed 30 inches from top of vase*. John Marston entered two sprays of *Michelia doltsopa* and won with both!

It was a delight to watch competitors absorb the judges' decisions and then to listen to the comments made by the public as they reviewed the display. This was a creditable show, a great advertisement for the Group and a most useful trial run for 2007 when the Main Rhododendron Show comes to Rosemoor. We will be ready!

## Lakeland Rhododendron, Camellia & Magnolia Society.

Fred Tattersall

On Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 22 members met at Pitlochry in Scotland for the start of our Spring Tour. We spent three nights in Pitlochry and three nights in Contin, which enabled us to visit both the East and West coasts of Scotland. We were blessed with good weather and visited some superb gardens. Our thanks go to Christopher Bradbury who had spent many hours organising the tour.



The Society Show took place at Holehird Gardens on the evening of Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> May. This was well attended and members enjoyed a Buffet meal to complete the evening. Best in Show was a Rhododendron Hybrid shown by Anthony Cameron. We also welcomed Jason Haine the Head Gardener of Muncaster Castle who won the Leaf Class.

Our Autumn Season starts on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> October with our Annual General Meeting to be followed by Colin Mawson's Talk entitled "A Selection of Indian Gardens." All meetings will take place at Holehird commencing at 7.30pm.

Further meetings will take place on Tuesdays 14<sup>th</sup> November and 13<sup>th</sup> December.

Contact Fred Tattersall on 015394 43963 for any information.

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## BOOK REVIEW

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### **Rhododendrons and Azaleas: A Colour Guide** **By Kenneth Cox**

November 2005. 240 pages £29.95

This hardback publication, written by one of the world's leading Rhododendron authorities, is extremely well conceived, compact, yet amazingly comprehensive, packed with colour photographs and well informed, instructive comments. If you're in a hurry, read no further – buy it, I think it's brilliant!

The book measures 11 ¼" x 9" with 240 pages of easily-turned glossy paper which feels as if it should wear fairly well. For protection, it ought to fit neatly into a standard 13" x 10" folder or document case, because you might well wish to have it with you when visiting gardens or nurseries.

There is a 28-page introduction which includes an invaluable 7 pages upon pests, diseases, problems and disorders which, is not only up-to-date, but full of useful practical tips including Trichoderma fungi to combat fungal root diseases. (I can enthusiastically endorse this; available in U.K. as Triamum).

The encyclopaedia covers over 4,300 of the "most commercially important" varieties. The format of this 188-page section is of three 2 ½" columns per page. The print is of necessity smallish, but ought to be readable without aids if you have average eyesight. The text covers stature, hardiness, flower shape, colour, truss composition, leaf shape and special characteristics e.g. bark, drainage requirements. Hardiness ratings have been extended beyond those traditionally used by the RHS (but this is slightly spoilt by some printing errors within the lower sections of the "degrees Celsius" column upon page 33, table 1). As you would expect, the encyclopaedia does not provide the detail you can find within the "Rhododendron Register and Checklist" but does include very helpful comments like: "...flower texture rather thin", "...subject to mildew and rust", "...scruffy and poor", "...open, leggy sprawling habit".

The first 35 pages of the encyclopaedia section features lepidote species and their hybrids. This unexpectedly includes 3 ½ pages of exciting Maddenia hybrids, many of which will be unknown to U.K. readers. Additionally there are a further captivating 6 pages devoted to Vireya species and hybrids.

Inevitably the next 200 (almost) pages of the encyclopaedia schedules elepidote species (20 pages) followed by their hybrids. The final section is devoted to Azaleas: 16 ½ pages to deciduous species and their hybrids, plus an unbelievable 29 ½ pages to evergreen species and their hybrids.

Many of the encyclopaedia entries are supported by a colour photograph, probably averaging 2 ¼" by 2 ½" wide with close to 7 per page in the species section but fewer for the hybrids. There are over 1200 photographs and these concentrate upon the floral characteristics except where the foliage is possibly more important to readers. Most of these colour reproductions are very good but a small number could have been better, notably a few reds, but we all know how hard it can be to capture red in a photograph in difficult light conditions.

If you are fortunate to own, or have seen, previous publications by the Cox family you will know that this "Colour Guide" is likely to be an invaluable book. My advice is don't let this one slip by; I believe it is exceptional value-for-money and a "must have".

In fairness there are a few errors but these are almost inevitable given the staggering wealth of information crammed into the publication. Rhododendron lovers owe Kenneth Cox a big 'Thank You' for producing it.

*Colin Grainger*

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## MEMBERSHIP

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Rupert Eley

**We are delighted to welcome the following new members.**  
**We hope they will enjoy their membership.**

(I notice several eminent names amongst our new members this time. I hope that they may perhaps take an active part in contributing to *The Bulletin* in the future! Ed.)

### UK

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## NOTICES

*Pat Bucknell, Hon Secretary*

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### THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2006 held on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2006

**Present:** Chairman Dr M L A Robinson  
Mr E Annal, Mrs PA Bucknell, Mr. J. David, Dr AJB Edwards,  
Mr RLC Eley, Mr PD Evans, Mr C Fairweather, Mr MDC  
Gates, Mrs M Gunn, Mrs J Hallett, Mr JD Harsant, Mr BA  
Haseltine, Mr G Mills, Mr JA Rawling, Mr A Simons, Mr  
AT Stevenson, Mr BE Wright.

**Apologies:** Mr CEJ Brabin, Mr C Ellis, Mr MC Foster, Dr D  
Ives, Dr LRA Jack, Mr C Lima, Mr. IT Stokes.

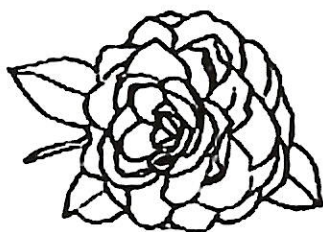
The Chairman, Dr Mike Robinson welcomed everyone  
present to the AGM.

**The Minutes** of the Annual General Meeting 2005 held  
on 12th April and published in Bulletin No. 88 July 2005  
were agreed to be a true record and were signed by the  
Chairman.

**Matters Arising:** There were no matters arising.

**Chairman's Report:** See Chairman's Notes on front page  
and page 2 of this Bulletin.

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**Treasurer's Report** The income and expenditure account, and the balance sheet for the year ended October 2005 were tabled. The result for the year was satisfactory, with the accounts showing a surplus of £1,383 compared with a surplus of £2,339 for the previous year.

Martin Gates spoke on the accounts referring to an increase in income over the previous year to £19,578. Membership subscriptions were also slightly higher at £12,320, and thanks are again due to Pam for her diligence in chasing slow payers. Chip Lima had an excellent year with sales of seed, and Brian Wright managed to increase the advertising revenue by £432. Although Pam Hayward was as efficient as ever the net income from publications was lower at £1032

For the first time travelling expenses have been paid to members of the committee for attending committee meetings and other essential journeys; the cost for the year was £684. The combined cost of the Year Book and Bulletins was only 1.7% higher than the previous year. Other combined expenses increased by £480 for the year. Total expenditure was £18,195 compared with £16,799 for 2004.

The Treasurer thought that the Group's reserves were adequate but without the bank interest, the surplus for the year would have only been £551. The reserves give the Group flexibility and enable them to finance capital projects when they arise.

**The Secretary** had received 18 postal votes, confirming all officers in post.

**Appointments** Vice Chairman Philip Evans, Yearbook Editor (from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007) Pam Hayward, Tours Organiser Judy Hallett. Committee members Eric Annal and Andy Simons.

**Appointment of Auditors** John Harsant had approved the accounts. Martin Gates thanked him and proposed that he do so again next year. This was agreed.

**Change of Year End** Rupert Eley thought that provided that the collection of subscriptions could be streamlined, any change should be deferred for the present time.

**Subscriptions** It was proposed that from year-end 2007, direct debits would be introduced and an inducement to be offered to members to encourage them to use this form of payment. More investigation would be carried out in implementing the scheme.

**Proposal for donation to the Rhododendron Ph.D. at RBGE Edinburgh** The cost would be approximately £21,000 per year for three years. John David, Principle Botanist at Wisley, thought that the R.H.S. would be able to donate £2,000 per year. The Chairman proposed that the Group also donate £2,000 per year for three years. This was discussed, seconded by John Harsant and the motion was carried.

**Any Other Business** It was proposed and carried that Philippe de Spoelberch be made an honorary life member, for his generous donation to the Ph.D. Appeal.

**Date of Next Annual General Meeting** This will take place during the week commencing 11th June 2007 at R.H.S. Garden, Wisley at 2.00 p.m

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## FORTHCOMING EVENTS 2006

Date/Time	Organiser	Location	Event	Contact
<b>October</b>				
10th	Lakeland Society	Holehird	AGM plus Talk by Colin Mawson: 'A selection of Indian Gardens'	Fred Tattersall 01539 443963
21st	SE Branch	Emmetts NT	Garden Visit	Barry Haseltine 01342 713132
21st	SW Branch	RHS Rosemoor	Talk by Dr George Argent on "Vireyas"	Alun Edwards 01271 343324
<b>November</b>				
11th	SE Branch	OA Room Ardingly College	Talk by Richard Thornton: 'In the Footsteps of George Forrest'	Barry Haseltine 01342 713132
14th	Lakeland Society	Holehird	T.B.A.	Fred Tattersall 01539 443963
<b>December</b>				
12th	Lakeland Society	Holehird	T.B.A.	Fred Tattersall 01539 443963

## MICHAEL JURGENS

24.7.1931 – 18.9.2005

After being a member of The RHS Rhododendron Group for many years, Michael Jurgens joined the Executive Committee as International Branch Organizer in 1996, and ably did this job until his death in September 2005. Michael was Dutch, and his wife, Jorie, an American, and their children live in USA, so they were well placed for this job.

They generously hosted individuals and groups from overseas, as well as the local branches, to their red-brick Queen Anne house and 15-acre woodland garden in Berkshire, filled with camellias and rhododendrons and companion plants. The long approach to the house was stunningly bordered with yellow deciduous azaleas.

He went on a plant hunting expedition to Bhutan in 1986, and contributed articles and letters for The Rhododendron Group's Bulletins and ARS and NZ Journals.

Michael took a degree in history and law at Kings College, Cambridge, and had a career in banking and business. He was a JP, and involved in many charities, including the Council of St John's Ambulance, and the IMB of Reading Gaol. Garden Open days (the Yellow Book) made money for St Mary's Church, Silchester.

He had firm opinions, yet a genial, gentle and understanding nature, with a good sense of humour and a 'twinkle' in the eye. He had enormous courage in his final illness, as those on the Spring Tour to West Devon and Cornwall in Spring 2005 can testify. He was a good friend.

Joey Warren.



The happy Group at the Rhododendron Species Foundation Botanic Garden, USA

Photo: Mike Robinson