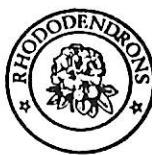


# The Rhododendron & Camellia Group



BULLETIN No. 36 - December 1987

## Forthcoming Events

12 February, 1988      Wessex Branch lecture, Elstead - Mr E. G. Millais on his 1987 visit to China

11 March, 1988      Wessex Branch lecture, Farnham - Mr M. Staniforth of Kew on rhododendrons of Sect. Vireya

23 April, 1988      Wessex Branch visit to Borde Hill (Gore's Wood in morning, garden in afternoon)

Please apply to Mr D. Clarke-Hall for more details of these events. His address is Moorhouse, Iping, rr Midhurst, W. Sussex GU29 0PJ

May 7 - 13 1988      RCG Spring Tour of Dunbartonshire and Argyll

## Rhododendron and Camellia Group

### List of Officers and Members of Committee 1988

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**Vice-Chairman:** Dr R. H. L. Jack, Edgemoor, Loch Road, Lanark, ML11 9BG, tel. 0555 3021

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**Hon. Tours Secretary:** Mrs V. M. Archibald, 'Starveacre', Dalwood, nr Axminster, East Devon EX13 7HH, tel. 040 488 221

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Sir Giles Loder, Bt., VMH, Ockenden House, Cuckfield, Haywards Heath, Sussex RH17 5LD

Major E. W. M. Magor, Lamellen, St. Tudy, Bodmin, Cornwall PL30 3NR

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Major R. A. W. Reynolds, Woodland Grove, Bovey Tracey, nr Newton Abbot, Devon TQ13 9LG

Major T. Le M. Spring-Smyth, Elcombe's Close, Lyndhurst, Hants., SO43 7DS

### Robert Nunn Stephenson Clarke

Those who attend the RHS Rhododendron Shows will have been deeply sorry to read the announcement of Robert Stephenson Clarke's death on the 17th November. He was buried 7 days later in Gore's Wood, among his beloved rhododendrons.

In 1970, Robert inherited the very fine collection of trees and shrubs, particularly rhododendrons, made by his grandfather, Lieut.-Col. Stephenson R. Clarke CB at Borde Hill near Haywards Heath in Sussex. His father, Sir Ralph Clarke, was an active Member of Parliament, interested in trees but not really in rhododendrons, and so, until, Robert took over, exhibits from Borde Hill had not been seen at the RHS shows for a good many years.

With no knowledge of rhododendrons when he took over, but the mentality of a computer, Robert very soon mastered the intricacies of the Edinburgh revision and developed an encyclopaedic memory for collectors' numbers.

He first exhibited at the Rhododendron Show in 1975, and was receiving Awards of Merit the following year for species, which always had a collector's number, and then usually received an evocative clonal name.

His grandfather, who started gardening at Borde Hill in 1893, contributed an article, which he described as 'humdrum', on the rhododendrons at Borde Hill in 1916, in Vol. 1, no. 1, of 'The Rhododendron Society Notes'. In 'Rhododendrons 1977', with Magnolias and Camellias, Robert contributed a most erudite 9-page account of the rhododendron species at Borde Hill, which he called a thesis.

He became one of the leading exhibitors at the RHS shows, considerably assisted by the skill of Jack Vass, his head gardener, in arranging exhibits, and in recent years he even condescended to show hybrids occasionally as well as species. Jack Vass was awarded the A. J. Waley Medal for work with rhododendrons by the RHS in 1976, and Robert was awarded the Loder Rhododendron Cup ten years later. In 1978, he presented the Stephenson R. Clarke Cup in memory of his grandfather, which this year was awarded at the Late Autumn Show for the winner of the class for four trees or shrubs of different genera with autumn fruits.

Robert became a member of the RHS Rhododendron and Camellia Committee in 1980, and that year he wrote the account of the Species classes at the Rhododendron Show for the yearbook. He attended the last two International Rhododendron Conferences, at New York and Edinburgh. This year he was much in evidence at the Rhododendron Show at the end of April, when Borde Hill did very well. The following week, he and Jack Vass spent a morning conducting 30 members of the Rhododendron and Camellia Group round the garden at Borde Hill. A few months later, it became known that he was seriously ill. Our deepest sympathy goes out to his family.

### Branch Organisers

East Anglia: C. E. Grainger

Ireland: Miss M. Forrest

Midlands: Temporary vacancy

South East: J. A. Fox

South West: Major R. A. W. Reynolds

Wessex: Lady Adam Gordon

W.M.

### Chairman's notes

It is with great regret that I have to record the resignation of John Sanders as Yearbook Editor and I am sure that all members will remember with great appreciation the results of his five years in office.

Most fortunately The Lady Cynthia Postan has agreed to take on this onerous task and I hope that members will make her induction as smooth as possible by providing her with copy as soon as convenient and not later than 30 April 1988. Just a small suggestion - how did your garden fare in the hurricane? No need for a long article - say 100 words. Lady Cynthia's address is 84 Barton Road, Cambridge CB3 9LH.

In addition, I am glad to announce a **photographic competition** for the best photograph of a species or hybrid rhododendron, or for any scene connected with the genus. Members are invited to send transparencies together with a short note of not more than 100 words as to why they chose the photograph, to the Hon. Editor of the yearbook, to arrive not later than 31 MARCH, 1988. The winning photograph will be selected by the editorial board (whose decision is final) and it will be published in the 1988-89 Yearbook. A prize of a £10.00 book token is offered. Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope if you wish your slide to be returned.

I am delighted to welcome to the Executive Committee Tom Spring-Smyth who will be known to many as a collector of plants in Nepal, and whose widespread contacts will be of great service to the Group.

Finally, to those of the Group whose gardens suffered so grievously in the hurricane may I offer my sympathy? I can only say that Nature has a way of healing her own wounds, but she does need time.

B.A.

### What's in a name?

Some years ago now, my late wife and I made a long narrow bed for dwarf rhododendrons alongside the drive, and planted it mainly with subsect. *Lapponica* species and hybrids, most of which have done well. These included several of General Eric Harrison's secondary hybrids from the 'Blue Tit' ('Saint Beward') grex, and a number of the Glendoick game-birds.

One day in early May the garden was open from 1000 till 1800 for St John Ambulance under the Cornwall Gardens Festival arrangements, and my eleven-year-old grand-daughter Carolyn and I were 'on the gate', on the other side of the drive a little further up the hill from the dwarf bed, from 1000 till 1400 when when the St John ladies arrived. During the course of the morning, while there was a constant stream of visitors, I spied someone taking photographs of the plants. He started with R. 'President Roosevelt' in my grandson Edward's garden nearby, which is far from being my favourite rhododendron, and then went on to photograph a yellow dwarf rhododendron which was then in full bloom.

Then he spotted me, and came over to ask the names of what he had been photographing, and I was flattered and delighted to see that he was Dr Homer E. Salley, co-author with Harold E. Greer, of that splendid reference book, 'Rhododendron Hybrids - A Guide to their Origins'. At the time, I could not go over to have a close look at the plants, and I told him that the one with variegated leaves and flowers was 'General Eisenhower', and the yellow was 'Chikor', and I was wrong on both counts as I discovered as soon as I was able to go over and see the labels. At one end of the dwarf bed we have in close proximity a group of yellows: R. *chryseum* (now *rupicola* var. *chryseum*); 'Chikor'; 'Chink', 'Remo', and the plant which Homer had been photographing, which was labelled 'Golden Fleece', the name under which I had bought it in 1971 - a hybrid of *keiskei* and *hanceanum* 'Nanum'.

I remember my surprise in 1978 when this hybrid received an Award of Merit after trial at Wisley under the name 'Princess Anne'. I had known ever since that my 'Golden Fleece' had changed its name, but I do not seem to have changed the label. Since an apology and an explanation were obviously called for, and by this time the Salleys had gone on to Pencarrow, I sat down and did what I should have done nine years ago, and thumbed through the old yearbooks until I found the explanation. I found 'Salley and Greer' helpful in this, too.

The name 'Golden Fleece' had apparently not been registered, so it was taken in 1965 or 1966 by Slocock's Goldsworth Nursery for an unrelated hybrid, 'Goldsworth Orange' × 'Yvonne'. The

*hanceanum* × *keiskei* cross (introduced 1961) was probably put into the Wisley trials in 1974 when it was realised that the name 'Golden Fleece' had now been taken for another hybrid, and so the name 'Princess Anne' was registered by W. S. Reuthe instead. Under this name it was awarded an AM in 1978 and an FCC in 1986, after trial at Wisley in each case. It is a very fine small yellow rhododendron which forms a shapely mound less than two feet high, and which I can strongly recommend.

W.M.

### Additions to the International Rhododendron Register, 1986-7

This year's list of Additions to the International Rhododendron Register, from the 1st July 1986 to the 30th June 1987, has been published as usual with 'Rhododendrons 1987-88, with Magnolias and Camellias', but owing to the considerable numbers of new registrations, it has been bound separately.

At the Fourteenth International Horticultural Congress, held at Scheveningen in Holland in 1955, the Royal Horticultural Society was invited to become the International Registration Authority for Rhododendron Names, and Dr H. R. Fletcher, the Regius Keeper of the Royal Botanic Garden at Edinburgh, was appointed the first Registrar. He undertook the immense task of collecting all the published names given to rhododendron and azalea cultivars, and produced the International Rhododendron Register in 1958: the publication of a second edition is eagerly awaited by *Rhododendrophiloi*<sup>1</sup> all over the world. It is understood that the RHS does not propose to bring out a further edition of 'Part Two - Rhododendron Hybrids' of their Rhododendron Handbook, last published in 1969, and in the absence of up to date editions of either of these works, which in any case are out of print, Salley and Greer's 'Rhododendron Hybrids - A Guide to their Origins' fills a much-felt want.

In his introduction to the Register in 1958, Dr Fletcher commented that many seedlings are not as good as rhododendrons or azaleas of the same or similar parentage, and that such second-rate plants are not worth naming. The introduction to Part Two of the Rhododendron Handbook 1969 made the point that, in view of the publication of the International Rhododendron Register, only those newly-registered hybrids which have received awards, or are of exceptional interest, were being included.

Additions to the Register are published in the yearbook every year, and during the last twelve-month period, 288 new registrations were made, of which 19 belonged to section *Vireya*, and 87 were Azaleas. Besides the list of new registrations, the yearbook publishes the names of the registrants, 47 this year from the USA including 18 from the State of Washington, 14 from Australia, 13 from the United Kingdom, 7 from New Zealand, 3 from Canada, 2 from Germany and 1 from Ireland.

Of the newly-named evergreen azaleas, 16 were clones of the 'Purple Splendor' × 'Vuyk's Scarlet' grex; 11 of the 'Elsie Lee' × 'Robin Hill Frosty' grex, and 8 of 'Ward's Ruby' × 'Hahn's Red'. Forty-three of all the new registrations were crosses of *yakushimanum* and 19 were of 'Parentage Unknown'. Four were crosses of 'Purple Splendour', and it is of interest that 'Purple Splendor' is the registered name of an azalea, 'Hexe' × *poukhanense*, named by Gable in 1939, while 'Purple Splendour' is a *ponticum* hybrid made by Waterer at Knap Hill before 1900, which received an AM in 1931. This confusion could not have happened since the International Register was created.

For our other main genus, *Camellia*, the International Camellia Society became the International Registration Authority about 1984 and the Registrar, Mr R. J. Savige, is still at the stage of collating all the 32000 names which have been given to camellia cultivars in Chinese, Japanese, and various European languages over the years, and the 2800 pages of the register should be ready for publication in about two years' time. Thirteen new names have been registered since the International Registration Authority was appointed, two of them in the last year.

W.M.

1. Walter points out that 'Rhododendrophiloi' (or rhododendron lovers) is the Greek inscription round the logo on the cover of Stevenson's 'The Species of Rhododendron', 1930.

### Rhododendron Species Foundation's Leaflet

Members who plan to visit the north western USA could scarcely do better than add the Rhododendron Species Foundation's 24-acre garden to their itinerary. The garden is 24 miles south of

Seattle and eight from Tacoma. An informative leaflet with map is available from Richard V. Piacentini, RSF Director, The Rhododendron Species Foundation, P.O.Box 3798, 2525 South 336th Street, Federal Way, Washington, WA 98063-3798, tels. (206) 927-6960 or (206) 838-4646.

#### 'First Class Rhododendrons'

The following five FCC plants were inadvertently omitted from the lists at pp.13-20 of 'Rhododendrons 1987-88 with Magnolias and Camellias':

##### Species

*diaprepes* 'Gargantua'  
*parryae*

Crown Estates 1974  
Gorer 1973

##### Cultivars

'Lionel's Triumph'  
'Marianne Hardy'  
'Queen Elizabeth II'

Rothschild 1974  
Rothschild 1982  
Crown Estate 1974

EWMM

#### 'Daffodilly'

In his account in the yearbook of the Cornwall Garden Society's Spring Flower Show last April, Barry Starling relates that the judges, Mr Edmund de Rothschild and Mr Brickell, had awarded a first prize to a vase of a rhododendron shown from Lamellen, masquerading under the name of 'Daffodilly'.

When General Harrison left Tremeer, and before Mrs Hopwood took over, I was allowed to have some of the young plants he left behind in the nursery. I was careful not to take anything of which there was only one plant, but one that I did take flowered very well for the first time this year. It had creamy-yellow, waxy tubular-campanulate flowers; the label was almost indecipherable, but appeared to read *xanthocodon* × 'Daffodilly'. This had always puzzled me, as there is no hybrid registered as 'Daffodilly', which seemed a curious name to give a rhododendron. However, a little research revealed that, in the course of a most interesting lecture to the RHS on 6th March 1962, (Rhododendron and Camellia Yearbook 1963, pp.14-15), the late Mrs Roza Harrison mentioned that she had raised at Tower Court a good many rhododendrons from Forrest, Farrer, Kingdon Ward, Rock, and Ludlow & Sherriff seed, among others *xanthocodon* (probably KW 6026) which, '... was the most outstanding yellow. I promptly named it 'Daffodilly'. The shades vary from white, cream-yellow and yellow'. In good faith therefore, the Lamellen plant was shown as *xanthocodon* 'Daffodilly', and accepted as such by the judges. After the judging was over, however, one or two of the 'experts' questioned the name and, appropriately, one of the Narcissus judges (Alan Hardy) was called over to give an opinion and said that it definitely was not *xanthocodon* 'Daffodilly'!

As the Rhododendron Show was only four days later in London, I took up an exhibit of this rhododendron, and asked the Rhododendron and Camellia Committee to identify it for me. Arthur George of Hydon Nurseries, who has propagated a lot of General and Mrs Harrison's rhododendrons, was unable to stay for the committee meeting, but recognised it as one of the General's hybrids, and was able to tell me a few days later that it was *R. xanthocodon* 'Daffodilly' × 'Hunter's Moon' (*chasmanthum* × *concatenans*). With the agreement of General Harrison and Mrs Hopwood, this cross has now been registered as R. 'John Stone', after the gardener who has kept an eye on the Tremeer rhododendrons for the last thirty years. 'Daffodilly' has also now been registered, as have two other good hybrids left behind at Tremeer: 'Sincerity' × *rex* ('Catherine Hopwood'), selected for trial at Wisley, and 'Romarez' (*kyawii* × *griersonianum*), a hybrid made by Roza's first husband, J. B. Stevenson, × 'Polar Bear', described as 'a pink Polar Bear', now registered as 'George Haslam'.

W.M.

#### Late flowering rhododendrons in Cornwall

At the Cornwall Garden Society's AGM on the 22nd October, when we had a really superb talk by Mr John Simmons, Curator of what 'The Times' described a couple of days later as 'The Royal Britannic Gardens at Kew', I was asked to identify a truss of a beautiful deep yellow lepidote rhododendron, and to my surprise it was *R. concatenans* which I had never before seen in flower in the autumn.

Still more to my surprise, I found it just coming into flower here

at home next day, and it has remained so for a full month. One of my father's few ambitions was to have a rhododendron in flower every month of the year, and I think he achieved it. Also in flower today are *triflorum*, *neriiflorum* ssp. *euchaites*, *sanguineum* and 'Yellowhammer', and next month we shall have 'Christmas Cheer', 'Fulgarb' and 'Nobleanum'.

Walter Magor, Lamellen, 20 xi '87

#### Australian Rhododendron Society's International Rhododendron Conference

The Conference Organiser has sent the Hon. Bulletin Editor five slips for those who wish to receive details of the provisional programme and official application form (on which bookings should be made). The editor will send a slip to each of five members who wish to attend the Conference in New South Wales, 1-5 October 1988. His address is given at the beginning of this issue.

When Members receive this year's copy of the Yearbook, they will find that the new list of Additions to the Rhododendron Register has been bound separately, in view of the space that would have been taken up in the yearbook. It is expected that the number of new registrations may not decrease in the future, and so the same format will be used.

As some Members may not wish to receive this list, it would assist the Editors if Members would kindly complete the attached proforma and return it to The Lady Cynthia Postan, 84 Barton Road, Cambridge, CB3 9LH.

The replies received will enable the editors to decide how best future lists can be made available to those members who would like to receive them.

I do/do not wish to receive the yearly list of Additions to the International Rhododendron Register.

Signed .....

Address .....

.....  
The Lady Cynthia Postan, 84 Barton Road, Cambridge, CB3 9LH.

#### Rhododendron and Camellia Group greetings cards

A supply of Rhododendron and Camellia Group greetings cards, featuring Joyce Jack's beautiful portrait of *Rhododendron haematodes* is still available, now at the reduced price of 10p per card, in packets of five with envelopes. Apply, with cheque to cover postage, to Major E. W. M. Magor, Lamellen, St. Tudy, Bodmin, Cornwall PL30 3NR.

#### Rhododendron and Camellia yearbooks

Major E. W. M. Magor would be grateful for help in obtaining copies of the following yearbooks:  
1950 (no. 5); 1953 (no. 7); 1954 (no. 8); 1960 (no. 14); and 1961 (no. 15).

He, in turn, has duplicate copies of the following, which he is willing to pass on to other members of the Group:  
1956 (Garden Book Club edit.); 1964 (no. 18); 1967 (no. 21); 1980-81; 1983-84; 1985-86.

Apply: Major E. W. M. Magor, Lamellen, St. Tudy, Bodmin, Cornwall PL30 3NR.

#### Bowood

On the 21st of May, at the kind invitation of the Earl of Shelburne, a party of members arrived at the rhododendron garden, situated on the A342 near Calne in Wiltshire. We were greeted by Lord Shelburne himself who, after giving a short history of the garden, led us through the beginning of the woodland where most of the drives are named after members of the family.

The woodland is about 650 feet above sea level, on part of the narrow belt of greensand that stretches from the Wash to Lyme Bay in Dorset, providing a soil suitable for rhododendron cultivation. Additionally there is a fair amount of high cover from mature oak and beech, so that the conditions are well reflected in the health of the rhododendrons. Some of these are large, planting having been commenced by the 3rd Marquess of Lansdowne about 1854 and added to by each generation up to the present. It was most encouraging to see young plants from quite recent seed

importations being planted out. The large quantity of leaf mould has prompted natural regeneration on the scale normally associated with the west coast of Scotland. Deer are a nuisance but some of the areas have been wired and here regeneration is most noticeable.

We saw large plantings of *R. luteum* with its very sweet scent, and noted a mature *Magnolia wilsonii* with its large pendent white flowers. Very many old rhododendron hybrids were evident, and a fine *yakusimanum*, flowery and compact, was close to the path. It would be hard to name all the plants but mention must be made of a very good pink *decorum* and a vast 'Humming Bird' (*haematodes* × *williamsianum*).

The fifty-acre woodland has been extremely well maintained. Mr David Cleverly, the head groundsman, and his staff of four deserve loud congratulation. At the end of our tour we thanked Lord Shelburne for his very kind invitation and for devoting much time to showing us round. We presented him with a moosewood, *Acer pensylvanicum* 'Erythrocladum' as a small token of our appreciation.

B.A.

### Exbury

On a genial 1st June 1987, 40 members of the Group gathered at Exbury in response to Mr Edmund de Rothschild's kind invitation to a guided tour of this world-famous garden. We soon split into three parties, one led by Mr de Rothschild, one by Mr Terry Drew, the Estate manager, one by Mr Douglas Betteridge, the head gardener.

Exbury is noted for the range of superb hybrid rhododendrons which have been raised there, and it was somewhat unfortunate that our visit was too late to catch the best of these. However, the azaleas were in full flower and provided a colourful mosaic, especially when reflected in the surface of one of the ponds. There is also an excellent collection of rhododendron species. A close examination of a good *R. bureavii* disclosed an old etched label giving a Rock collection number, R59248A. In one place there was a planting of *Taliensis* (prev. *Lacteum* series), with *traillianum* var. *dictyonum*, and the good form 'Kathmandu' with cinnamon indumentum, AM 1965. Quite a few of the large-leaved rhododendrons were still in flower and the magnificent 'Fortune' (*falconeri* × *sinogrande*), crossed at Exbury, was a mass of lovely yellow trusses. Exbury is not all rhododendrons, and many select camellias, magnolias and other trees and shrubs are present in the woodland, with, at a lower level, drifts of Asiatic primulas in the wetter parts of the garden. This report necessarily omits far more than it can include and, indeed, one would need many more visits to find all the treasures hidden in this lovely garden.

Regrettfully we had to leave the garden but Mr and Mrs de Rothschild very kindly invited us into the house, where we were lavishly entertained. When the time came for us to depart we thanked Mr and Mrs de Rothschild for their hospitality and left resolved to make another visit in the near future. Some of our party then drove the short way to 'Spinners' at Boldre, the home of Mr and Mrs Peter Chappell, where the richly-planted garden has recently been televised. The nursery also contains a broad selection of plants not easily found elsewhere, and members found it hard to leave empty-handed!

B.A.

### Impressions of a visit to Bhutan, 1987

'There was an old woman tossed up in a basket  
Fifty times as high as the moon.  
Where she was going I couldn't but ask it,  
For in her hand she carried a broom.  
"Old woman, old woman, old woman", quoth I,  
"Whither, oh whither, of whither so high?"  
"To sweep the cobwebs out of the sky  
And I'll be with you by and by".

This old rhyme could very well be taken as a skit on the expedition to Bhutan in April and May of 1987 to see the rhododendrons in flower and to collect seed and seedlings. All aspects of the trip are there: the high passes reaching into the sky; the cobwebs are the rich harvest of plants and seeds swept into the white plastic carrier bags carried by each member of the party; the broom stands for the strange assortment of implements - knives, trowels, kitchen spoons, etc. - which were used to dig up the spoils. The basket, of course, is the minibus that the party came to regard as their second home as it snaked dizzily round the endless contours of the mountainside, thousands of feet above the rushing river below.

The old woman could possibly be taken for the writer, who began as a detached observer but rapidly joined the ranks of those endearing eccentrics known as plant collectors.

Drukyl, the Dragon Kingdom of Bhutan, lying high up in the NE corner of the Himalayas with Nepal and Sikkim to the west, Tibet to the north and the almost trackless NE Frontier Agency of India, now known as Himachal Pradesh, to the east, is an independent kingdom with a constitutional monarch, but lately emerged from almost total isolation: Shangri-la indeed. Even now, after about thirty years of intense modernisation, the country is still served by a single road, brilliantly built by Indian Army engineers. This road connects India with the capital, Thimpu, and from there to other small towns and the ubiquitous monasteries or dzongs, lying mostly between 7 and 9000 feet in the north-south valleys separated by high passes. Before the road was built in the 'sixties (the last section was only tarred in 1980) travel in the country was slow and arduous, on ponies or on foot. Thanks to the road and the minibus, we covered in less than three weeks most of the route that took Ludlow and Sheriff three months in 1934. However, there are many valleys and passes only accessible on Shanks's pony.

Our party, originally eight in number, but reduced by illness to six, was led by Keith Rushforth; the other five were Anne and Edward Boscowen, David Clulow of the Orchid Committee, Fergus Kinmonth, a tree surgeon and intrepid tree climber, and I. The tour lasted for three weeks, of which nearly a week was spent under canvas and on foot or pony. The rest of the time we travelled in the minibus, which made it possible to cover a very large part of the country where trees and shrubs likely to survive in the British Isles could be found. This meant concentrating on areas above 7000 ft up to 13000 ft., mostly the approaches to, and summits of, the various passes. Grierson and Long of the Edinburgh Botanic Garden, in their *Flora of Bhutan*, classify these zones of ascending altitude as: cool broad-leaved forest, evergreen oak forest, blue pine forest, spruce forest, hemlock forest, fir forest, juniper-rhododendron scrub, and highest of all, dry alpine scrub (up to 1600m.). All are dominated by a few characteristic trees, such as *Acer campbellii*, *Betula alnoides*, *Castanopsis* spp., *Pinus wallichiana*, *Picea brachytyla* and *spinulosa*, *Tsuga dumosa*, *Abies densa* and *Juniperus recurva*. The highest passes our party reached were the Rudong-la and the Thrumsheng-la, both at over 13000 ft and under snow on 5 and 10 May, but where even so some rhododendrons were in flower.

The weather was mixed, some beautiful days interspersed with a good deal of rain. It was never too hot, but once or twice we were uncomfortably wet. The valleys were often filled with streamers of cloud, so that we could look down from the heights through dripping forests that could never have known a drought. As in all alpine countries streams are abundant, but I missed the lush flower-dotted meadows of the European Alps. The high pastures, given over to sheep and yaks, are more likely to be closely cropped bamboo. This ubiquitous bamboo gives prickly walking, as well as an almost impenetrable understorey in the forests. However, there is much that is familiar in these high valleys. The villages with their wooden houses huddled on steep hillsides, with roof shingles held down against the wind by rounded boulders, could easily have been in Switzerland or Austria. Rice is grown up to 9000 ft., and as in all mountainous regions, every possible inch is cultivated, so the brilliant green of terraced rice paddies can be seen on apparently precipitous slopes. The farmers are herdsmen with large flocks of cattle and sheep. The animals' droppings suggest that the cattle penetrate to every part of the forest.

A pleasant memory is of trying to tread between hundreds and thousands of *Primula denticulata* growing around our tents at our first camp site, and another is of hearing the cuckoo calling ('Oh, to be in England...'). Other plants growing profusely were *Rosa sericea*, with creamy flowers the size of florins, the fiery *Euphorbia griffithii*, *Clematis montana* and *Rosa brunonii* draping trees 30 ft. high, *Daphne bholua* scenting the air, bright yellow *Piptanthus laburnifolius* (L&S 17394), and a tiny blue flower like an *Eritrichium* which I never identified (possibly *E. canum*. Ed.) More rarely seen but never to be forgotten were clumps of *Iris clarkei*, fragrant *Skimmia arborescens*, *Bryocarpum himalaicum*, *Primulas sikkimensis* and *wightii*, two orchids, a pure white *Coelogyne corymbosa* and a purple *Dendrobium nobile*, *Jasminium humile*, and most spectacular of all, *Cornus (Benthamidia) capitata*.

We had come mainly to see the rhododendrons, and, according to Keith, we found over thirty-five, two-thirds of these in flower. I have a diary record of having seen twenty in flower, but I don't think the list is complete. They grew in careless profusion, competing for light and air amongst the forest giants, many of which were dead or dying, with broken branches covered with epiphytic ferns and streamers of grey moss. We would suddenly come round a bend in the road and see banks of *arboreum* blazing up into the treetops, or look down a ravine over a sea of *falconeri* mingled with 60 ft *Magnolia campbellii*, both in flower. It was interesting to note on our homeward journey a fortnight later the many greens in these woods as the deciduous trees, especially *Acer campbellii*, put out their leaves.

I thought I had lost my cash and passport after we had fought our way through six-foot high thickets of bamboo to reach a glowing carmine *hodgsonii*, first seen fifty yards away from the other side of a deep ravine. Our minibus would frequently stop when someone wanted to investigate a flash of colour or a familiar shape in a ravine or on a rock face. Such investigations often took two hours or more, and progress was slow. Our guide, Kinley, and our driver were patient. We knew what we owed to our driver, who held our lives in his hands as we often travelled in the dark and the rain; a line of wooden posts bordering the road our only protection from the voids below. He was a good Buddhist, too, and would not run over a snake on the road one wet night. It was sleepy and took a lot of moving! Two gorgeous epiphytic rhododendrons seen and brought down from their trees were *lindleyi* and *dalhousiae*.

Trekking highlights were the camp fires in sound of rushing water on the only two starry nights, and my '4 seasons' sleeping bag into which I crept with a noggin of dutyfree whisky on those nights when it rained. I also remember gratefully the farmer and his family who allowed us to dry out in their house by a wood-burning stove when we arrived at dusk, soaked to the skin after an eight-hour slog across the mountains.

Lastly, I remember with affection the people of Bhutan, good peaceable followers of the Lord Buddha, who won't shoot wild animals, and who welcome strangers with friendship and a smile.

Cynthia Postan

#### Rhododendrons found in Bhutan, 23 April - 13 May 1987

Lady Cynthia's list of rhododendrons observed in Bhutan is appended. A glance reveals how well rewarded she was. Notable inclusions are *fulgens*, *lanatum*, *smithii* and *succothii*. 'F' means 'in flower'.

*arboreum* F  
*arboreum* ssp. *cinnamomeum* F  
*arboreum* ssp. *cinnamomeum*  
var. *roseum* F  
*arboreum* ssp. *delavayi* F  
*barbatum*  
*camelliiflorum*  
*campanulatum* var. *aeruginosum*  
*campylocarpum* F  
*cinnabarinum* F  
*cinnabarinum* ssp. *xanthocodon* F  
*dalhousiae* F  
*edgeworthii* F  
*falconeri* F  
*falconeri* ssp. *eximium* F  
*flinckii* (*lanatum*) F  
*fulgens*  
*glaucocephalum* F

*griffithianum* F  
*hodgsonii* F  
*keysii* F  
*lanatum*  
*lepidotum*  
*lindleyi* F  
*maddenii*  
*maddenii* ssp. *crassum* F  
*nivale*  
*setosum*  
*smithii* F  
*succothii* F  
*thomsonii* F  
*triflorum* F  
*virgatum* F  
*wallichii* F  
*wightii* F

#### The Autumn Weekend, 23-25 October 1987

There had been general agreement among members who had been on the spring tour of Sussex gardens in May that their hotel, the Roebuck, Wych Cross, near Forest Row, would be a good venue for the autumn meeting. It was a happy occasion even though Ashdown Forest and adjacent gardens had been in the path a week before of the wind at Beaufort number 12 which had prostrated many of the Wealden trees. Gardeners in this part of Sussex were tentatively letting their heads show above the wall for the first time since the storm, and clearing, cutting and burning were under way.

At Sheffield Park a still despondent Mr Skinner and his staff had begun their restoration programme with vigour, but the scene in the garden produced a heavy feeling of sadness as a late soft sun dissolved the matutinal mists. The large incidental trees, beech, oak and pine, whose cover had been valued, had proved most frangible and spectacular in collapse. Cypress both true and false were, of course, top-heavy, and had toppled intact. Some parts of the garden were not obviously affected, and the view down one of the lakes to the Chusan palm-girt waterfall had not lost its savour. In the afternoon at The High Beeches we found that the Boscowens had roped off their woodland garden as impassable, so, skirting the margin, we walked up to the house and pored over their albums of cuttings and photographs of Bhutan, Nepal and Australia.

Saturday evening at the hotel passed swiftly when Mr A. D. Schilling of Wakehurst Place gave a lecture with slides on Nepal, without charge to the Group, in kind response to an invitation from Major and Mrs T. Spring-Smyth, who were present. A number of the rhododendrons shown are grown in Westwood Valley at Wakehurst, and, largely, only the tallest of these had suffered in the storm. If it had not been for falling branches and trees, the rhododendrons as a group would have fared well. Mr Schilling said that an aerial survey would have been required for an initial appraisal of the storm's havoc.

Happier botanical experiences were recalled to general applause at the hotel on Sunday morning, when Lady Cynthia Postan showed her slides of Bhutan, beginning at the very gates to the Dragon Kingdom, and ending in swirling cloud on the Thrumshing-la, where a bilingual roadside board informs drivers that they are, '... now passing through the highest pass', and advising them to 'bash on regardless'. Her story of Bhutan is related elsewhere in this issue. Mr John Fordham then showed us a generous selection of his sharp and squarely-posed close views of alpines seen with the AGS in Austria, France, Italy, Switzerland and Yugoslavia. Keen interest was aroused by his comparisons of members of a genus and their various geographical or local expressions, and the clear affinity within such families as *Primulaceae* and *Ranunculaceae*.

Patrick Haworth