



*The Rhododendron  
& Camellia Group*

BULLETIN No. 30 - December 1985

**Forthcoming Events, 1986**

February 25th	R.H.S. Annual General Meeting
March 18th/19th	Camellia Competition.
	Magnolia & Ornamental Plant Competition.
April 8th/9th	Rhododendron Competition Camellia Show

April 29th	Rhododendron & Camellia Group Annual General Meeting at 4 p.m. at Vincent Square
April 29th/30th	Rhododendron Show
May 20th/23rd	Chelsea Show

**Group Officers:**

**Chairman:** Hon. H. E. Boscawen, The High Beeches, Handcross, Sussex, RH17 6HO — until 29th April, 1986 and thereafter — Mr. Bruce Archibald, "Starveacre", Dalwood, E. Devon, EX13 7HH. Tel: Stockland 221. **Vice-Chairman:** Mr. Bruce Archibald as above until 29th April, 1986.

**Hon. Gen. Secretary:** Mrs. B. Jackson, 2 Essex Court, Temple, London, EC4Y 9AF. Tel: 01 353 1669.

**Hon. Minutes Secretary:** The Lady Cynthia Postan, 84 Barton Road, Cambridge, CB3 9LH. Tel: 0223 353314.

**Hon. Tours Secretary:** Mrs. V. M. Archibald, "Starveacre", Dalwood, E. Devon, EX13 7HH. Tel: 040488 221.

**Hon. Treasurer and Membership Secretary:** Mr. R. H. Redford, Fairbank, 39 Rectory Road, Farnborough, Hants. Tel: 0252 545565.

**Hon. Year Book Editor:** Mr. J. Sanders, Badger Cottage, 101 Guildford Road, Bagshot, Surrey, GU19 5NS. Tel: 0276 73439.

**Hon. Bulletin Editor:** Mr. Bruce Archibald as above.

**Branch Organisers:**

**South East:** Mr. John Fox and Mr. B. E. Wright, Picket Post, Rannoch Road West, Crowborough, Sussex. Tel: 089 26 3207.

**Wessex:** Lady Adam Gordon, Hethersett, Littleworth Cross, Seale, Farnham, Surrey. Tel: 025 18 2054.

**South West:** Major R. A. W. Reynolds, Woodland Grove, Bovey Tracey, nr. Newton Abbot, Devon, TQ13 9LG. Tel: 0626 832336.

**Midlands:** Mr. N. M. Maybury, "Glenarn", 3 Arthur Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 1JN. Tel: 021 454 8855.

**East Anglia:** Mr. C. E. Grainger, The Gables, Finborough Road, Stowmarket, Suffolk, IP14 1PY. Tel: 044 92 5138.

**Honorary Life Member**

In the minutes of the Annual General Meeting circulated with the last Bulletin, members will have noticed a proposal that Mrs. Jean Rasmussen, whose first husband was Frank Kingdon Ward, be made an Hon. Life Member of the Group. The Executive Committee have been delighted to ratify this.

**The International Camellia Society**

It is with great pleasure that we are able to report the election, in international competition, of our member Mr. John Tooby as President of the International Camellia Society and our warmest best wishes for the future go to him.

**Bulletin Editorship**

So far the Hon. Editor has had no response to his appeal in

the last Bulletin for someone to take over from him. The matter now becomes rather pressing and if anyone would like this very interesting job — it does not take up all that much time — please get in touch as soon as possible.

**Hon. Treasurer's Notice**

1. Many thanks to all who have paid already, without reminder, their subscription for 1985/86 and, of course, thanks too to members who now subscribe regularly by Banker's Order.

2. TO ALL OTHER MEMBERS, YOUR SUBSCRIPTION FOR 1985/86 IS NOW DUE. Please send it promptly. Please complete the tear-off slip below and return it to The Treasurer. The annual subscription is due on 1st November each year. It is not too late to initiate a Banker's Order for the current year and thereby worry and uncertainty over subscriptions and delays in the future will be avoided.

3. OVERSEAS MEMBERS can no longer combine their subscriptions 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. The annual subscription covers despatch of Year Book and the Bulletins by surface mail to countries outside Europe. If AIR MAIL is required (to speed up the receipt of these publications) £3.00 per annum must be added to the subscription.

PAYMENT IN CURRENCIES other than STERLING must now include an amount equivalent to £2.00 to cover the cost of collection of the subscription. For example, the sum of 2.50 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 2.50 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.

4. THE RATE OF SUBSCRIPTION is £5 per annum, see Treasurer's Report in Bulletin No. 23. (For those not requiring the Year Book the rate is still £1.50).

To: The Hon. Treasurer, RHS Rhododendron & Camellia Group, Mr. R. H. Redford, Fairbank, 39 Rectory Road, Farnborough, Hants.

From: Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\*a) I enclose cheque for £ : for my subscription for 1985/86.

\*b) Please send a Banker's Order for my Group subscription. \*Delete as appropriate, please. If at all possible please use Banker's Order.

#### Rhododendron & Camellia Group Greetings Cards

Members of the Group are reminded that Greetings Cards made from Mrs Joyce Jack's paintings are still available, and that it is not too late to order some for Christmas.

*R. haematodes* at 15p per card and

*R. thomsonii* at 10p per card in packets of five.

Applications should be sent to Major E. W. M. Magor, at Lamellen, St. Tudy, Bodmin, Cornwall, PL30 3NR, with a cheque in his favour, to include 2nd class inland postage, at the following rates:

10 cards for 28p

20 cards for 34p

50 cards for 98p

100 cards for £1.70 (1st class).

#### South East Branch

On 19th October the Branch were due to visit the Vireya collection at the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew and it is hoped that a report on the visit may be included in a later Bulletin.

On 29th November Mr. Stephen G. Haw gave a lecture at the home of Mrs. Ann Holland at Balcombe near Haywards Heath on the subject of "Rhododendrons & Camellias in China".

On November 7th the Branch was kindly invited by the Wessex Branch to attend a talk by Mr. Ted Millais on this year's Rhododendron Conference in Seattle.

#### Wessex Branch

Miss Judy Medhurst's lecture on Nymans on 4 October last was greatly enjoyed by some 30 members. Some very lovely shots of magnolias featured prominently among her slides, but we had in fact an excellent overall view of the various aspects of the garden often overlooked by those of us who can get there only rarely. Our thanks are due to the committee members who worked hard to provide the buffet, and to Lady Adam Gordon for procuring the wine and glasses (not forgetting Mr. McQuire who acted as wine steward).

On Friday 28th February 1986 at Farnham Maltings — Mr. Ken Lowes will give a slide lecture on his visit to Cornish gardens last April.

#### South West Branch

On Friday 29th November the Branch held an Autumn Rhododendron Evening at the Edgemoor Hotel, Bovey Tracey, at which there was a Quiz organised by John Bodenham and Kenwyn Clapp, a plant sale, and a lecture by Richard Fulcher on "The Rhododendrons of Inverewe" illustrated by some very fine slides. There was also an excellent buffet supper.

#### Midlands Branch

The Spring Meeting of the Group took place on 18th May, when the Group visited Croft Castle, and Hergest Croft Gardens. About twenty members attended during the course of the day, and we were fortunate to have excellent weather.

In the morning the party assembled at Highcroft House, the private home of Lord Croft in the grounds of Croft Castle. Lord Croft personally met us, and conducted us on a

tour of his garden. This featured a very enterprising water garden and numerous recently planted rhododendron hybrids. The party then returned to the house for an excellent lunch, which included some local Croft Castle white wine. Lord Croft was presented with a Clematis in token of our appreciation. The party then moved on to Hergest Croft, where unfortunately due to the preparations being made for Chelsea the following week neither Mr. Banks nor his son or the head gardener was available to show us around. However the party split up into small groups and spent an extremely pleasant afternoon strolling through the gardens. Notable amongst the Rhododendrons in flower were R. Loderi, R. Cornish Cross, and many others.

The Autumn meeting of the Branch took place at the Botanical Gardens in Birmingham on Friday, 8th November at which Mr. Douglas Harris, formerly of Exbury, gave an illustrated talk.

The Spring visit for 1986 is at present being planned, with a possible visit to Bodnant. However, the organiser of the Branch, Neil Maybury, has indicated that he is anxious to receive assistance in organising the Branch, and any volunteers would be warmly welcomed.

#### Wants

Mr. Pradhan, Clerk to the Government of Sikkim and Minister of Agriculture, would love a copy of the RHS Colour Chart fans, which alas are no longer being produced. He has always been most helpful to horticultural visitors going to Sikkim, and it would be a nice gesture if he could be given the Chart. If any member should have one they are prepared to relinquish perhaps they could contact the Secretary, Mrs. K. J. Beadle, 60 Wellhouse Road, Beech, Alton, Hants, GU34 4AG. (Tel: Alton 82590).

We have received a request to try to locate a plant of Camellia 'L'Avenir' alias 'Lalla Rookh' alias 'Laurel Leaf'. If anyone can help, please write direct to the Hon. General Secretary who will pass on the information.

If any member has a plant of *R. microphyton* growing or know of anyone who has, Mr. E. G. Millais of Crosswater Farm, Churt, Farnham, Surrey GU10 1JN would be interested to learn under what conditions it is being grown and just how hardy it may be.

#### The Moment of Truth

In an article in the current Rhododendron and Camellia Yearbook, Sir Peter Smithers brings us up to date on his experiment with magnolias at La Morcote in Southern Switzerland, and tells of his disillusionment when a number obtained from a supposedly reliable source turned out to be anything but what the labels said, being evidently open-pollinated seedlings. The National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens has tried to encourage the vegetative propagation of the named award-winning clones of the Yulania section of Magnolia, but the response has not been encouraging.

It was that great gardener, the late Mr. J. C. Williams of Caerhays who, among other words of wisdom, once remarked what a splendid hobby hybridising rhododendrons was "Seven years expectation, and only one day's disappointment".

We all have our gardening disappointments, and can perhaps laugh about them later. I have had several in 1985, when two magnificent young magnolias, obtained from most prestigious sources, were due to flower for the first time, after about 18 years; one was *M. campbellii alba* (would it be white?), and the other *M. mollicomata*; each had about 3 flowerbuds, which I eagerly looked at every morning for about a month. Then we had a hard frost, so the flowers opened a shrivelled "café au lait" colour; *mollicomata* in addition was rather undersized, but when I mentioned this to a gardening friend, he told me that this had been the case too with a young plant of his from the same

source, but he was able to show it to me in flower this year, a large clear pink, so I still live in hope.

We used to have a very fine plant of *Rhododendron macabeanum* high on a bank across the drive from the house; a large compact truss of deep yellow bells with a crimson blotch in the throat; it more than once beat the very fine Trewithen form at shows, as well as the F.C.C. Plant from Trengwainton, to the disgust of the late Sir Edward Bolitho. A tall lime tree below the house just blocked the view of it from the library window, so my wife had this cut down; the following year, we had a severe drought, followed by a very hard winter, which between them finished off Macabe. As some slight compensation, the lime stump has now formed a well shaped 'bush' about 12 feet across and 7 feet high, which is really rather beautiful.

We used to have a very good form of *R. mallosum* down the drive opposite the lower pond; the other side of the drive from it, above the pond, was a big clump of *R. ponticum*, stocks probably on which old hardy hybrids had been grafted. This, we cut down and the following year, *mallosum* died, deprived of the shelter provided by the *ponticum*.

Soon after we came back to Lamellen (after service in India and Kenya), Sir Eric Savill gave us a most generous present of half a dozen magnolias, and the same number of large-leaved rhododendrons. One of these, *mollyanum*, now *montroseanum*, we planted in an old leaf mould dump above a spring, where it made phenomenal growth, and soon flowered, a good deep pink for this species, considerably admired by John Bond, and said by Mr. Findlay to be a seedling from the F.C.C. plant at Benmore, so I was able to return a layer to Windsor. Near it had been a plant of *R. preptum*, much admired by Mr. Davidian, but a few years ago this succumbed to 'honey fungus'. I failed to take the warning, and to my deep regret, *montroseanum*, perhaps the finest young rhododendron in the garden, turned up its toes this spring. However, Dick Reynolds has most kindly replaced it with a young plant grown from a saddle graft made by Alan Clark a few years back, and this is going into a place where there has been no sign of honey fungus.

*R. souliei* is one of the species said not to thrive in Cornwall, so I was very pleased some years ago to obtain a plant said to be of a very good form from a well known nursery, which prides itself on all its plants being on their own roots. It did well, and I showed it this year at the Rhododendron Show, where I was acting as a steward for the species classes. My co-steward, Mr Reuthe, who was in charge of the hybrid classes, unaware that it was my exhibit, did ask me whether I was sure that it was correctly labelled, to which I replied that I was quite sure as it had come from such a reliable source, and it was awarded third prize in the *campylocarpum* class. After the judging was over, I saw another exhibitor whose knowledge I respect, and asked

him to look at the spray, and he at once said that it was not *souliei* at all, but probably the cross with *aberconwayi*, so I had to admit that he had sold it to me as *souliei*, to which he replied that they usually came true from seed. The only compensation for this has been the evident pleasure which it appears to have given to the scribe who wrote up the species classes at the Rhododendron Show.

More genuine compensation came from a piece of a rather insignificant little yellow rhododendron which I sent to Dr. James Cullen at Edinburgh, because I could not identify it, and which he said was a hybrid between *R. triflorum* and one of the *Tephropepla* subsection, which makes it probably *R. 'Triaur'* — *triflorum* × *aureum* (*xanthostephanum*), which my Father named in 1920, and which I did not know existed. It is amazing, after 24 years back here, still to be finding plants that I did not know we had.

Another of Sir Eric's presents was a plant of the very fine Windsor form of *R. yakushimanum*, which grew into the best shaped plant in this garden, till two years ago one of my son-in-law's shooting guests took a short cut through it in his Landrover. Half the plant has survived, though not surprisingly it did not flower this year, though it has budded up well for 1986. It now has a strong iron stake in front of it.

W.M.

#### Wroxton V

On Friday 18th October the annual Wroxton Week End took place. As usual those attending — 30 odd members — were regaled with a mixture of illustrated talks on such diverse subjects as a recent visit to China by Florence Auckland and Hugh Dingle and the relationship between conditions of rhododendrons growing in the wild and those that can be grown in cultivation, given by Ted Millais. Two gardens were visited, Upton Hall and a smaller garden at Brook Cottage at Alkerton. Once again David Farnes is to be congratulated and thanked for the time and effort spent to produce such an enjoyable occasion.

#### Camellia species in cultivation

Those of us who are only familiar with *Camellia japonica* and *reticulata*, and their cultivars and some of the hybrids, may be unaware that there are 23 different species of Camellia in cultivation in Britain.

In an interesting article in the current issue of the International Camellia Journal, Dr. Takayuki Tanaka of Kyushu Tokai University in Japan, gives an account of the results of a survey which he has carried out of the number of camellia species in cultivation among members of the International Camellia Society in ten countries.

Of the 200 species of camellia in 20 sections, recognised in 1984 in the latest revision of the genus, by Professor Chang Hung Tu of Sunyatsen University in Canton and Dr. Bruce Bartholomew of the California Academy of Science,

only 49 are in cultivation, 47 of them in Japan, 42 in the U.S.A., 35 in Australia, 31 in New Zealand, and 23 each in South Africa and the United Kingdom.

Up to 1960, the United Kingdom was the main channel of introduction; of the 14 species introduced into cultivation up to 1924, 13 had come first to Britain. From then till 1960, another 18 species were introduced into cultivation, of which 4 had come first to Britain, 9 to the U.S.A., 2 each to Australia and New Zealand, and 1 to Japan. In the last 25 years, 32 more species and varieties have been introduced, 19 to Japan, 8 to the U.S.A., 4 to Australia and 1 to New Zealand.

The following species are grown in other countries, but not in Britain:

Section *Stereocarpus*

*C. yunnanensis*, from China, in the U.S.A., Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Japan.

Section *Oleifera*

*C. vietnamensis*, from Vietnam, in the U.S.A. and Japan.

Section *Furfuracea*

*C. crapnelliana*, from Hong Kong, in the U.S.A., Australia, South Africa and Japan.

*C. furfuracea*, from Taiwan, in the U.S.A. and Japan.

Section *Paracamellia*

*C. grijsii*, from China, in the U.S.A., New Zealand and Japan.

*C. miyagii*, from Japan, in the U.S.A., Australia, South Africa and Japan.

Section *Chrysanth*

*C. euphlebia*, from China, in the U.S.A. and Japan.

Section *Thea*

*C. irrawadiensis*, from Burma, in the U.S.A., Australia and Japan.

Section *Theopsis*

*C. forrestii*, from China, in the U.S.A., Australia, New Zealand and Japan.

*C. transnokoensis*, from Taiwan, in the U.S.A., Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Japan.

*C. transarisanensis*, from Taiwan, in the U.S.A., Australia and Japan.

*C. nokoensis*, from Taiwan, in the U.S.A., Australia and Japan.

Section *Camelliopsis*

*C. caudata*, from Hong Kong, in the U.S.A., Australia and Japan.

*C. assimilis*, from Hong Kong, in the U.S.A., Australia and Japan.

It seems remarkable that 3 species endemic in Hong Kong do not appear to be in cultivation in this country.

W.M.

**Bulletin No. 31**

The last date for receipt of copy for Bulletin No. 31 will be 10th March 1986.

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All correspondence concerning matters reported in the Bulletin, except where otherwise indicated, should be sent to: Hon. Bulletin Editor, Bruce Archibald, "Starveacre", Dalwood, East Devon, EX13 7HH.

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**Group Tour, May 1986, Scotland**

Several gardens in Argyll will be visited, among them Benmore, Crarae and Arduaine. Further North, Inverewe and Blackhills, then travelling South, a visit to Jack Drake's nursery and that of Peter Cox near Perth. The tour will commence on May 9th.

To simplify administration the tour will be a package deal i.e. 'all or nothing' and the cost will be kept as low as possible, commensurate with comfort and inclusive or exclusive of coach travel as required. The majority of members present at the Wroxton weekend felt that the length of the tour should not be more than seven full days. Since Inverewe is the highlight of the tour, this will mean a fair amount of travelling but, weather permitting, the beauty of the Scottish countryside should compensate for this. For further details please send completed form below with s.a.e.