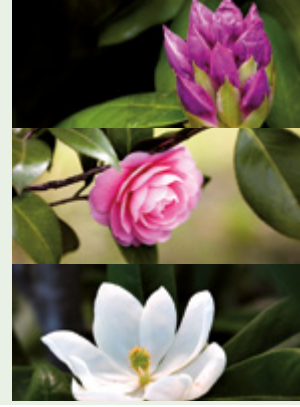


# the Rhododendron, Camellia & Magnolia group

Patron: HRH The Prince of Wales

Bulletin 137 / November 2021 / [www.rhodogroup-rhs.org](http://www.rhodogroup-rhs.org)



## CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

It seems to have been an unusual year weather-wise. I remember cold snowy winters and summers when it never rained but I was only 3 at the time so my memory may not be complete. This year the seasons seem to have overlapped and interfaced with one another. At the moment the days are as sunny as summer but the evenings and nights are quite cold.

It is of course a time to organise the garden for winter and plan for next year. In my case that includes the planting of a number of magnolia seedlings. The dry weather will help with that but I also need the rain to bed them in.

It is also a time to look forward to the next flowering season. It has not been good for magnolias in the last two years so I am hoping that 2022 will be better.

### Face-to-Face Events & Shows

Our branches are beginning to put together programmes of face-to-face events again and you can see details on our website: [www.rhodogroup-rhs.org/activities/events-face](http://www.rhodogroup-rhs.org/activities/events-face)

Similarly, a programme of shows is also appearing.

We may not be back to a full normal after the pandemic until 2023 but the signs for progress are good.

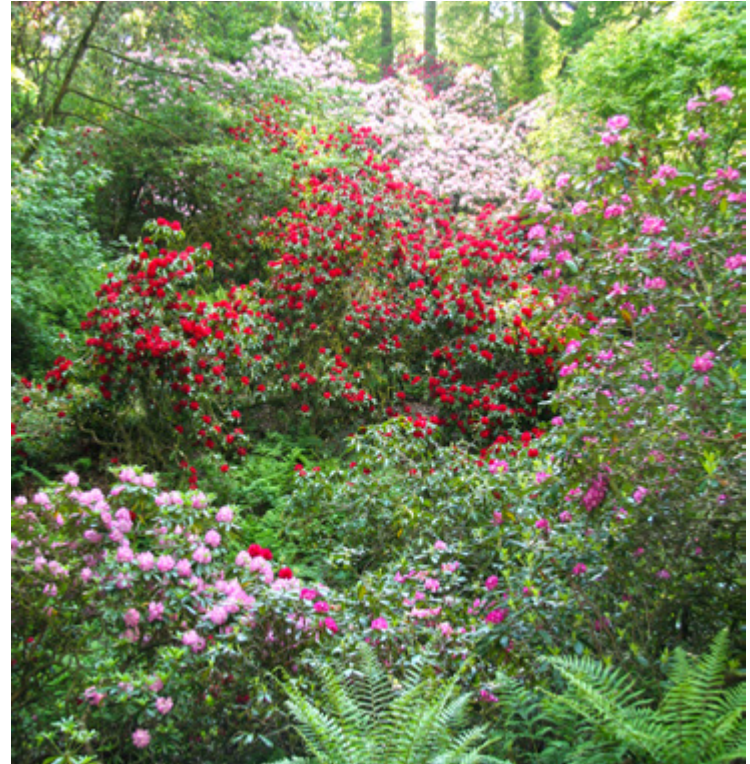
### Brexit and recent VAT rule changes

Along with our continuing issue with exporting seed to the EU, we have noticed one additional problem post-Brexit, exacerbated by the introduction of VAT rule changes in the summer. Some countries, particularly Denmark, are holding up delivery of books and levying significant customs fees and hefty VAT charges. That was not a problem for our annual yearbook mailing since they are bulk shipped to the EU and individually posted from there.

However, new members receive the current yearbook as part of their membership and that is despatched from the UK using the normal postal service. My apologies to new members in the EU for any delays and unexpected charges. We are working to improve the situation.

### Volunteers – Independent Examiner

I am pleased to let you know that we have found a very well-qualified person in the form of Jacky Havenga who is going to take on this very important but low profile and often undervalued role. She was formally co-opted to the position at our October Management Committee meeting.



View of a hillside in Park Wood, Hergest Croft called the Flower Fall  
Photo: Elizabeth Banks see p.6

### Volunteers – Advertising Officer

Stephen Lyus has decided to step down as our Advertising Officer at the end of this calendar year. He has spent over a decade looking after the advertisements in the Bulletin and five years in the yearbook and feels that it is time to pass on the baton. I would like to thank him for his efforts over the years to keep our coffers full.

I am very pleased to say that Philip Eastell has volunteered to fill this role along with his duties as Membership Secretary. He feels that he is already contacting most of the advertisers so the two roles fit together well.

### Volunteers – Secretary

As I indicated in the last Bulletin, we need a new Secretary from May 2022.

The role involves a number of administrative and communication activities. These include arranging our AGM and Management Committee meetings, taking minutes thereof and communicating with the RHS over awards, shows and other matters.

*Continued overleaf*

*Visit our website  
for latest news of Shows and  
Branch meetings*

This is a very important role that can be considered to help keep the Group together. If you would like to be at the centre of Group activities then please contact me for more information.

Graham Mills

#### EDITOR'S NOTE

The next issue of the *Bulletin* will be March (no. 138). Copy date will be Friday 28th January 2022. By then I hope to have received more reports from the Branches of visits and activities planned for the later spring. Members' Notes, especially with photos, are not only very welcome but they are the lifeblood of this publication. We love to read of your experiences of gardening with our three genera, not just in the UK but across the globe, and other news.

Peter Furneaux

#### MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S NOTE

### Subscription renewals

The Group's membership year commences on 1 November and those members who pay by Direct Debit may need to be reminded that the unfamiliar EAZYCOLLECT entry on their bank statement relates to their renewal payment. (Eazy Collect Services Ltd are the company we have used to manage our Direct Debit collections since we first offered this payment method.)

If your subscription is due for renewal by any other method you will have already received an email notification along with the relevant forms and details of the various ways of making your renewal payment.

Thank you for your continued support for the Group.

### Contributions to our publications and activities & an information request – your responses invited

Members who have email will have received a request from me in September requesting your consent to being contacted as a potential contributor to our printed publications and online activities. Active consent is required in order to safeguard your personal data and use it only in accordance with our published privacy policy.

If you do not have email but would like to give your consent to being contacted, please send me a letter.

I would kindly request that you reply to the following 4 questions. Your responses will be recorded and will ensure that our correspondence with you will reflect your preference choices.

- 1) Do you agree to being contacted by email or post for contributions to our published documents?
- 2) Do you agree to being contacted by email or post for contributions to our online activities?
- 3) Your year of birth (Optional)?
- 4) How did you hear about our RCM Group?

Please send your replies directly back to me.

Philip Eastell

35 The Kiln, BURGESS HILL, West Sussex RH15 0LU  
07749 278992 membership@rhodogroup-rhs.org

#### VICE CHAIRMAN'S NOTE

### The Centenary Cup Photographic Competition 2021

Once again we were unable to hold a show at which the Centenary Cup could be contested. However, the Photographic Competition served a useful purpose in offering a means for all members to take part in, and have a chance of winning the cup. To maintain anonymity of entrants, a number was allocated to each photograph to allow the judges to identify their selections from the website. First, Second and Third places were awarded in each of the seven classes. The results are detailed in the following pages along with the winning photograph for each class.

To see all awarded photographs please visit the RCMG website ([www.rhodogroup-rhs.org/activities/photo-comp-2021/results](http://www.rhodogroup-rhs.org/activities/photo-comp-2021/results)).

The Centenary Cup was won by Roderick and Mary White who were presented with the cup by Barry Cooke at the end of August. The competition attracted 33 entrants who submitted over 600 photographs. I thank Pam Hayward for acting as the competition steward and taxonomist, without whose help I would have missed many submitted errors. I also thank the seven judges for selecting the three winners of each class and then the Centenary Cup winning photograph.

The results from the seven classes are:

#### Class 1: A hardy species rhododendron, truss or spray

1st place: *R. keysii* 0159, Alan Pedrick

2nd place: *R. praestans* 0081, Mark Bobin

3rd place: *R. multiflorum* var. *purpureum* (formerly *Menziesia*) 0582, Pam Hayward



Class 1 Winner: *Rhododendron keysii* Photo: Alan Pedrick



**Class 2: A hardy hybrid rhododendron, truss or spray**

**1st place and Centenary Cup 2021 winner: 'Fortune' 0245, Roderick & Mary White**

2nd place: 'Sappho' 0196, Mark Bobin

3rd place: 'Loderi Sir Joseph Hooker' 0315, Philip Eastell



Class 2 and Centenary Cup Winner: *Rhododendron* 'Fortune' Photo: Roderick & Mary White

**Class 3: A tender species or hybrid rhododendron, grown under glass or otherwise, including vireyas, truss or spray**

**1st place : Labelled 'Cara Mia' (Vireya) 0146 , Andy & Jenny Fly**

2nd place: *R. loranthiflorum* (Vireya) 0392, Andy & Jenny Fly

3rd place: 'Robert Bates' (Vireya) 0240, Andy & Jenny Fly



Class 3 Winner: *Rhododendron* Labelled 'Cara Mia' Photo: Andy & Jenny Fly

**Class 4: A deciduous azalea, species or hybrid, spray**

**1st place: 'Bartholo Lazzari' 0168, Andy and Jenny Fly**

2nd place: 'Gibraltar' AGM 0346, Fiona Campbell

3rd place: *R. schlippenbachii* 0084, Mark Bobin



Class 4 Winner: *Rhododendron* 'Bartholo Lazzari' Photo: Andy & Jenny Fly

**Class 5: An evergreen azalea, species or hybrid, spray**

**1st place: 'Aya kammuri' (Wilson No 19) 0265, Polly Cooke**

2nd place: 'George Hyde' 0270, Polly Cooke

3rd place: 'Saotome' (Wilson No 21) 0293, Polly Cooke



Class 5 Winner: *Rhododendron* 'Aya kammuri' Photo: Polly Cooke

**Class 6: A camellia, species or hybrid, bloom or spray**

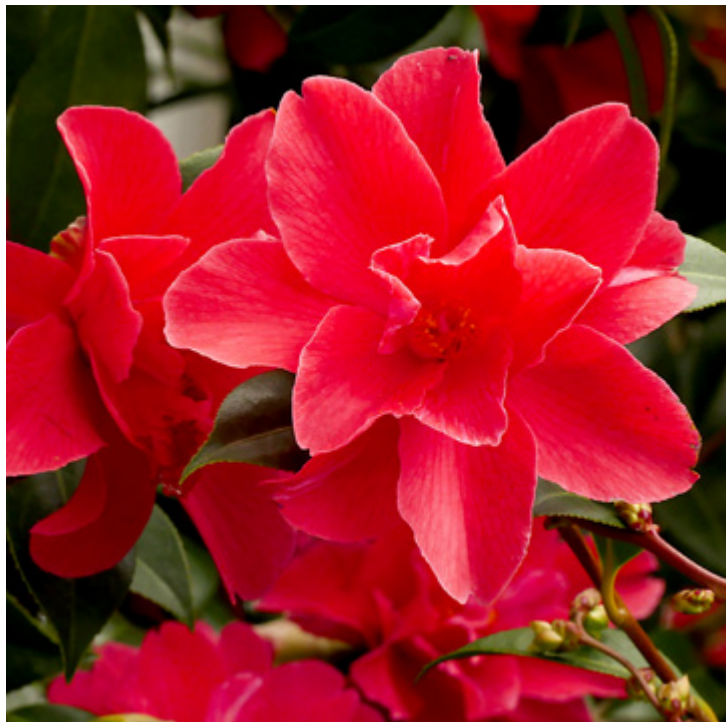
**1st place: C. 'Freedom Bell' 0232, Russell Beeson**

2nd place: *C. forrestii* 0068, Glynne Jones

3rd place: *C. japonica* 'Adelina Patti' AGM 0442, Jim Stephens

*Continued overleaf*





Class 6 Winner: *Camellia* 'Freedom Bell' Photo: Russell Beeson

**Class 7: A magnolia species or hybrid, bloom or spray**

1st place: *M. sprengeri* 0317, Philip Eastell

2nd place: *M.* 'White Caviar' 0363, John Marston

3rd place: *M. tengchongensis* 0364, Roger Clark



Class 7 Winner: *Magnolia sprengeri* Photo: Philip Eastell

I hope that next year we will be able to hold the Centenary Cup Competition along with the AGM at Ramster Garden. We plan to hold the two events on Sunday 15th May 2022. Details will follow.

Barry Cooke

**WINNER OF THE 2021 CENTENARY CUP**



**THE CENTENARY CUP 2021**

is awarded to Roderick & Mary White  
with *Rhododendron* 'Fortune'



Photo: Polly Cooke



As the evenings draw in and gardens settle down for the winter, perhaps now is the time to consider applying for the Outstanding Garden Scheme (OGS).

The OGS scheme recognises public gardens that hold magnificent, well maintained collections of rhododendrons and magnolias. This helps prospective visitors, whether interested amateurs or professional, to find gardens they will enjoy; and for the gardens, the scheme provides additional publicity.



For the scheme to be successful, there need to be enough gardens within it, otherwise it will not become well known and few people will use it. At the moment it has just two – Exbury and Caerhays – and we would love to increase that number significantly: it would be

particularly good to have some of the less well-known gardens, and from all parts of the UK. Eventually we intend to expand beyond the UK.

Full details of the scheme can be found on the website, including details of the application process and the criteria against which applications are assessed. The criteria have been clarified since the initial launch, so it is clear that absolute perfection is not required! Go to [www.rhodogroup-rhs.org/activities/outstanding](http://www.rhodogroup-rhs.org/activities/outstanding)

So please consider applying over the winter: currently, all expenses incurred by the RCMG in assessing gardens will be covered by the RCMG.

If you have any questions, either general or related to your own garden, please send me an email at [ogs.rcmg@gmail.com](mailto:ogs.rcmg@gmail.com).

Nick Butler



## APPRECIATION

### Robin Lack

Robin Lack was a long-standing and active member of the Wessex Branch of the Group who passed away earlier this year. He is fondly remembered as a very knowledgeable and friendly man who was always such good company and is greatly missed.

Robin had a career in the horticultural trade and joined Waterer's Bagshot Nursery in the mid-1960s. He had started on a very different tack as an Actuary, but later switched to horticulture. He spent some time working at Hilling's, Chobham nursery where he met his wife Pamela before going on to Waterer's where he started in the nursery office, over the years rising to the position of section head.



Robin Lack in his beautiful Woking garden Photographer unknown

His enthusiasm led him to become very knowledgeable on plants and in particular on hybrid rhododendrons, which were an old Waterer speciality. He loved the hybrids rather than species, perhaps to encourage the non-expert and to share the success of growing them with customers. This passion was fortuitous for he was in at the start of selling the new, soon to become legendary, Waterer's 'yakushmanum' hybrids and he became known to some as "Lack the Yak".

His garden at St John's, Woking, on land that was once part of Jackman's Nursery, was a delight. It was a haven for choice plants including his beloved hybrid rhododendrons. He occasionally opened the garden to the public for charity and was then helped by his family. Waterer's yakushmanum hybrids were a feature of course, and the timing of the opening often depended on these plants. No visit to Robin was ever complete without a walk around the garden where he pointed out his new additions. We well remember the disappointment he suffered after his patient anticipation of a *Cornus contraversa* 'Variegata' growing sufficiently to develop into a specimen plant was ruined when deer entered his garden one night and severely damaging this fine plant.

Visits to other nurseries and gardens were regular occurrences and we were always amazed at the number of people he knew. Robin kept active his knowledge and respect of the wholesale nursery stock growers in Woking, Chobham, Knaphill and the West End area, and in 2019 he was the source of the material for a historical exhibition about the influential Woking nurseries, held in Woking Lightbox Gallery.

Compiled from notes kindly supplied by Andrea Lack, Mike Clift and Geoff Yates



## Rhododendrons at Hergest Croft 1910 to 1930

My grandfather, W.H. Banks (WHB), had filled up all the available space in the Garden and the Azalea Garden by the 1910s and he had turned his attention to the new trees coming from the Wilson collections from western China for Veitch. In 1912 he had the chance to buy Park Wood, an ancient oak and beech woodland adjacent to the garden with an understory of hazel and holly and groundcover of wood anemone and bluebells. It formed part of the medieval deer park belonging to the old manor house of Hergest Court. The steep valley which runs south along a small spring fed stream under oaks provided an ideal place for planting rhododendrons and extends to some 30 acres. It was described by Tony Schilling, sometime curator of Wakehurst Place, "as more like a Himalayan valley than anywhere else in England."

It runs from north to south with an old irrigation pond in the middle. It is protected by tree cover and has a benign microclimate, a rainfall in excess of 40 inches, and good frost drainage. Roy Lancaster once observed to my father "Dick, I can see why rhododendrons grow so well as you live in a monsoon area".



*Rhododendron oreodoxa* var. *fargesii* (ex Chenault)

He had little time to plant before the First World War but he commenced south of the pond with hardy hybrids including a cascade of rhododendrons known as the Flower Fall, spilling down the slope from *Rhododendron* 'Cynthia' at the top to *R.* 'Doncaster' at the bottom. When the war ended in 1918 he began to develop the milder part of the valley above the pond, initially with hybrids such as *R.* 'Pink Pearl' and *R.* 'Mother of Pearl', in an area nicknamed Pearl Harbour by my mother, and a marvellous group of *R.* 'Shilsonii' that reflect in the pond. My father well remembered helping to make stone terraces up the steep side of the valley and raking oak leaves onto the beds where the planting of rhododendron species began.

WHB's rhodomania grew exponentially and the first purchases of species were made. He acquired plants from an increasingly wide number of sources and although he does not seem to have received seed directly from plant collecting expeditions he bought extensively from nurseries such as Veitch, Reuthe, White, Gill and Chenault. Leon Chenault, based in Orleans, received



*Rhododendron sutchuenense* Photo: Elizabeth Banks

Wilson material through Vilmorin and the Arnold Arboretum. Represented here by *Rhododendron oreodoxa* var. *fargesii*, with free flowering pink bells, I long thought that this probably came from Caerhays as there is an almost identical plant behind the castle, but we have discovered that it came from Chenault in 1927 probably from an original Wilson collection. Wilson wrote that he felt this was one of the best rhododendron introductions, a sentiment I share.

There is also a *R. oreotrephes*, likely a Wilson plant from the same source. WHB obtained many plants through other notable gardeners such as the Earl of Stair at Castle Kennedy, who had received seed directly from Joseph Hooker, Joseph Rock and others. Plants in our collection are Hooker's *R. falconeri*, Rock's *R. rex* ssp. *fictolacteum* and George Forrest's *R. basilicum* and *R. arizelum* to name but a few. All of these plants were recorded by WHB with collectors' numbers providing us with a surviving record of provenance. There are also plants from the Williams at Werrington and Caerhays, through their relationship with the Coltman-Rogers at Stanage who were WHB's neighbours and close gardening friends.

There are so many different hybrids and species (the catalogue includes over 2000 entries!) that I have only been able to pick out a few that stand out for me. The Chinese Path that runs along the west bank high above the stream contains some real gems: there is a fine specimen of *R. mallotum*, a Forrest collection F25067,



*Rhododendron griffithianum* x *R. barbatum*



that may have come from Magor or Westonbirt and has a dark orange brown indumentum under the leaf. Also on that path are large plants of *R. insigne* which came from Reuthe in 1925, with shining silver undersides of its leaves. It is interesting to compare this with the much larger and closely related *R. argyrophyllum* ssp. *hypoglaucum* also bought from Reuthe in 1923. There is a pink form of *R. yunnanense* that my father was particularly keen on, a form of *R. floccigerum* with bright red bells, probably from Forrest though we have no note of its provenance but the beautiful plant of *R. cerasinum* 'Coals of Fire' has a Kingdon Ward number 5830.

Below the path close to the pond is an excellent form of *R. ambiguum*, with the clonal name 'Jane Banks' after my mother, that received an AM from the RHS. A large plant of *R. falconeri* planted in 1929 grows on an island in the stream and has had to have the ground around its roots built up with leaf mould to prevent it from "drowning". There are many other species but both *R. calophytum* and *R. sutchuenense* do very well here and are over 5 metres tall. My father remembered in his childhood the excitement over the first flowering *R. sutchuenense* because of the early flowering time.



*Rhododendron argyrophyllum* ssp. *hypoglaucum*

*Rhododendron arboreum* forms are scattered throughout the wood, many now approaching 10 metres in height. There are further plantings of *R. Loderi* Group and the less common *R. 'Kewense'*, now understood to have the same *R. griffithianum* x *R. fortunei* parentage. Another interesting *R. griffithianum* hybrid is a cross with *R. barbatum* planted in 1923 from Captain Johnstone of Trewithen. It was said by my father to be one of the very best rhododendron hybrids.

In the late 1920s WHB began to be frustrated that he felt Park Wood was too cold for the more tender species. Having tried a number of tender magnolias including *M. dawsoniana* from Chenault in 1925 and *M. delavayi* from Veitch in 1926 that have not survived, he was looking for a seaside site with a more benign climate. He identified possibilities in both Pembrokeshire and Cornwall but he died in 1930 before a purchase was made. I must confess that I am quite pleased that we did not inherit another rhododendron garden with its demands for further resources! And in any case the milder climate of recent years has allowed us to grow many more of these plants at Hergest Croft.



*Rhododendron ambiguum* 'Jane Banks'

My grandmother, Dorothy, continued planting until her death in 1936 but on a much smaller scale. Most importantly, in 1932 she commissioned Bruce Jackson from Kew to produce a catalogue of the whole woody plant collection, which is a priceless resource. After her death and during the Second World War the garden was on "a care and maintenance basis" and its survival was due to the devoted service of George James, the Head Gardener who finally retired in 1957. My father R.A. Banks (Dick) returned to live in Kingdon in 1953. His first task was to regain control over the overgrown garden but he soon began to plant again and fortunately there was still plenty of room in Park Wood, but that is another story.

Much of the information in this article is derived from the research done by Rowan Griffiths, keeper of the garden records, from my grandfather's archives, in particular "the fat green notebook" in which he recorded his rhododendron purchases. Also I am grateful to my wife Elizabeth for her editorial assistance in writing this complex story.

Lawrence Banks CBE, DL, VMH

Photos by Rowan Griffiths unless otherwise stated.



*Rhododendron insigne*



## Something for the darker evenings – Part 2

Members may recall my contribution to *Bulletin* No. 134/December 2020 in respect of Collectors' Field Notes. As the result of contributions from various sources, additional titles can be added. I am fairly confident that this represents a near complete list that reached publication – *unless anyone knows different?* The details below should be used in conjunction with the previous list.

Despite energetic attempts, I have sadly located no information as to the number of copies that were published for any of the titles; I assume fairly small print runs?

It is worth mentioning that a range of random colours were selected for the bindings, with the Kingdon Ward notes showing the greatest variation.

Various botanical and other important gardens have some heavily annotated copies – some with interesting previous ownership provenances. When I started my own collection, in true bibliophile's tradition I eagerly sought unmarked and near mint copies. I quickly learnt that often the most rewarding and instructive copies for inquisitive gardeners and collectors – with a thirst for further knowledge – are those that are much thumbled and heavily annotated with updated and important information of their time.

I am not aware of many copies that may be on the private bookshelves of members. Any further leads to enhance these lists would be much appreciated.

### Kingdon Ward booklets:

No additional titles

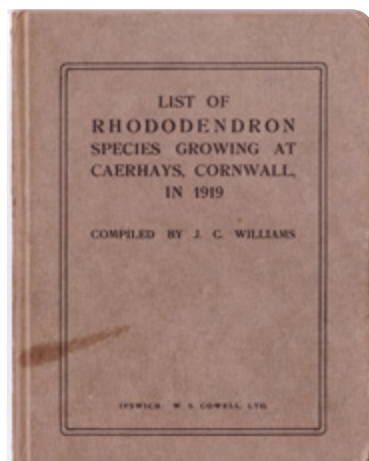
### Rock booklets:

No additional titles

### Forrest booklets:

- F (1912–13) : Field Notes
- F (1913–14) : Seeds of Plants
- F (1914–15) : Seeds of Plants
- F (1917) : Details of Specimens of Rhododendrons
- F (1919) : Details of Specimens of Rhododendrons
- F (1924) : Some further details of seeds sent back  
(Unusually, card covers on the copy recorded)
- F (1924) : Some Plants, Shrubs & Trees

*Addendum:* Another small and uncommon booklet cross-referencing collectors and various field numbers is entitled *List of Rhododendron Species growing at Caerhays, Cornwall in 1919* compiled by J C Williams (printed/published by W S Cowell Ltd, Ipswich). Slightly different dimensions (12cm x 15.5cm) to the Field Notes series. Forty-two pages bound in greyish rigid-card covers listing 345 species/



varieties alongside their collector and their collection number – the majority attributed to Forrest and Wilson + a few Purdom + ANOs. Copies that I have inspected mostly carry annotations. This publication is useful in confirming the successful germination of seeds recorded in the various earlier Field Notes.

John Sanders

ewenique@eclipse.co.uk

## Planting season extended

Planting *Rhododendron* and other woody plants is usually carried out when the ground is moist between the first autumn rains and late spring. Spring planting is recommended more especially for evergreens, it is also the best time for transplanting which avoids winter gales, enabling better establishment.



Young rhododendrons ready for planting

The very wet conditions here in mid Devon during May meant the ground was still wet into June. July saw some high temperatures but again the month ended with a wet spell thus topping up the groundwater, so planting was still possible and, as I write now in early August, I find myself still planting when normally I would be watering young newly-planted plants.

What a difference; I don't ever remember doing so much planting through the summer and not losing anything. In addition, I have been pulling bracken and using it as a mulch around young plants. This helps to conserve moisture and should exclude seedling weed growth while allowing for plenty of air around the main root plate and, as it breaks down, adds organic matter to the soil thus increasing the soil's fertility. Removal of brambles is a greater challenge and just means more hard work.





Bracken is used as a mulch for this so far unidentified species of *Rhododendron* Subsection Falconera (JA389)

At times I think I am losing the battle and could do with some help but I tell myself it's all good for the body in general, although not good for my arthritis. (Caroline Bell told me I should take turmeric. This I am now doing because it seems to be having a positive effect and have stopped taking glucosamine.)

Dick Fulcher

Photos taken by the author.

### The Rhododendron Species Conservation Group Conference, October 2 & 3 at the Herbarium Lecture Theatre, RBGE

I think many people thought this event represented a good opportunity to start enjoying freedom. Certainly my partner, Mary, and I did. It was wonderful to meet old friends again and we are very grateful to John and Margaret Hammond for their organisation of this stimulating conference.

The theme was 'Garden Restoration and Plant Conservation are Mutually Dependent'. Mike Thornley's talk on his experiences of his garden at Glenarn, which he and his family moved to in 1983, fitted the theme well. Some of the rhododendrons at Glenarn, which was built in 1850, date from Joseph Hooker's 1849–50 Sikkim expedition, notably *Rhododendron falconeri*. Many more were added from Kingdon Ward and Ludlow & Sheriff collections, and from other famous Scottish gardens. One of the problems for the Thornleys has been identification because labels, even if legible, drop off. But careful recording of the location of fallen labels has paid dividends. Mike's talk covered many other aspects relevant to the theme of the conference including good record keeping. His main point, which perhaps summarised the day itself, was that for many enthusiasts in Scotland – and in the UK – conservation of rhododendrons starts in their own gardens where many older plants, particularly those from older collections, are in urgent need of conservation and propagation. In this way, they may also be able to start to help conserving rhododendrons globally. His was in fact the last talk of the day.



Recently propagated rhododendrons growing on in the Shade House at Glenarn Photo: Sue Thornley

We began with a talk by Dr David Chamberlain on rhododendrons in the wild. One of the messages of David's talk was how limited are the populations of some species in the wild. The Red List records these species that are endangered. In the RBGE a bright red label now highlights these endangered species and emphasises the role of the RBGE as a site of ex situ conservation.



Red Listed *Rhododendron aberconwayi* at RBGE Photo: Peter Furneaux



The extremely rare *Rhododendron bailsiense* at the Baili Rhododendron Nature Reserve, NW Guizhou, China Photo: David Chamberlain

Continued overleaf



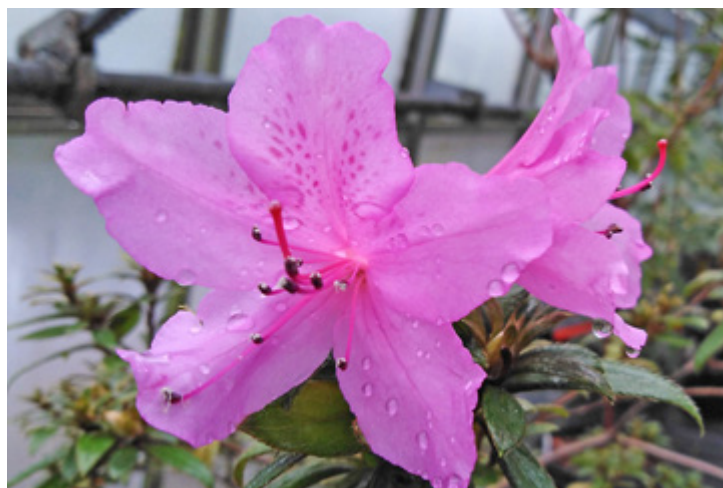
David described many species endangered in the wild. I was struck by *R. bailiense*. It seems that there are only 35 individuals of this new species from Guizhou Province. Another example is a species well known in collections, *R. mallotum* from Pien Ma, but now an endangered species in the wild. Causes of habitat restriction are many and include forestry, burning the rhododendron for charcoal and forest fires. I was surprised to hear that *R. platypodum* is threatened because a bamboo with which it grows is collected for food. Because areas of rhododendron in flower have become tourist attractions, other species may get weeded out for the benefit of 'what the tourists have come to see'. David wisely pointed out that conservation and people must co-exist.

The second talk was by Jens Nielsen entitled 'What's new for Scottish Gardens'. 'New' started in 1980, about the time China was reopening to tourists. Firstly, two species which were known from previous description but were not in cultivation: *R. glanduliferum* was known from a collection by Delavay in 1880 but has only recently been introduced into cultivation and *R. roxieoides* was described by Chamberlain from herbarium specimens in 1950. It is a cliff dweller and is very localised. Jens showed charts of newly published names for proposed new species. Many are synonyms, some are species which were previously known but only recently introduced and more than a few are genuine new species. Quite a number are from Subsection Laponica eg *R. tsaii*, Section Pogonanthum eg *R. praeclarum*, Subsection Taliensia, eg *R. deterrent* (first found by Farges but not introduced until recently) and *R. yaoshanense*. Jens showed us many others which have been recently discovered and my selection is not representative.

Next was a talk by Dr Alan Elliot. Alan is based at the RBGE and is part of the Global Conservation Consortium. He began by quantifying the scope of and need for conservation. The *Rhododendron Red List* (2011) was an important milestone. He asked us, if we had not yet done so, to watch Julia Haslett's film *Pushed up the Mountain*. I quote from The Southern Documentary Fund: "a profound meditation on the fundamental questions at the heart of conservation work..." Alan presented examples of conservation: *R. monkoboense* in Sabah is critically endangered and *R. tuhanense* from Mt Kinabalu where only six individual plants remain. The problem here is that it is getting



*Rhododendron tuhanense* in the research collection  
Photo: courtesy of RBGE



*Rhododendron kanehirae*: (Upper) in the research collection (Lower) dissected flower in David Purvis's book *Rhododendron Dissected* Photo: David Purvis. Published courtesy of RBGE

too dry for seed set. *Rhododendron monkoboense* has not yet been seen in flower.

In India and Nepal, local scientists are tissue culturing *R. macabeanum*, *R. wattii* and *R. lowndesii*. The site of *R. kanehirae* was destroyed in 1984 by dam construction. The species is now successfully re-introduced from ex situ sites.

The conference presented the problems for conservation both worldwide and here in Britain. The scale of these problems is enormous but the need to protect and preserve species is well recognised and appreciated. We are grateful to our speakers who each in their different ways are part of this effort. A lively discussion ended the meeting.

Peter Furneaux

## Planting for a carbon neutral future

Recently, a question was posed about the best plants of our three genera that could cope with the changing and warming climate challenges we are now facing: winter flooding, summer droughts and increased ambient temperatures.

With no obvious candidates (in general our genera are not very good at coping with droughts) I thought I would prefer to look at what we can do to help in the fight against climate change by locking up carbon in the first place.



Regarding the criteria for good carbon capture and storage in plants, are any, including our three genera, better at this than others? Sheer size and bulk matter so trees are best. A mature tree can store up to a ton dry weight of carbon dioxide [CO<sub>2</sub>].

As an aside, we must also preserve the oceanic green plants such as sea grasses since 40% of man-made CO<sub>2</sub> emissions is dissolved in the world's oceans. Ironically, the lower the atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> the more CO<sub>2</sub> is released from the oceans in a process called 'off-gassing'! But that is another story. I use these examples merely to demonstrate the interdependence of living organisms and other factors when considering climate change.

Nearer to our experience as growers of ericaceous plants is the need to find alternatives to peat for our composts. The world's peat bogs are estimated to store twice as much carbon as all the trees on the Earth.

The changing climate means that the natural flora and fauna in specific regions are now changing; some species are threatened, others have become more invasive. Some high altitude plants are having to move further up mountains to find cooler places, but will run out of places to go in a process known as the 'escalator to extinction'. Our wish to try out new and previously supposed tender plants is natural in keen adventurous gardeners. Care must be taken in importing plants with the concomitant risk of importing invasive pests and diseases which could thrive in a newly warming atmosphere.

Trees absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere by photosynthesis and store it within trunks, roots and leaves. Carbon is also stored in the detritus of dead wood and the soil around them. They act as coolants in hot urban environments and mitigate flooding – two main consequences of climate warming. I remember being thankful for the trees in the middle of the National Mall in Washington D.C. where there was almost an 8°C reduction when walking under them compared with the temperature outside the canopy. Droughts occur more frequently in summer, but although trees will not directly have a part to play in mitigating this, indirectly they will by their general lowering of carbon dioxide levels.

It takes between sixty and a hundred years for trees to reach maturity and act as carbon 'sinks' and monoculture is to be avoided in the interests of reducing disease and encouraging biodiversity. Luckily in private gardens diversity is the norm and many small plantings, especially of trees in gardens, can accumulate in thousands of gardens to a considerable bulk overall.

It was thought that woodlands were carbon neutral but now it is known that they are net storers of carbon – carbon sinks. Ancient woodlands are especially valuable in this regard.

A recent study of demolition of old houses shows a massive release of carbon into the atmosphere with each demolition which of course includes old wood in planks, joists etc. There has recently been a move towards restoration rather than demolition and new builds.

Within our genera, there are no specific suggestions that I can think of. Obviously, magnolias are going to be the biggest growers and some are large and fast growing as well such as *Magnolia x veitchii*, *Magnolia acuminata* and some of the Asiatic species (but over a longer time scale). The allied Tulip tree *Liriodendron tulipifera* grows fast and puts on considerable bulk as the 44-year-old specimen in my garden will testify at almost 3m circumference ABH. The vast rhododendrons of old plantings also provide bulk in leaves and trunks; one thinks of mature stands of *Rhododendron* 'Cynthia' or the enormous Cornish Reds and other *R. arboreum* hybrids that one encounters in old gardens. These can in time cover vast areas, often lawns in front of grand houses, to wonderful effect, but of course slowly and often over the course of a century.

Climate change is very complex, with so many interlocking and interdependent factors in play. Planting trees alone cannot reverse the process, but they certainly have a part to play in the overall fight.

#### References:

1. International Union of Nature Conservation – Peatlands and climate change
2. The Grantham Institute for Climate Change, Imperial College London – 'Offgassing' of CO<sub>2</sub> in oceans
3. The Woodland Trust – How trees fight climate change
4. NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory / ETH-Zurich Research University – Planting trees to help mitigate climate change
5. The Guardian 13th January 2020 – The case for never demolishing another building.
6. The Guardian 29th January 2021 – Alpine plants face extinction

John Marston



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## Der Maxwald-Park – Ein authentisches englisches Rhododendron Woodland und ein Woodland Garden

**Author:** Eberhard Pühl

**Hardcover:** 236pp

**Publisher:** Eberhard Pühl

**Publication date:** 2016

Older members – in both senses of the term – may recall the very enjoyable rhododendron tour of N. Germany the Group undertook in 2002, and the warmth of the hospitality from our hosts, including Bruns, Hachmann, Hobbie and the Maxwald garden.

A recently published book: *Der Maxwald-Park – An authentic English Rhododendron Woodland and Woodland Garden* brought memories flooding back. Written by Eberhard Pühl – ‘brought up in the world of the rhododendron’ – it is a chronicle and memoir of this family garden, the land acquired by his great-great grandfather in 1876. He planted a Scots pinewood, which was completed by his son GD Böhlje. This provided the perfect setting for later plantings of rhododendrons, inspired by the latter’s visits, starting in 1890, to Waterers’ Bagshot nursery and prominent English gardens, down the generations. There is a chapter, ‘A life for Maxwald’, referencing the dedication of the author’s mother Annaliese.

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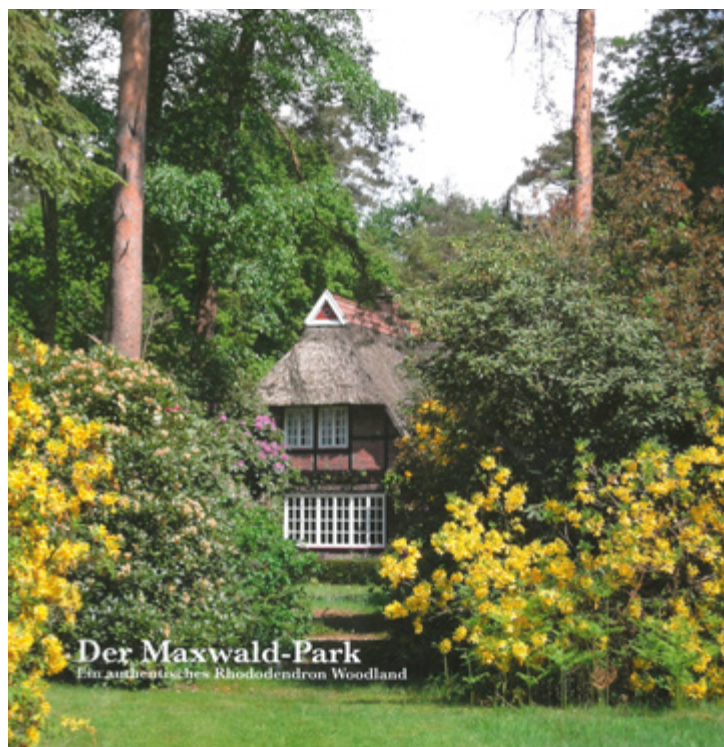
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In a busy book of short chapters, there are inter alia sections on notable trees, an old rose garden, a moss garden, a yew topiary, visits to English gardens and the design and construction of the house in 1947/8; but the principal interest for members will lie in the all too brief references to the hardy hybrid rhododendrons purchased mainly from Waterers around the turn of the 19/20th centuries which form the heart of the rhododendron collection.



There is a bald list, of some 129 cultivars, taken direct from the Böhlje diary. Many of these remain to be identified on the ground. In the book, 21 are briefly described from the ‘Old Rhododendron Wood’, with a further fourteen transplanted from there around the house. Some are beautifully illustrated with full colour portraits. Naming of these ‘was only made possible by the tireless involvement of Herr Dipl.-Ing. Walter Schmalscheidt, the renowned German expert on rhododendron cultivars’. Members may recall meeting him during our visit and discussing the problems of identification.

This Maxwald collection is of considerable historical interest and value as many cultivars it features will no longer be in cultivation in the UK, unless perhaps lurking in some anonymous woodland hardy hybrid planting such as that for example at Woburn or some National Trust gardens. Who is familiar with ‘Alexander Adie’ (J Waterer before 1865), ‘Currianum’ (A Waterer before 1851) or ‘James Marshall Brooks’ (A Waterer 1870) ?

This 236-page book is privately published in square 20x21cm format with hard covers and generously illustrated throughout, with beautifully composed garden views and plant portraits, including a few charming old black and white photos.

*Beachtenswert:* The text is in German. For members interested, please contact Pam Hayward.

*Maurice Foster* VMH

*Afterthought:* Perhaps we might be allowed propagation material of some of these forgotten plants for our own collection at Ramster to further secure this important chapter of English garden history.



## South West Branch Autumn Meeting and AGM at RHS Garden Rosemoor

October 30th 2021

Forty branch members gathered in the Education Centre at RHS Garden Rosemoor for our Autumn Meeting and AGM. This had not happened last year so here was a good chance to meet again and catch up with friends face-to-face.



Keith Rushforth demonstrates how to make a mountain walking aid from *Borinda* Photo: John Marston

The programme for the morning followed the by now usual format of Plant sales, Bring & Tell session, Raffle and Plant Quiz. Quite a few members had brought interesting things to talk about ranging from a look at three *Brassaiopsis* species (Saul Walker), how to make a mountain walking aid from a *Borinda* bamboo (Keith Rushforth), an impassioned talk about the complete muddle and rather dubious practices surrounding the new *Camellia azalea* hybrids coming on the market (Jim Stephens) and a presentation of the incredible yellow *Camellia chuangtsoensis* with its fleshy petalled semi-double flowers (Richard Baines). The plant sales outside did good business as well – what can be more satisfying than buying unusual plants at a reasonable price? Now to find a place to plant them....



*Camellia chuangtsoensis* in cultivation at Logan Botanic Garden Photo: Richard Baines

After lunch, the raffle prizes were distributed and plant quiz answers were given out. A tie between Keith Rushforth and Russell Beeson was sorted by the question 'What family does *Rostrinucula* belong to?' (!) astonishingly answered correctly by Russell – *Lamiaceae* (!!!). What an erudite bunch we are.

At the short AGM which followed, the Chairman outlined the Branch activities for this year and proposals for next year. He also mourned the passing of Sarah Leadbetter at an all too young age. Sarah had been our treasurer, a valued committee member and contact with Rosemoor. There will be a memorial bench for her erected in the garden. Our new Treasurer, Ashley Brent, who is also to be congratulated for his editorship of our Branch Newsletter, gave an update on Branch finances and the purchase of a card reader for our contactless transactions. No cheques will now be accepted by the Branch because of the cost of processing by the bank.



Richard Baines delivering his fascinating lecture on his travels in North Vietnam Photo: John Marston

Finally, we welcomed Richard Baines, Curator of Logan Botanic Garden in South West Scotland, who gave us a fascinating lecture on his plant hunting travels in the mountains of North Vietnam, where he and his team had found several new rhododendrons for Vietnam and two completely new species yet to be described fully. This area will no doubt yield more fascinating plants but it is a race against time competing with the destruction of habitat for cardamom cultivation and tourism by new cable car to the summit of Fan Si Pan mountain. Richard came armed with copies of his recent book on his travels which members could buy.

The meeting then came to an end; it had been a most enjoyable and varied day. I must thank our new Rosemoor contact, Emma Marsh, for all her help in making the meeting run smoothly, as well as the staff at Rosemoor for preparing the room and clearing it afterwards. Above all, I thank our members who had generously donated plants for the raffle and sale and who continue to support our Branch activities.

John Marston



## ICS win Silver Medal at rescheduled Chelsea Flower Show

The RHS broke with tradition and bravely moved the Chelsea Flower Show 2021 four months on from its traditional late May date, causing ripples of anxiety from an already pandemic-scarred horticultural world. This initial reaction was followed by a careful recalculation and finally a realisation that the September date offered a (hopefully) unique opportunity to capitalise on the later time to showcase an entirely different range of plants, bringing some unfamiliar players into the Chelsea exhibiting ring. Among these was the International Camellia Society, in association with Thompson & Morgan. T & M were keen to promote their new *Camellia azalea* hybrid '1001 Summer Nights Jasmine' while the ICS moved to bring the all-too-little-known delights of autumn-flowering camellias to the Chelsea-goer.



The award-winning ICS Stand at Chelsea 2021 Photo: Jeremy Wilson

Being judged under the more demanding Lindley rules for educational displays this was a challenge for novice exhibitors but the combined efforts of a number of seasoned camellia experts including fellow RCMG members Caroline Bell, Jim Stephens, Jeremy Wilson (of Stretgate Camellias) and, of course, long time ICS aficionado and exhibit mastermind Pat Short, yielded a Silver Medal from the judges.

The impressive flowering specimen plants were complemented by informative displays of seed and camellia-based products and carried a wealth of information for those new to the genus, ably conveying to visitors the sheer floral and foliar diversity available to the gardener.

Feedback at the show and later from the gardening press has been really positive and the ICS should be well satisfied with their efforts.

Bravo to all!

Pam Hayward

## The new *Camellia azalea* hybrids – a surprise in every pot?

Quietly entering the UK market last year and seemingly under most camellia growers' radar was the first of what promises to be a whole race of exciting new hybrids which capitalise on the flowering characteristics of 'wonderspecies' *Camellia azalea* (formerly *C. changii*) said to flower all-year-round. This year a more concerted marketing effort by Thompson & Morgan and its associated BVG Group companies (Van Meuwen, Suttons & Dobies) definitely caught the attention. The link-up with the International Camellia Society amplified the publicity reach and now many more of us have taken advantage of this offer.



*Camellia* '1001 Summer Nights Jasmine' Photo: Sally Hayward

*Camellia* '1001 Summer Nights Jasmine' was bred in China by Gao Jiyan and is the product of a cross between a *C. azalea* seedling and *C. 'Dr. Clifford Parks'*.

This camellia is providing us with more entertainment than just the prospect of an extended flowering season and those of us who are now growing it have formed an informal band to record and monitor its progress, especially in terms of flowering and hardiness.

Initially it should be noted that plants received reveal that propagation is undertaken in multiples so that pots generally contain two and sometimes three rooted cuttings. Some of us have separated these companions successfully, others are more cautious. What is more apparent – and confirmed by the Chelsea exhibit – is that it seems that more than one hybrid is being sold under this name – there were four different variants at Chelsea. The 'classic' variety has the beautiful single clear red bloom you see in the image above, taken in Sally's garden. Two of the other known manifestations are a semi-double, often with petaloids, and a full double; both sport the golden stamens but the flower colour is less vibrant as it matures. Foliar variation is similarly present and it appears Scheherazade may have been at work!

Pam Hayward



## SEED LIST

**D**onations are already beginning to come in for the 2022 Seed List which is most encouraging. I hope you won't mind me reminding you yet again that we really do need everybody's help to keep this membership benefit going.

Over recent years we have of necessity shifted the emphasis away from wild collected seed to choice items, from our three genera and more besides, collected in our own gardens or from places where we have permission and I am sure there is still a rich and rewarding seam to mine in this regard. As well as rhododendron, camellia and magnolia offerings we are interested in receiving seed of interesting shrubs and trees and all manner of companion plants. Our only ask is that you know what they are and that you take time to name the donations carefully and clearly – provenance is much valued.

For the remainder of 2021 we can still accept donations from EU members and meantime we continue our campaign to persuade the authorities to introduce a simple small seed lots permit scheme to enable amateur growers and hybridizers in the UK to import from like-minded enthusiasts worldwide.

If you need any help with preparing seed to send, do ask, we are always keen to help. Just email Tim Atkinson or me.

**Most important:** Tim's address has changed and donations for the 2022 list should be sent to:

Tim Atkinson, 9 Kingsnorth Road, Urmston, MANCHESTER M41 8SL

Email [timothyatkinson@msn.com](mailto:timothyatkinson@msn.com) or [pam@woodtown.net](mailto:pam@woodtown.net)

*Pam Hayward*

## MEMBERSHIP

**W**e welcome new members and hope they will enjoy the benefits of membership of the Rhododendron, Camellia and Magnolia Group.

### UK

Lucy Bidgood Woking, Surrey

David & Anne-Noelle Pinnegar East Grinstead, East Sussex

Richard Scholes Tiverton, Devon

Wendelin Morrison Wimborne, Dorset

Stephen Harding Rochester, Kent

Richard Moore Brentford, Middlesex

Martin Thompson Colwyn Bay, Clwyd

### Europe

Niels Berg Hinnerup, Denmark

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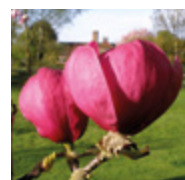
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*The following publications are offered to Group Members exclusively and sold in support of the Group / Branch*

*Back issues of the yearbook from 1946, and previously advertised titles not featured here may still be available – please enquire.*



### Pocket Guide to RHODODENDRON SPECIES

John McQuire & Mike Robinson

704pp Kew, 2009

(A few copies are still available)

Full Price: **£59**

Member's Price: **£42**

Postage: UK **£5.50**

Europe & Rest of World  
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### Seeds of Adventure

Peter Cox and Peter Hutchison

(Just one copy available) UK only **£25** post paid.

### Second-hand titles:

If you have are looking for a specific title that may be out-of-print, do let me know and if we don't have an available copy, we may be able to help you source one.



The South West Branch has been gifted a number of books to sell for Branch funds. They include *Magnolias of China*, *Magnolias in Cornish Gardens*, *Sichuan Rhododendron of China*, *Rhododendrons of China (3 Volume Set)* and a host of plant-hunting titles. A list is available on request.

Contact: Pam Hayward

Email: [rcmgpublications@woodtown.net](mailto:rcmgpublications@woodtown.net)

PLEASE NOTE THAT SADLY WE ARE NO LONGER ABLE TO SEND BOOKS TO EU COUNTRIES.

# PUBLICATIONS



# the Rhododendron, Camellia & Magnolia group

## Group and Branch Meetings and Events

Members are more than welcome to attend events at any branches

### JANUARY 2022

**Thu 13th 6.30pm**

#### Plant Heritage Online Talk

John Anderson 'Windsor's World of Rhododendrons - looking to the future'

Open to non-members.

Visit [tinyurl.com/JA-Talk](http://tinyurl.com/JA-Talk) to register (£4) All are welcome.

**Sat 15th 2pm**

#### North West Branch

Ness Botanic Gardens

#### Social Meeting

[angela.brabin@btinternet.com](mailto:angela.brabin@btinternet.com)

### FEBRUARY 2022

**Sat 12th 2pm**

#### North West Branch

Ness Botanic Gardens

Joe Wainwright 'How to take better garden photographs'

[angela.brabin@btinternet.com](mailto:angela.brabin@btinternet.com)

### MARCH 2022

**Sat 12th / Sun 13th**

#### RHS & South West Branch

RHS Garden Rosemoor  
Torrington, Devon EX38 8PH

RHS Early Camellia Competition and the SW Branch Magnolia, Rhododendron and Spring Ornamental Competitions

Georgina Barter  
020 7821 3142  
[georginabarter@rhs.org.uk](mailto:georginabarter@rhs.org.uk)

Dr John Marston  
01271 267091  
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**Email: [events@rhodogroup-rhs.org](mailto:events@rhodogroup-rhs.org)**

### APRIL 2022

**Sat 9th / Sun 10th**

#### RHS

The Savill Garden, Windsor  
TW20 0UU

RHS Main Camellia, Early Rhododendron & Spring Ornamental Plant Competitions

Georgina Barter  
020 7821 3142  
[georginabarter@rhs.org.uk](mailto:georginabarter@rhs.org.uk)

**Sat 23rd / Sun 24th**

#### RHS and South West Branch

RHS Garden Rosemoor  
Torrington, Devon EX38 8PH

RHS Main Rhododendron Competition and the SW Branch Camellia, Magnolia and Floral Display Competitions

Georgina Barter  
020 7821 3142  
[georginabarter@rhs.org.uk](mailto:georginabarter@rhs.org.uk)

Dr John Marston  
01271 267091  
[artavianjohn@gmail.com](mailto:artavianjohn@gmail.com)

**Sat 30th / Sun 1st May**

#### RHS

RHS Garden Harlow Carr  
Harlow Carr Rhododendron Competition

Georgina Barter  
020 7821 3142  
[georginabarter@rhs.org.uk](mailto:georginabarter@rhs.org.uk)

### MAY 2022

**Sun 15th**

#### RCM Group

Ramster

AGM and Centenary Cup Competition

Polly Cooke  
[secretary@rhodogroup-rhs.org](mailto:secretary@rhodogroup-rhs.org)

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