

CALENDAR FOR NEXT FEW MONTHS.

1982.
 JAN 30 Wessex Branch meeting - Keith Rushforth. See note.
 FEB 16 RHS Show. Annual General Meeting.
 17 - do -
 MAR 16 RHS Show. Rhododendron Competition.
 17 - do - do -
 26 South East Branch meeting - John Bond. See note.
 30 RHS Show. Magnolia Competition.
 31 - do - do -
 APR 14 RHS Show. Camellia Show. N.B. WEDNESDAY.
 15 - do - do - N.B. THURSDAY.
 27 RHS Show. Rhododendron Show. N.B. TUESDAY.
 28 - do - do - N.B. WEDNESDAY.
 MAY 5 Group Tour of gardens in NW England and SW Scotland. See
 to 10 full report on arrangements at end of bulletin.
 19 Group's Chelsea Week Day Outing. See note.
 18 RHS CHELSEA SHOW. FELLOWS' DAY.
 19 - do -
 to 21 - do -
 29 South East Branch meeting. Visit to a garden. See note.
 NOV 12 South East Branch meeting. Details nearer the time.

MATTERS OF IMMEDIATE OR CURRENT INTEREST.

STAFF VACANCIES.

1. HONORARY SECRETARY. A note of the retirement of Mr John Owens was included in Bulletin No. 17, but at the moment of writing the vacancy has not been filled. As there is now another vacancy among the Group's officers, the need for a replacement has become more urgent. Anyone prepared to consider undertaking this interesting work should get in touch with either Mr Owens or the Chairman.

2. CHANGES IN THE BULLETIN, AND VACANCY FOR HONORARY BULLETIN EDITOR.

At a Group Committee meeting on 3rd November 1981, a decision was made to reduce the annual issue of the Group Bulletin from four to three. As this entails an increase in the interval from three months to four, Committee arranged the months of issue in future as MARCH, JULY, NOVEMBER. It is intended that this sequence will commence in March 1982.

At the same meeting, a contribution which had been submitted to the Hon. Editor for the purpose of open discussion in the pages of future bulletins was withdrawn from his editorship.

The present editor was not prepared to be associated in any way with either of these decisions; on the other hand he does not question the Group Committee's authority, and has consequently resigned, with effect from 31st December. After that date communications concerning future issues should be addressed to the Chairman.

The vacancy thus caused ought, if at all possible, to be filled by the end of February, so as to give the new holder of the post time to commence work on the bulletin due to appear as the March 1982 issue, that is, No. 19. Will any member prepared to consider undertaking this work please communicate with the Group Chairman as soon as possible, so that he can ascertain what is entailed and make arrangements for the takeover in good time?

SUBSCRIPTIONS - TREASURER'S NOTICE.

An important notice regarding payment of subscriptions appears on Page 3, together with a tear-off slip for use if required. Overseas members should make a point of reading this notice carefully as it contains information about changes in the way in which some of them, at least, remit.

EDINBURGH 1982. 2nd International Rhododendron Conference. A sheet is enclosed with this bulletin which has been kindly supplied by Dr Chris Wood, the Conference Organiser. It gives details of the lecturers and their subjects, and some clarification on costs.

GROUP TOUR AND ONE-DAY OUTING, MAY 1982. Two separate sheets of detailed information about these two events will be found at the end of the bulletin. Each embodies a tear-off slip which should be completed by those interested and RETURNED URGENTLY TO MR NIGEL GLASS.

EDITORIAL.

OBITUARY NOTICE - CAPTAIN COLLINGWOOD INGRAM. V.M.H.

Many members will have known for some time of the death of "Cherry" Ingram, so recently designated an Honorary Life Member of the Group. The Lady Anne Palmer, who is a member of the Group's Committee, had known him for many years, and kindly provided the obituary notice which follows. The editor apologises for the late appearance of this notice, due to the fact that when a hasty re-construction of Bulletin No. 17 was called for, this and a number of other contributions had to be left over. Bulletin No. 14 carried reproductions of two interesting messages of congratulation to him on his centenary, from the "Times" and the "Telegraph".

Lady Palmer writes:-

" We shall not see his like again - Collingwood Ingram was one of the last remaining members of a generation which produced men of character and fame of whom few can be his equal. A keen sense of humour, integrity, generosity, an ability to make friends of people of all ages and from all walks of life, enthusiasm and perhaps above all the professional approach he made to the many and varied subjects which aroused his interest and on which he became a respected authority - these were the hallmarks of his fame.

He will probably best be remembered as a horticulturalist, as a collector who introduced many good garden plants into cultivation, and for his work in the hybridisation of rhododendrons. His generosity in propagating plants for his friends was renowned and his garden at Benenden was full of 'layers' of choice rhododendrons, carefully laid down with a special soil mix, a peg and a stone. In due course he would examine the layers to see if they had rooted and if they had, the fortunate friend who happened to be with him at the time would be presented with yet another 'treasure' for his or her garden. My garden is full of such treasures, a living memory of a great and generous gardener.

Those who were fortunate enough to be numbered amongst his friends will not forget this remarkable man whose keen intellect made him the best of companions. My personal debt to Cherry is unbounded for he awakened my latent interest in plants and horticulture.

I hope this inadequate note will serve as a small tribute to the love and respect which Cherry engendered amongst his colleagues and friends. "

----- Anne Palmer. -----

BORDE HILL SPECIES COLLECTION.

The Rhododendron collection at Borde Hill is one of the country's most extensive. It is also, like some of the other great collections, accessible to the garden-loving public, at least in part. The garden has for many years been opened to visitors, nowadays on a much more frequent basis than formerly; in addition, those who can get to the RHS shows at Vincent Square have regular opportunities of seeing some of the best examples, as trusses or sprays, when they are taken there for exhibition or for consideration for an award.

It will therefore be of interest to some members, particularly those enthusiasts who regularly take the opportunities afforded by access to such extensive collections, that Mr Robert Stephenson Clarke has now produced a booklet giving an alphabetical list of species, showing the way in which they are affected (if at all) by recent changes in classification. The word "booklet" is the one used by the author himself, but I should explain that the format is about 11¼" by 8½", and that there are nearly forty pages of detailed explanation and tabulation, including some enlightenment on the new Edinburgh classification, and notes on plant hardiness at Borde Hill.

A feature which particularly took my eye is a column in which are recorded the numbers of plants of each species known to be in the garden. There were quite a few surprises, for me at any rate, for I know the garden moderately well. For example, whilst I was not specially surprised at entries showing 13 of *campanulatum*, 23 of *ciliatum*, 21 of *cinnabarinum*, 18 of *decorum*, or 30 of *schlippenbachii*, I was quite unprepared for 30 of *arizelum*, 21 of *crassum*, 36 of *fulvum*, 17+ of *lanigerum*, 36 of various *neriiflorum*, 16 of *sidereum*, and 17 of *uvariifolium*. I suppose the answer to this is to keep visiting and looking for fresh discoveries. With such richnesses to

be explored, I am going to need several years before I can feel that I know very much about the Ali Baba's Cave at Borde Hill.

An extract from a covering letter which gives further information, and details of availability and pricing, will be found near the back of the bulletin.

RHODODENDRONS OF CHINA.

A notice regarding this recently published book appeared on page 6 of Bulletin No. 16. Since then I have had the opportunity of seeing it and browsing through its pages. It is a substantial tome of 670 pages and 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ lbs. deadweight. The contents have an interest which appears to be unique - most of the rhododendron books I know have this quality - and at the very low price asked it is a bargain. A recent note from Mr Mayers renews his generous offer, as follows: "The demand for "Rhododendrons of China" continues; I have ordered fresh copies. Would you kindly announce in the Bulletin that I shall be able to supply copies beginning next Spring, and the price will be £7 each plus £1.50 postage - members are welcome to collect them and save postage."

HON. TREASURER'S NOTICE.

1. Members already paying by Bankers order, need read no further but to accept our thanks for their help and co-operation. They will have received their 1981-82 Year Books by the time they read this.
2. Other members of the Group are requested to complete the tear-off slip below and return it to the Treasurer, as soon as possible. The annual subscription is due on 1st November each year. It is not too late to initiate a Bankers Order for the current year although this will inevitably lead to some delay this time in the despatch of a member's Year Book, although worry and uncertainty over subscriptions and delays in the future will be avoided.
3. Those members who are in arrears with their 1980-81 subscriptions have already received a personal reminder about this and must now remit for two years to bring their subscriptions up to date in order to secure their Year Books for the two years.
4. OVERSEAS MEMBERS can no longer combine their subscription with their R.H.S. membership, it is regretted. The system of combined subscriptions has not proved at all satisfactory and in most cases has led to members not receiving their Year Books at all or at best only after very long delays. Prompt payment direct to the Hon. Treasurer will ensure despatch of a member's Year Book by return of post in future.

PAYMENT in CURRENCIES other than STERLING must now include an amount equivalent to £1-50. to cover the cost of collection of the subscription. For example, the sum of 3 dollars-U.S.A. is required for members in North America. To offset this high cost of cheque conversion a member may of course pay several years' subscriptions at the same time; in which case still only 3 dollars-U.S.A. would need to be added to the amount written in. Without this surcharge some members will not even be covering the cost of their Year Books and this is obviously unfair to the majority of other members, which fact, we hope will be readily understood by those concerned.

5. The RATE of SUBSCRIPTION remain unchanged at £3 per annum. (For those not requiring the Year Book the rate is £1-50.)

6. If you have not received your 1981-82 Year Book by the time you read this, then it is very probably because you have not paid your subscription. If any member has a query about his/her subscription before completing the slip below they have only to telephone the Treasurer (available most evenings after 6.30 pm.) when an answer should be possible within 10 seconds!

TO: The Hon. Treasurer, RHS Rhododendron & Camellia Group, D.N. Farnes,
FROM: Name..... 'Corton Lodge',
Address..... 7, Burntwood Avenue,
Emerson Park,
Hornchurch, Essex.
RM11 3JD.

..... TEL: HORNCHURCH 40536.

** a. I enclose cheque for £.....for my subscription for 1981-82.

** b. Please send a Bankers Order form for my Group subscription.

** Delete as appropriate, please. THANK YOU.

BRANCH ACTIVITIES.

WESSEX BRANCH. On 20th November last a well-attended meeting took place at the home of Dr. Blowers, the Branch Organiser. Mr Douglas Harris, Managing Director of Exbury Gardens Limited, gave a most interesting talk on "Everest to Exbury". I had heard this only a fortnight before at a South East Branch meeting, and the best tribute I can pay Mr Harris is to say that I enjoyed it rather more the second time, because I had learned what to be prepared for and savour more fully. A well-supplied and well-supported Plant Auction after the talk must have done the Branch funds a lot of good, and unless I am mistaken a couple of the plants were on their way to Exbury an hour or two later.

Another meeting is scheduled for 30th January, when Mr Keith Rushforth will be the speaker. As he too has recently been in the East - Mount Omei in his case - another armchair visit to the home of the rhododendron is obviously in store for Branch members. I know that members of the Group who are not Wessex members are welcome to their meetings; contact should be made with either Dr Blowers or Keith and Sue Blundell.

SOUTH EAST BRANCH. The talk mentioned above took place on 3rd November, and was also very well attended. The enjoyment that this talk gave was, of course, sufficient to cause me to want to hear it again, since I knew that opportunity offered. Here, too, there was a Plant Sale which demonstrated the generosity of members, in both directions.

On 26th March, the next meeting, Mr John Bond, Keeper of the Garden at Windsor, will give a slide talk on magnolias, illustrated with slides. So far as I know at the moment, the plan is to follow the talk with a discussion. With Mr Bond's experience at their disposal, members will be privileged to have on-the-spot answers to their questions.

Another South East Branch activity will consist of a visit to a garden. This is at present being arranged, and of course details will be provided before the projected date, which is Saturday 29th May. Finally, a date has been set aside for another winter meeting, on Friday 12th November 1982. The point of this long notice is the difficulty which individual members can experience in fitting everything together in the weeks approaching Christmas. It is hoped that the date chosen is well clear of the inescapable rush period, and that members will diarise it, perhaps on Christmas morning when to their surprise they discover they have been presented with exactly the diary they were hoping to get.

SNAKE VERSUS GOSHAWK.

As an interlude between two different kinds of garden visiting I am placing an account of another kind of garden visitor. Like the knowledgeable human kind, this one proved to be discriminating to an unexpected degree. We are indebted to Sir Peter Smithers for this account of a visit he was recently paid by a Swiss native.

"The hazards of gardening are indeed unpredictable, even after one has pursued the knowledge of plants for a lifetime! In June of this year my wife was surprised to see a large black snake (perhaps a local variety of *Elaphe longissima*) engaged in digging a hole in a bank amongst young rhododendrons. So engaged was this very timid snake that it did not notice her presence and she was able to fetch a camera and take a photograph of the excavating reptile. After a few minutes it noticed her attentions and made off at high speed. It is a harmless creature which consumes

quantities of slugs and mice, about five feet long. But when called to the spot I noticed that to facilitate its labours the snake had uprooted and cast aside a young rhododendron planted this spring. For this purpose it had chosen *Jalisco v. Goshawk*, indeed a discriminating taste. *Goshawk* was recovered from the bottom of the bank and replanted, and seems none the worse for this unusual adventure. The only parallel I can think of is a plant of *Magnolia grandiflora*, last seen covering a considerable area of Itchen Stoke House, which when planted by me in 1948, was dug up by an Alsatian puppy and laid on the drawingroom carpet."

It seems clear that in spite of their keenness and industry, the Swiss and the Alsations are not to be numbered among the great gardeners of the world.

GARDEN OPEN. CLAPTON COURT, SOMERSET.

Having received a beautiful and most intriguing colour brochure about Clapton Court Gardens and Plant Centre, I asked Capt. Loder if he would like to provide more details in advance of the 1982 garden visiting season. This he has kindly done and I reproduce them below. In a covering letter he adds that there^{are} both formal and woodland gardens, where almost anything can be grown provided a suitable site is chosen; so far over 120 different rhododendrons have been identified, species and hybrids, flowering from February to July, as well as over 30 azaleas and some 80 camellias. The address is Clapton Court, Crewkerne, Somerset, Telephone: Crewkerne (0460) 73220/72200. The colour brochure mentioned gives a route map.

"Clapton Court Gardens, 3 miles South of Crewkerne, Somerset. This beautiful and interesting 10-acre garden was only opened to the public for the first time in 1979, and won the Open Garden Prize of the Wilkinson Sword Gardens Award. Now, over 10,000 people visit the Gardens each year and a lot more come to the Plant Centre.

With its formal Terraces, spacious Lawns, Rockery, Water and Rose Gardens, it is certainly one of the loveliest settings in Somerset. In addition there is a fascinating Woodland Garden, with natural streams and glades alive with primulas, anemones and bluebells, backed by banks of rhododendrons and azaleas. There are many unusual trees and shrubs of botanical interest, amongst them the biggest Ash tree in Great Britain, with a girth of 23 feet, and a fine *Metasequoia glyptostroboides* over 60 feet tall, planted in 1950 from seed supplied by the Arnold Arboretum in America.

The season opens with a dazzling display of daffodils and other Spring bulbs and the many camellias and magnolias providing vivid splashes of colour to complement them. The varied collection of *Prunus*, with their exotic blossoms eventually falling and lying like snowdrifts, herald the start of the main flowering season of the large collection of rhododendrons and azaleas from April to June.

With high summer the herbaceous plants, roses, fuchsias and geraniums fill the Garden with their many colours and sweet scent. The eucryphias are white with flowers and the hostas show their purple caps above luxurious foliage. The lilies nod majestically in their glory and the hydrangeas burst out in their many shades of blue and pink and creamy panicles.

As Summer fades to Autumn, the *Acer*s flame and huge clusters of scarlet and orange berries hang from the *Sorbus*. The wonderful shades of red, yellow, pink and orange seem to be the Gardens' final blaze of triumph before Winter.

A well-stocked Plant Centre (open all year round) offers 1,000 varieties of fuchsias and many varieties of pelargoniums, as well as a wide selection of interesting and unusual plants, shrubs, alpine, ferns and bamboos in containers."

Parties are welcome, by arrangement, at a special tariff, which can include meals. Parties can be conducted or not as required, and arrangements can be made for^{them} to visit the Glasshouses which are not normally open to the Public. A tour, with say, home-made cream teas, will take about three hours. Gardens are open all year, free from November to February, daily, not Saturdays. No dogs. Car Park free. Write to the address given for details of opening hours and prices.

Evidently a garden for at least most seasons.

GARDEN FULL (OR NEARLY FULL). MR JOHN FOX'S GARDEN. (by Brian Wright,

'Woodhatch', Harlequin Lane, Crowborough, is one of those attractive fringe-of-town houses, nicely suburban but not in suburbia, for it nestles in a leafy lane miles from any real metropolis. Its front is screened by a high, tight hedge of laurel, pocked by a marauding *Ilex Aquifolium*; an uneasy alliance but effective cover for a small half-acre plotful of rhododendrons. Here, petiole to petiole, live over 450 plants of the genus, of which more than 380 can be labelled different. They divide into 211 hybrids and 175 species, and belong to John Fox, a self-confessed and incurable rhodoholic.

To think that this demi-acreage can be no more than a miniature nursery, more or less planted out in rows, would be wrong. To think that Mr. Fox must specialise only in the dwarf and medium growing varieties would again be erroneous. The fact is that in spite of J.F.'s addiction this is still a garden. There is, from the house, a wide raised terrace that overlooks a small pool and a long well-shaped lawn, albeit being gradually commandeered as lebensraum for the plants. And there are some good trees and shrubs that, believe it or not, are not rhododendrons - mind you they had to qualify as 'associate plants' in order to gain admittance. At the front gate, for instance, stands the garden's sentry, a sixty feet high Scotch pine that annually sprinkles its desiccated needles on the rhododendrons beneath; viz., mollyanum (now renamed under the lady's title), 'Olive Judson' (a pinkish cinnabarinum hybrid), 'Luscombei Splendens' (syn. 'Pride of Leonardslee'), 'Hawk Crest', oreotrephes, 'Chikor', calostrotum, 'Yellow Hammer', chamaethomsonii and no doubt some others. At the bottom of the plot grows Acer pseudoplatanus 'Brilliantissimum', which was moved as a mature tree from a nursery that protested it needed the space; it took some manhandling into position, but now that it has recovered from the upheaval and realised that it is among auspicious company, begins to look its best. Another tree that likes the environment is a very young Eucalyptus gunnii. Having settled in, it is now proceeding to race away at a rapid rate and stands (well staked) in a centre bed surrounded by low growers and prostrates such as 'Pink Pebble' (a pretty callimorphum-williamsianum cross), 'Riplet', 'Curlew' and the azalea nakaharae. In addition to these allies there are some immature but handsome magnolias: a quick-growing sieboldii, 'Charles Coates', a grandiflora that has flowered nicely for the past three seasons, a wilsonii, a loebneri cross 'Leonard Messel', and the obligatory soulanganas, one of which ('Nigra') is apparently indestructible; some years ago it had a garage wall topple on it and now, after being fractured all over, it grows healthily from two root systems. Other attractions outside the main collection are a Liquidambar, a matching pair of Acer palmatum 'Dissectum', which overhang the terrace, and several camellias lurking among the rhododendrons.

John Fox got interested (sorry, involved) in rhododendrons not much more than a decade ago through a colleague. The colleague frequently mentioned those varieties he grew, and then invited John round to see for himself. From that moment on there was no going back, for J.F. was hooked. He sought out nurseries, books, bulletins, fellow-growers and a medical man or two in the hope of a cure; but before he knew where he was he had the basis of a collection and, like Topsy, it just grew.

One would have thought that space limitations would have curbed his keenness. Not so. If he could not defeat the problem at least he could defy it. He did so by bringing in some big-leaves: grande, falconeri, macabeanum, sinogrande, fictolacteum, arizelum, hodgsonii, basilicum and one or two others. They are young, of course, but they are obedient. He has told them what he expects and two or three have betrayed their youth and flowered.

It was inevitable that increasing and improving his collection would not be enough to feed his fervour. He had to exhibit, and then in 1976, from a then modest selection of plants, he made his London Show debut. It was less than spectacular, but at the end of the day he had after all competed with the famous, learnt a lot, enjoyed the fun and got the taste to do it again. With each subsequent year his exhibits have progressively collected more prizes, and I think that it is a measure of his enthusiasm and skill that in the hybrid classes of the 1981 Show only Exbury and Bodnant were more successful. For those inspired to follow his example, here is a shortened list

of his prize-winners:

Hybrids - 'Gaul', 'Unique', 'Tregedna', 'Lionel's Triumph', 'Avalanche', 'Lunar Queen', 'Carita Golden Dream', 'Parisienne', 'Princess Anne', 'Seta', 'Ightham Yellow'. Species - calostrotum 'Gigha', niveum, williamsianum, galactinum, campylocarpum.

Of course, in rhododendron terms, 'Woodhatch' is almost indecently young - a single-season bairn of a garden that in Spring will impudently burst into colour and display its creations like a Paris fashion show. Naturally, as in every other garden, the weather does its best to disrupt things, but because there is so much going on in such a small area, it never really appears to get the upper hand. Even early on, 'Praecox', mucronulatum, 'Bric-à-Brac', concinnum and 'Nobleanum' will often bloom unscathed. And later, when the devastating frosts demoralise us all, moupinense, ciliatum, 'Cilpinense', 'Seta' and 'Tessa Roza' nearly, but not quite, survive. When the rush comes from mid-April through May and into June you see the garden as a colourful kaleidoscope, flaunting a completely forgivable air of pride. And when there is no flower, when the first season has exhausted itself, there is the fascination of the new growth and seasonal change to enjoy - and some relative rarities that were temporarily forgotten by the burst of bloom. Among these would rate wardii astrocalyx, laudandum var. temoense, lopsangianum, myiagram, griffithianum (pink form), campanulatum 'Waxen Bell', succothii, decorum 'Cox's Uranium Green', piercei, kongboense, phaedropum, floccigerum, taliense, martinianum, brachyanthum var. hypolepidotum.

There is no greenhouse at 'Woodhatch', but that is no obstacle to growing some of the more tender varieties. Outside grow 'Fragrantissimum', 'Countess of Haddington' and taronense. Inside (not in the house but in a handy old windowed shed) grow, in large pots and containers, lindleyi, valentinianum, 'Tyermannii', 'Lindcil', 'Victorianum' and 'Sir Edmund', to name but a few. It is said that on a warm Spring day it is the most beautifully scented potting shed in Sussex.

During the past year or so even John Fox has been forced to concede that he is running short of space, and that some thinning out is needed. Pruning is fairly painless, as the trick is to wait until Show-time, which will mean the inevitable removal of a few sprays. But this amounts to no more than an enjoyable tidying-up job. Only the complete removal of a plant or two and a bit of re-arranging of the garden-plan will create any worthwhile space. This is not as drastic as it may sound, however, for the lifted plants readily find a good home in the locality, i.e. within 'propagating distance', and the new-found space gives J.F. the opportunity to improve and expand his collection with carefully selected imports. Of course, the quest for space could be avoided if John Fox was able to temper his obsession by specialising in alpine and medium growers better suited to the smaller garden. If this were to happen, however, John Fox wouldn't be John Fox and 'Woodhatch' wouldn't be 'Woodhatch', and therefore not half as intriguing or appealing to be in or talk about. But J.F. does realise that there are rhododendron lovers around who, like himself, could do with more ground but who, being saner, can control their appetites. For these he lists some smaller favourites of his that are easy to grow and reliable for flower: Hybrids - 'Elizabeth', 'Seta', 'Brocade', 'Popocatapetl', 'Tregedna', 'Moerheim's Pink', 'Roza Stevenson', 'Ightham Yellow' (best select form) and (a characteristic aberration here) if there is room for an eventual tree, one of the Loderis, 'Game Chick', is his choice. Species - (glaucophyllum, var.) luteiflorum, williamsianum, russatum (dark form), baileyi, calostrotum 'Gigha'.

For those interested in such things as soil conditions and climate, let me say briefly that Crowborough at its highest point is well over 800 feet above sea level with an average annual rainfall of 35 inches (copious for the South East, I think). Sub-soil is largely clay and sandstone - many would claim that this is a perfect description of their top soil - with a surface that can be on the right side of loamy with a high acidity level. In other words, Crowborough is good ericaceous country, although I would suspect that if 'Woodhatch' were to be removed to the middle of Salisbury Plain its owner would still grow rhododendrons and get them to flower, particularly when it came round to London Show time. B.E.W.

CAMELLIA CORNER.

THE INTERNATIONAL CAMELLIA SOCIETY AND ITS NEWSLETTER.

Mr H.J.Tooby, who is a member of this Group, kindly sends me copies of the Newsletters issued by the U.K. and W.European Region of the I.C.S. I know that many of our members are also members of the I.C.S., but I believe that many more are not; yet, of the latter, I think that many of them are in fact interested in camellias and probably grow them to some extent. Some of them, I feel sure, would benefit from joining and partaking of the I.C.S.'s offerings. With this in mind I append a few notes on the contents of the last two newsletters, to whet appetites and give some idea of the scope of the articles. Naturally, there are other things, including notices of an organisational nature and personal information. In case the Group list of members' addresses is not handy, I quote Mr Tooby's address; I am sure he will be glad to supply further information to any Group member enquiring.

H.J.Tooby, Esq.,
"Acorns", Chapel Lane,
Bransford, Worcester WR6 5JG.

In the June newsletter:- Notes on the recent Congress and Tour; Preliminary Report on Camellia Trials in Edinburgh (1978-81- ?); another report gives information about Camellia Trials in North Staffordshire; a note on Arcillite, a new American 'fertiliser' or additive with low pH; and of course domestic matters. The November issue records the decision to set up the National Reference Collection of camellias at Mount Edgcumbe; has notes on the future of Fota Island, Cork, early introductions of camellias to England from China, a review of a new camellia book, and so on. In this issue the most important item, however, is perhaps the detailed programme and organisation notes concerning the forthcoming Thames Valley Conference, based on Royal Holloway College from 16th to 19th April 1982. For this the closing date for firm bookings is 2nd February 1982, so anyone interested should waste no time in seeing about joining.

K.J.W.L.

CAMELLIA CHOICE.

(this time by Mr. G.A.Judson.)

To choose one Camellia out of all the varieties in cultivation is like the choice that confronts the castaway in the radio programme 'Desert Island Discs', but infinitely more difficult. As a start, one might perhaps reduce the list to some six varieties, before making the final and irrevocable decision. There is no doubt that 'Adolphe Audusson' has much to commend it - excellent foliage, a good habit, and most attractive blooms; and thoroughly hardy. Next, 'Kimberley', a good single, with brilliant flowers, perhaps a little on the small side. Completely different, but very attractive, C.sasanqua var. 'Narumigata'; coming at a time of year when flowers are few, its delicate white, shapely and fragrant blooms make it a tempting choice. Then 'Mathotiana Alba', with its perfectly-formed formal double blooms in purest white - but alas, unless grown in a frost-proof greenhouse, the merest touch of frost and it is ruined by ugly brown patches; so no. 'Donation' would appear to have much to recommend it, with its profusion of pinkish bloom; but I don't know whether I had a poor form or whether it is an inherent fault of the variety, but I seemed to spend all my time staking and tying it to keep the blooms from trailing on the ground. 'Fleur de Pêche' is a free-flowering and attractive variety, but the flowers are rather on the small side, and tend to get spoilt by frost. One could go on and on, but I will conclude with my final selection, the reticulata hybrid 'Leonard Messel'. Though with reticulata blood it might be thought likely to be tender, I have not found it so, and in my experience it is a fine, shapely plant, flowering freely when established, reasonably frost-resistant and with most attractive, clear pink blooms and attractive foliage. Out of those mentioned, the final choice lies between 'Leonard Messel' and 'Adolphe Audusson' - an agonising choice - but I think I would award the crown to 'Leonard Messel' by a whisker. G.A.J.

('Adolphe' had its moment of glory in Mr D.N.Farnes's 'choice' in Bulletin No. 13. Ed.)

We will be conducted round these plantations by the Superintendents of the Parks or their deputies. The Tour Secretary will send to members on request a map of Richmond Park and a map showing the roads around Richmond Park and Bushy Park. Please use the form below and enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

The Isabella Plantation is best approached by the Robin Hood Gate. On entering the park take the park road sharp left. Park in the car park half a mile along this road on the left hand side. (The map of Richmond Park shows two car parks, but one has recently been removed). A finger post points to the Isabella Plantation, a very short walk. Meet at the entrance gate.

For Bushy Park, leave Richmond Park by the Kingston Gate. (The Robin Hood Gate is now an "entrance-only" gate). Follow the A308 through Kingston and over Kingston Bridge, on to the first leg of Hampton Court Road. A mile ahead, before the road turns sharp left, you come to the Greyhound Hotel on the right marking the entrance to Bushy Park. Drive into the Park.

The Greyhound Hotel is a convenient place for lunch or bar snacks. If you decide to lunch there, park in the car park entered by going round the Diana Fountain.

For assembly for the visit to the Waterhouse Plantations, leave the Diana Fountain car park and proceed up Chestnut Avenue to a second car park approached from a park road on the left of the Avenue. It will be helpful to know the number of waterholes at the Diana Fountain.

It will be helpful to know the number of members likely to attend. If you hope to be there will you please complete the form below and send it to the Tour Secretary, Nigel Glass, 8 Nuns Walk, Virginia Water, Surrey, GU25 4RT (Tel: 099 04 2333). But come anyway whether you have notified or not.

Richmond Park covers a large area and there are several gates. Perhaps for some members the most convenient gate to use would be that nearest the direction from which they travel. Once in the Park the route which cars may use is largely peripheral and the car park for the Isabella Plantation lies between the Robin Hood Gate and Kingston Gate. As an alternative for lunch, members could go to Pembroke Lodge, which lies on the peripheral road in the Park between Ham Gate and Richmond Gate. There is a large car park in front of the Lodge. Set luncheons are served and a cafeteria service is available. The gardens of Pembroke Lodge are worth inspecting and there are good views across the Thames Valley.

SOME NOTES ON THE PLANTATIONS.

(by the Tour Secretary).

The Park comes under the Department of Parks. (42 acres).

The Park comes under the Department of the Environment and the care of the Isabella Plantation is the responsibility of the Superintendent of the Park, Mr M.B.Brown.

The plantation has been a woodland area since 1840. Modern planting began in 1951 and has continued progressively since then. There are small streams and pools and these have given scope for moisture loving plants. There is a description by Arthur Hellyer in the Shell Guide to Gardens, but more information is given in his article in the

To the Tour Secretary.

Chelsea Week outing, Wednesday 19 May 82.

Name.....No.in party.....

Address.....Tel No.....

.....

I/We hope to attend this outing.

Please send copies of the maps offered.	}	Delete if not required.
Stamped addressed envelope enclosed.		

Signature.....Date.....

RHS Journal, "The Garden", for June 1980, pp.245-248. The following is a short extract -

"But this is much more than a well planned woodland. It is also a splendid collection of hardy trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants with rhododendrons and azaleas prominent but by no means monopolising the scene. In addition to the camellias.....there are all the other ingredients of well informed twentieth century British planting. There are magnolias and southern beeches (nothofagus), skimmias..... leucothoes, hamamelis, styrax, parrotias, and many more. The rhododendrons themselves are a distinguished lot and in the early days Mr Thompson was able to acquire many good species and pedigree hybrids from Tower Court, Exbury and other top collections of the day....The evergreen azalea collection, always a strong point, has also grown greatly and must now be one of the most comprehensive in the country. "

The Waterhouse Plantations, Bushy Park.(2 areas,nearly 100 acres).

Bushy Park also comes under the Department of the Environment. The care of the Waterhouse Plantations is the responsibility of the Superintendent of the Royal Parks and Gardens, Hampton Court, Mr G.W.Cooke.

In the reign of Charles I a tributary of the River Colne was diverted through Bushy Park to provide a new water supply not only for Bushy Park but also for the gardens and fountains of Hampton Court. A brick shed built to house the gear controlling the flow of water was the origin of the name of the Plantations. The central axis of Bushy Park, Chestnut Avenue, was designed by Sir Christopher Wren as a state approach to Hampton Court. The Plantations are to the west of Chestnut Avenue.

Modern planting, taking advantage of the abundant supply of water, began in 1949.Arthur Hellyer, in the Shell Guide to Gardens, says: "Since the emphasis in planting is fairly heavily on rhododendrons, azaleas and camellias, the peak flowering season is from April to June, but the design is so good, the water so well used, the trees and shrubs so diverse and well chosen, that this is always a delightful place to visit."

There are heathers in island beds. Notable among the trees are two fine Taxodium distichum by the stream which have grown a long colony of knobbly "knees" along the Bank, some of them two feet high.

T.N.N.G.

CONSERVATION - THE OLD HARDY HYBRIDS.

An improbable-sounding heading, perhaps, but realistic in fact. Mr Walter Schmalscheidt of Oldenburg, Germany, is assembling a very large collection of the older hybrids, and has been trying to locate the following six by enquiry at Wisley who have already provided help over some years. If anyone can help with any of these, will they please inform Mr C.D.Brickell, the Director? If they can be spared, about 5-10 scions of each would be hoped for, to be sent direct to Wisley, where the necessary inspection would be arranged, along with other matters.

'Charles Truffaut', 'Galceador', 'Maximum Triumphans'
'Miss Cunningham', 'Sir John Broughton' 'Sun of Austerlitz'

(or perhaps 'Soleil d'Austerlitz').

DO YOU NEED TO RETURN THE SLIP OVERLEAF ?

GROUP TOUR 1982 - WEDNESDAY 5 MAY TO MONDAY 10 MAY.
NORTH WEST ENGLAND AND SOUTH WEST SCOTLAND.

Major Walter Magor has again made a special expedition to organise our annual tour, this time to North West England and South West Scotland. His report follows.

"The response to the Chairman's memorandum in Bulletin No. 17 was considered sufficient to warrant arrangements being made for a separate Spring Tour for the Group. Members will have received from the organisers of the Edinburgh conference details of several tours in which they have the opportunity to take part.

The Group had been consulted about arranging tours for people attending the conference from overseas, and had replied that any overseas members of the Group would be very welcome to take part in the tour that the Group was arranging in NW England and SW Scotland, but that it was found better not to have too many people going round a garden at the same time, and that it might therefore be better to have separate arrangements for other people.

A travel agency has circulated plans for an extensive tour which will appeal to overseas visitors who may wish to see the country, and do not wish to spend too long tramping round gardens. The National Gardens Scheme for Scotland has planned a shorter tour to some of the most notable of the Scottish gardens visited by the Group in 1979 and in 1981, and proposed for visiting this year, 1982.

Happily, the owners of some of the gardens on the itinerary of these other tours have indicated their willingness to receive a visit from members of the Group also. Tentative arrangements have been made therefore for a tour of about 10 gardens in the Lake District and Galloway, assembling on the evening of Wednesday, 5th May, and ending at lunchtime on Monday, 10th May, leaving time for participants to reach Edinburgh the evening before the conference begins. The first night will probably be spent at an hotel at Grange-over-Sands in Morecambe Bay, the next two nights at Keswick in the Lake District, and the last two nights in Galloway.

Members who have not already informed the Tour Secretary of their wish to take part in this tour are asked to do so without delay. For the time being, arrangements are not being made for a coach, and the Tour Secretary hopes to be able to arrange lifts for those who prefer not to bring a car of their own; members bringing cars therefore are asked to say whether they could give a lift to one or two other members."

Full details of the tour will be sent to all members who completed the form in Bulletin No. 17 and sent it to the Tour Secretary. Any other member who would like these details should complete the attached slip and send it to Nigel Glass, Tour Secretary, Evensong, 8 Nuns Walk, Virginia Water, Surrey, GU25 4RT. (Telephone:- 099 04 2333). Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope for reply,
AND PLEASE WRITE NOW.

To the Tour Secretary, Nigel Glass, Evensong, 8 Nuns Walk,
Virginia Water, Surrey, GU25 4RT. (Telephone:- 099 04 2333).

GROUP TOUR MAY 1982 NORTH WEST ENGLAND AND SOUTH WEST SCOTLAND.

Name.....Tel No.....

Address.....

.....

.....

Please send me full details of the Tour. I enclose a stamped addressed envelope for reply.

Signature.....Date.....

Doggerel concerning the RHS 1980 Rhododendron Species Handbook.

On receiving the following contribution on the present plight of a well-known and highly respectable rhododendron species, the Editor found himself wondering whether the poet might perhaps have in his veins the blood of some famous forebear, for instance Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. So he made efforts to find out; he had no success, for even the poet himself is not quite sure why he was impelled to use the trochaic metre, and there do not seem to be any family records which would support the theory. A fluctuating series of chromosome counts revealed nothing helpful, so the investigation was abandoned. Evidently four trochees do not always make a Longfellow.

A member suggests the following amendment to the Handbook:
Page 149 Delete the entire entry relating to R.fortunei.
Insert in its place:

R.fortunei (Lidl) subsection Fortunea (Sleumer). See pages 36 and 37).

Let us turn to R.fortunei,
first of those to come from China,
named by Lindley after Fortune
who had found it in a province
on the Chinese eastern seaboard.
Chekiang the province name is.

Sometime in the eighteen fifties
Fortune sent back home to England
seeds collected in the autumn
and the seedlings grew and flourished
and they flowered some ten years later.

Flowers funnel shaped and scented,
rose or lilac pink when opening,
eight to twelve in every cluster,
seven lobes to every flower -
sometimes eight but only rarely,
stamens fourteen, maybe sixteen.

Petioles are mostly purple,
and the leaf base mostly rounded,
and the other end is pointed,
underneath all pale and glaucous,
deeply green the upper surface.

In the Edinburgh revision
R.discolor (named by Franchet)
and houlstonii (Hemsley, Wilson)
lose their rank as separate species.
Label each of them FORTUNEI
adding ess ess pee discolor
and after that the author's name
(Franchet in brackets) Chamberlain.

Eheu! Tempora mutantur
et nos in illia mutamur.
Even rhododendrons suffer
changes
in nomenclature.

DO YOU NEED TO RETURN THE SLIP OVERLEAF ?

BORDE HILL SPECIES COLLECTION - The new booklet. The information promised in the earlier note is now provided. The information is taken from a letter which can be obtained on request, and which embodies an order form.

"I have great pleasure in informing you that the above booklet is now available, having been produced privately to save unreasonable costs. Nevertheless even on a booklet of this kind production costs have been high, particularly in regard to typing the involved manuscript. I offer a price of £2.50 per copy direct, or £3.00 per copy including postage, and £2.00 per copy to any bona fide member of the S.E. or Wessex Branches of the RHS Rhododendron Group, or the Rhododendron & Camellia Committee at the RHS. Owing to the high cost of foreign postage special rates will be quoted for overseas takers. There are only 250 copies available, each one being numbered and signed, so please get your copy quickly before it is too late." Mr Clarke goes on to say that a Book 2 (the species in greater detail) and a Book 3 (covering a selection of the best hybrids) are at present in hand.

TREKKING IN THE HIMALAYAS - OR FOLLOWING IN JOHN FOX'S FOOTSTEPS.

Brian Wright's explanation of the disease which has attacked his friend John Fox helps us to understand how something similar has happened to Mrs Joy Neal. A paragraph from her covering letter, which I place after her most interesting contribution, will explain the relevance.

"Last spring we set off on a round-the-world trip, of which one of the highlights was our trek on the Indian Nepal border. It was to fulfil an ambition we had to visit Darjeeling and Sikkim. Our first plan was to trek in Sikkim from Permayanase, but this was not possible as the Indian High Commission would only give us permits to visit for three days. There were no tours being arranged from the UK so we were put in touch with a local agent in Darjeeling. As soon as we arrived, the agent brought our sherpa to visit us in our hotel and the trek started to be arranged. We needed to acclimatize to the altitude and spent the first few days walking up and down Darjeeling; the botanical gardens and the tea gardens were 1,000 feet below our hotel on Observatory Hill.

We started the trek in two landrovers and drove some distance towards the frontier, and were dropped half way up a wooded slope. The going was tough; the Himalayas are steep mountain ranges gradually getting higher and higher, and it seems one goes down as much as up. We really needed our sherpa, our cook, our bearer and our six porters, and they looked after us beautifully. We had carefully calculated our arrival for the end of April and early May so as to see the largest possible number of species rhododendrons. We were helped by the Regius Keeper of the Edinburgh Botanical Gardens, who gave us a list of the species found in their recent expedition, and even more by a booklet written locally in Darjeeling by Sain. But we were unlucky as there had been violent thunderstorms and hail storms, and most of the rhododendron flowers had perished. There has been a great deal of erosion in the last few years, brought about by the felling of trees and the clearing of vast areas of rhododendrons for fire wood. So it was not until one was well away from a village that one came upon species in any quantity, and we never saw a real mass of bloom covering a mountainside. We saw R.griffithianum in a dak bungalow garden at 7,000 feet and good specimens of R.hodgsonii and R.campanulatum at 8,000 feet. We were a little early for R.falconeri but R.barbatum was fairly common between 8,000 and 10,000 feet. Our favourite was R.cinnabarinum, as the colour was so distinctive and the flower so prettily bell-shaped.

As amateurs we missed many things in the botanical sense, but there were many other experiences - dawn breaking over Kanchenjunga and Everest was the most memorable. One forgets the physical hardships and remembers the cheerful Nepalese porters, who as their loads grew lighter, sang and danced down the track on their way home." (From covering letter). "However, it has absolutely confirmed my hobby in collecting species rhododendrons, and now we are trying to complete finding and planting all those which could grow in Wales. Actually most do extremely well there, as the soil is just right for them...."

Joy Neal.

CLASSIFICATION OF RHODODENDRON - another investigation.

Dr. Wolfgang Spethmann, who is a member of the Group, has sent me a copy of his thesis of December 1980, which sets out the findings of an investigation he carried out into the infrageneric classification of Rhododendron in regard to flavonoids and carotenoids of flowers and flower colouring. 193 species and 181 hybrids were investigated, and as a result Dr Spethmann has done a substantial re-classification on the basis of many new findings. As an example I quote one small section of a summary he has provided, in English. "Biochemical characteristics, the flower colouring and several till present not utilized characteristics were evaluated synoptically, and together with the classical characteristics a new infrageneric classification of the genus was created." Here is another extract:- "Chorus subgenerum Rhododendron was newly classified. The former subgenera Pseudazalea, Rhodorastrum and Pseudorhodorastrum were dissolved". The dissertation is in German, and runs to 300 pages app.

K.J.W.L.

More doggerel for the RHS Rhododendron Species Handbook. The same member suggests amendment No. 2 to the Handbook, viz:- Pages 228 and 229. Delete the entire entry relating to R.yakushmanum. Insert in its place:

R.yakushmanum (Nakai) subsection Pontica (Sleumer).

From Japan's most southern headland
forty miles across the ocean
lies the island Yaku Shima,
homeland of yakushmanum.

Beautiful yakushmanum
growing wild on Yaku Shima,
wild on Yaku Shima only.

Sugar cane, and mangrove marshes,
line the lowland coastal reaches
but inland are mountain ranges.

Tallest peak is Miyanoura,
next in height is Mount Kuromi,
both six thousand feet exceeding,
Granite based are all the mountains.

Cool the summer in the highlands,
fierce the snowstorms in the winter,
fierce the winds and high the rainfall
driving from the wine dark ocean.

Rainfall tops three hundred inches.

On this far off eastern island,
on the slopes and mountain passes,
native grow yakushmanum,
dense and domed and leaves recurving.

Flowers bell shaped open deep pink
change to pale pink then they whiten.
Beautiful yakushmanum.

You who love the choicest flora,
love the flowers of the garden,
love the wonder of the woodland,
love the glory of the leaf forms,
love the joy of growth unfolding -
you must love yakushmanum.

We have not of course expounded
on the stamens, calyx, sepals,
indumentum, hairs and so on.

If you ask the reason why not
we will answer "These are trifles.

In the 1980 Handbook

we don't bother much about them.

Six generations after any one particular ancestor, homo sapiens has sixteen chances out of sixty-four of not having even one single chromosome in his count which derives from the said ancestor. Whilst this thought may be a great solace to one who happens to know that he is in the direct line from, say, Tamburlaine, or Torquemada, Henry VIIIth, or even Casanova, it does create difficulties for those who seek to prove that they are, or are not, descended from Longfellow.

And on this lighter note, I leave you. Kenneth Lowes.

SECOND INTERNATIONAL RHODODENDRON CONFERENCE
EDINBURGH: 11-13 MAY 1982

Bookings are now being taken for this Conference, if you have mislaid the booking form or require any additional information please write to the Conference Organiser at the address below.

There seems to have been a little confusion regarding the Conference registration fees, I hope that I can clarify this. Conference registration is £95, this is for all 3 days and covers everything except accommodation. If you wish to attend only 1 day of the Conference, the fee is £50 and this covers everything on the day booked plus the Conference report.

These costs may seem a little excessive but when the report will cost around £15 per copy and it costs £1200 to bring one lecturer from New Zealand you can see how the costs mount up very quickly.

A more detailed programme is now available and is given below:

Ming Tianlu (Kunming) and
Dr David Chamberlain (Edinburgh):

James Kelly (Kinsealy, Eire):

John Bond (Savill Gardens, Windsor):

Dr George Argent (Edinburgh):

Dr Peter Stevens (Harvard):

Dr John Rouse (Melbourne):

Alan Bennell (Edinburgh):

Dr Melva Philipson (DSIR, NZ):

Prof Barbara Palser (Rutgers, USA):

Prof William Philipson (Christchurch, NZ):

Dr Alan Leslie (RHS, Wisley):

Professor Vernon Heywood (Reading):

Some aspects of Rhododendron
distribution

"Propagation of Hardy Rhododendrons"

"The Presentation and Maintenance of
large Rhododendron collections"

"A Reassessment of Bornean
Rhododendrons"

"Vireya Rhododendrons - towards an
understanding of their floral
diversity"

"The Propagation of Vireya
Rhododendrons"

"Horticultural and Taxonomic
importance of Rhododendron rust"

"The Rhododendron nectary - an
ultrastructural study"

Rhododendron embryology

"Shoot morphology in Rhododendron"

"Registration of Rhododendron
hybrids"

General summing up and conclusion
of conference

Dr Chris Wood
Rhododendron Conference Organiser
Royal Botanic Garden
Inverleith Row
EDINBURGH EH3 5LR

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energetic
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AS an example I
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