



The Rhododendron, Camellia & Magnolia Group

THE ROYAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

BULLETIN – 83

OCTOBER 2003

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Maurice Foster

Plans for the Group's celebration of the centenary of George Forrest's first visit to Yunnan in 1904 are nearing completion. These include a seminar at Vincent Square on April 7 (the second day of the spring show). Details of the programme are on Page 4. We have an outstanding group of contributors who are foremost authorities in their field and it should be a day to remember for all interested in plants and plant exploration. A foretaste of what will be on offer at the seminar will be featured in the Yearbook next January with articles by Sir Peter Hutchison and Jim Gardiner. Tickets for the day will be £15 and attendance limited to 150 so early application is advised on 020 7821 3408.

Ted Brabin, Chairman of the NW Branch based at Ness, is organising a Group stand in the hall displaying some of Forrest's introductions and a selection of the most notable hybrids that grace our gardens today. While the garden at Ness has an extensive collection of Forrest plants thanks to the patronage of A.K.Bulley, if you feel you have plants or material to contribute to the stand please see Ted's note on **P. 4 (Help Required)** and let him know as soon as possible how you may be able to help. We will need as wide a choice of plant material as possible in order to ensure the highest quality for display. There is no shortage of choice. Forrest collected and documented over 31,000 specimens, not to mention the many garden-worthy hybrids that derive from his introductions.

Linked to the plants on display at Vincent Square there is also an exhibition of archive documents and pictures in the Lindley Library available for viewing during the show. A further display of archive and herbarium specimens will be arranged at Wisley.

At the same time, major gardens across the country are participating by setting up George Forrest plant 'Trails' for visitors to see in cultivation a selection of his introductions, some from his original seed collections. Some are planning conducted tours and special leaflets with background information on the plants. At the time of writing we have Ness, The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, Wisley, Bedge Hill, Caerhays, High Beeches, Exbury and Wakehurst planning to participate, with others expressing interest.

continued on page 2



Rhododendron edgeworthii

John Rawling

A George Forrest introduction.

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Do keep an eye open for our publicity to see what is planned in the various gardens featuring trails. Incidentally, if any members have private gardens with Forrest collections, either species or hybrids and would be happy to open them for say a couple of days, we would be delighted to hear from you. It would be a valuable contribution to the project.

George Forrest wrote many letters and his plant documentation was extensive but unlike Wilson or Kingdon-Ward he wrote no books describing his travels. He died suddenly in the field in Yunnan while out shooting and thus enjoyed no leisurely period of retirement in which to write. He perhaps as a result does not feature in the public eye quite as prominently but he must surely rank with Wilson as our greatest collector in China. I hope our celebrations next year will prove to be some small tribute to his work and recognise the debt owed to him one hundred years on by all those who enjoy his plants.

In praise of the mulch

Driving up to the midlands via the home counties in mid-September, almost all the pasture was the same sere yellow as recently harvested cereal fields. Evaporation levels following record temperatures and drying winds had been excessively high. It was claimed by Philip Eden in the Sunday Telegraph that evaporation rates in June in for example the Vale of York are 65 times higher than on a typical January day. Evaporation rates, like rainfall are measured in millimetres or inches and he went on to point out that in the Home Counties evaporation ranges from 2mm in December and January to just over 100mm in June and July. Even in an average summer the moisture deficit is significant and after the recent period of heat and drought it is damaging in the extreme. The evaporation of moisture from prolonged contact between moving warm dry air and bare soil can be rectified by irrigation but if for any reason this is not practicable, then mulching is no longer optional, but essential. This season has convinced me that woody plant gardening in the south and east without mulching cannot succeed. It is especially true of young or recently installed plants. The difference in growth and appearance between the mulched plant insulated from excessive evaporation and its fellow growing in baked, cracked bare earth is too painful to contemplate...

EDITOR'S NOTES

John Rawling

The *R. yakushimanum* Trials at Wisley (Bulletin 82)

I have to advise members that the dates for the Woody Plant Trials Sub-committee to assess this Trial are not yet fixed, but are likely to be during May 2004 – see the March Bulletin.

My sincere apologies to any member who was disappointed by being unable to join the Magnolia Society tour to New Zealand. The invitation was listed in the previous two issues, but unfortunately by the time the details were published in the July issue, the tour was full.

Visiting New Zealand?

Kathryn Millar, the President of the New Zealand Rhododendron Association is always pleased to hear from members who are planning a visit to New Zealand. She holds a list of gardens to visit, both public and private ones, some of which you might not otherwise be able to visit. The list is available by e-mail: wendrum@paradise.net.nz

Tony Weston writes: Erratum - *The Garden* (October)

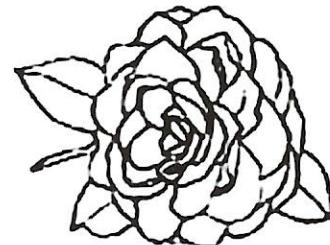
Due to my failure to vet the script of an article in *The Garden* entitled "Rhododendrons as nature intended" by Tim Longville with sufficient care, those of you who read the article will have noticed an unfortunate error on page 776 column 2, where the loderi hybrids are stated to be derived from crosses between *R.griffithianum* and *R.auriculatum*. Whereas, of course, the latter should have read *R.fortunei*.

I still need your letters, reports from branches, articles etc, to keep the members up to date! So, please send me your copy for the March Bulletin by 21st February 2004. Articles and letters etc. are preferred by E-mail or on disc.

Please send to: John Rawling, Hon Bulletin Editor,

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OBITUARIES

Ted Millais

Died 2 August 2003, aged 85.

Ted Millais was the youngest grandson of the Pre-Raphaelite painter, Sir John Everett Millais. However it was his uncle, the Victorian naturalist J.G. Millais, and author of the great 2 volume edition on Rhododendrons dated 1917 and 1924 who inspired and kindled Ted's lifelong interest in Rhododendrons from a young age.

In 1969 Ted developed his long-standing hobby of rhododendrons into Millais Nurseries.

With the gradual opening up of China to visitors during the 1980's, Ted was amongst the first Westerners to follow in the footsteps of the great plant-hunters such as Forrest, Kingdon-Ward and Rock. Among Ted's more interesting introductions were late forms of *R. augustinii*, July flowering decorum, denudatum, glanduliferum, huianum, irroratum var. ningyuenense and ochraceum.

In 1987 Ted was awarded the Royal Horticultural Society's Loder Cup in recognition of the value of his work with Rhododendrons, and in 1988 he was invited onto the RHS Rhododendron and Camellia Committee where he served until 1999.

In personal life, Ted and Romy formed a very close family with their 4 sons and a daughter. He was a Churchwarden at St. Mary's Frensham, and loved fishing in Scotland, where he would return most years.

David Millais

TOURS

Valerie Archibald

The Group Spring Tour of Gardens in West Scotland - 25th to 30th April 2004

Members will gather in time for dinner on **25th April**, at the Commodore Amethyst Hotel, Helensborough (Argyll & Bute).

26th April. The first garden to be visited is **Glenarn at Rue**, the home of Mr & Mrs Thornley. A wonderful garden, continually being extended and improved. Mrs Thornley has very kindly offered to provide a light lunch.

Then on to **Ardkinglas House, Cairndow**, the home of Mr S.J.Noble. The informal gardens of 5 acres contain magnificent azaleas, trees and other shrubs. Adjacent is **Ardkinglas Woodland Garden** which contains one of Britain's finest collection of conifers and a spectacular display of rhododendrons. We proceed to **Creggans Inn** for two nights stay. This looks over the water of Loch Fyne.

27th April. We spend the day at the **Younger Botanic Gardens, Benmore** (the specialist garden of the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh), world famous for its magnificent conifers and an extensive range of flowering trees and shrubs as well as its collection of some 250 rhododendrons. We also hope to visit nearby **Eckford** Garden developed in the 1930's after the family gave Benmore to the nation. The climate and shelter here make for the most luxuriant growth (rhododendrons growing in the fissures of large trees).

28th April. We leave Creggans Inn and travel to **Creran**, a famous garden which we last visited in 1998, but since then it has been taken over by a Trust and further plantings have been made. Its main feature is a glen which has been planted over many years with rhododendrons, magnolias, embothriums and azaleas. Waterfalls are a feature of the garden.

After lunch en route, we motor to **Arduaine, Kilmelford** (National Trust for Scotland). This garden is on a promontory bounded by Loch Melfort and Asknish Bay on the Sound of Jura. It was originally developed by the Wright brothers who are responsible for its outstanding beauty and its wonderful collection of rhododendrons and magnolias, all interspersed with a series of ponds and watercourses. We stay at **Loch Melfort Hotel** for the next two nights.

29th April. We drive to **Ard-Daraich Hill Garden & Nursery**, belonging to Lady Edith Maclare, but the nursery and gardens are managed by her son Norrie Maclare. This a private garden, set on a hillside with wonderful views and a

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rich assortment of many different interesting plantings. Mr Maclarens has kindly offered us refreshments during our visit.

Later we drive to **Druimavuic House** owned by Mr & Mrs Newman Burberry. This has a stream, wall and woodland gardens with lovely views over Loch Creran. There are spring bulbs, rhododendrons, azaleas, primulas, meconopsis and a wide variety of plants from around the world. After this visit we return to Loch Melfort where there will be another chance to see around **Arduaine**.

On the 30th, we leave for Helensburgh and our cars, and for those who wish, another night at the Commodore Hotel.

The cost will be around £450, more for members requiring single rooms, inclusive except for drinks at the bar.

For those members interested in joining the tour please contact the Organiser: **Valerie Archibald**
at **Starveacre, Dalwood, E. Devon, EX13 7HH**.

E-mail: starveacre@tesco.net or Tel: 01404 881221.

SPECIAL EVENTS – 2004

George Forrest Centenary Seminar

2004 marks the centenary of George Forrest's first visit to Yunnan.

Date: 7 April 2004

Venue: RHS Conference Centre,
Lawrence Hall, Greycoat St, London SW1

Time: 10.00am - 4.00pm

Cost: £15, including coffee and tea.

A programme of lectures The Group has arranged, to celebrate an event of major horticultural significance. Forrest collected and documented over 30,000 specimens from what botanically is China's richest province. His contribution to the genus rhododendron is unique in quantity and quality. His camellia and magnolia introductions have had a major impact on the contemporary garden, particularly through the hybrid races derived from them and his many other introductions of woody, herbaceous, bulbous and alpine plants are to be found in every plantsman's garden. Our contributors are foremost authorities in their field and it should be a day to remember for all interested in plants and plant exploration.

The Programme

Forrest made seven visits to SW China between 1904 and 1932, all privately sponsored by individuals or syndicates.

Dr Brenda McLean, who is writing a life of Forrest, will set the scene of the man and his patrons for the specialist plant presentations that follow.

The first of these is a selective account of Forrest's most significant rhododendron species and their hybrids by

Sir Peter Hutchison, himself a much travelled plant hunter in W China and an authority on both Forrest and the genus rhododendron.

By contrast there were comparatively few Camellia introductions, but their tremendous impact on gardens today, particularly through the C.x williamsii hybrids, will be traced by **John Gallagher**, a founder member of the International Camellia Society and a member of RHS committee B.

The afternoon session will open with **Jim Gardiner**, former President of the Magnolia Society joining us from Wisley to describe Forrest's magnolia introductions and assess the value of their forms and hybrids in contributing to the recent rise in popularity of this spectacular genus.

Forrest was a meticulous collector and missed little. Primulas were second only to rhododendrons in his inventory, not to mention gentians, alpines, bulbous plants and many shrubs and trees. **Dr Chris Grey-Wilson**, botanist editor of the Plantsman and the AGS Bulletin, will end the day with his selection of some of the most significant introductions of Forrest's 'other' plants.

There will be plenty of time for questions after each paper. During the lunch period and at the end of the afternoon there will be an opportunity to visit a Forrest plant display in the hall and an exhibition of archive material in the Lindley library. The day's presentations will also be linked to a series of Forrest 'Plant Trails' in major gardens across the country.

To book your ticket just phone 020 7821 3408

HELP REQUIRED!

Ted Brabin writes:

Forrest Centenary April 6/7 2004

Please can I include a plea for help in the Bulletin, particularly with regard to specimens, along the lines outlined below?

Following on from our Chairman's notes, **I agreed (rashly?) that our local North West England & North Wales Branch would stage an exhibit next April, at Vincent Sq. to commemorate the centenary of Forrest's first expedition to Yunnan.** This was apposite, as we are based at Ness Gardens, which started as the home and garden of Arthur Bulley. It was he who employed Forrest, and later Kingdon Ward, Cooper, Comber and Farrer, to go and discover plants for him. With the exception of Comber, all his other collectors searched in China, Burma, Tibet and north east India. Paul Cook, Curator at Ness, has kindly offered his help with the exhibit.

The question then arose as to what exactly Forrest sent home. The amazing answer was over 31,100 specimens, many of which were different examples of the same species. A slow count (from W.J. Bean, vol.III) of his Rhododendron species, showed that he had either discovered, introduced or discovered and introduced, 107 species, ranging from *aberconwayi* to *zaleucum*. It is difficult to give a precise number for the hybrids derived from his species but one

source mentions 155. These include 'Carmen', 'Chink', 'Choremia', 'Elizabeth', 'Fabia', 'Hawk Crest', 'Lionel's Triumph', 'May Day', 'Tally Ho', 'Vulcan', 'White Glory' and 'Yellow Hammer'.

Thankfully, the **Camellia** discoveries and introductions were fewer. Bean mentions **five**, (viz. *pitardii*, *reticulata* "wild type", *saluenensis*, *taliensis* and *tsaii*). I have not tried to count the hybrids between *C.saluenensis* and *C.japonica* but "Donation" is known to thousands, around the world.

Fortunately Forrest's **Magnolia** discoveries were also few in number, if magnificent in flower, including *M. campbellii* *mollicomata* and cv. 'Lanarth', *M. globosa*, the evergreen *M. nitida*, described by Bean as "in foliage the finest Magnolia cultivated in Britain". The last species is *M. rostrata*.

My original intention in writing this summary was to seek help from gardens with Forrest material, whether wild origin or not. With the vagaries of British weather only the Almighty knows what the climate will be next spring and I am not sure that His forward planning extends that far. Put another way, **it is impossible to guarantee an adequacy of flowers from up here and any help from anywhere else would be much appreciated.**

Many Forrest Rhododendrons are worthy of exhibit for their foliage alone, including *Rh. bureavii*, *edgeworthii*, *leptothrium*, *mallotum*, *protistum giganteum* and *sinogrande*, to name but six. There should be no difficulty with these. It will be flowering specimens that may cause difficulty.

I was intending to include a full list of Forrest's species and a larger list of his hybrids but this would have filled the Bulletin and more. I have the details at home but unlike that in "The Mikado", it is not a little list and I am sure some of them would be missed. Those without interesting foliage and not in flower may safely be excluded. It is a relief to me to realise that most of his herbaceous discoveries will still be dormant.

If you think you may have some suitable specimens, which look as if they will be in flower for 6/7th April next and could bring them to Vincent Square, I would be delighted if you could **contact me**. At present I do not know precise details of when we will be putting the exhibit together but should be better informed after the November committee meeting. **It would be very satisfying to stage an exhibit which fairly reflects Forrest's epic efforts.**

My home 'phone is 0151 353 1193 and address is C.E.J.Brabin, Rosewood, Puddington Village, Neston, CH64 5SS. (Sorry, not on Email.)

CAMELLIAS

Jennifer Trehane

Notes on *Camellia oleifera*

In Britain there's recycling and there's more recycling; paper, cans, bottles... you name it. All good for the environment of course.

In China it's camellias; or to be more specific *Camellia oleifera*. Its original wild distribution has become confused as it has been cultivated "in the wild" and latterly in deliberately planted fields for hundreds of years. With its ability to grow in many different climates and soil conditions, and to regularly produce an abundant supply of fruit with seeds containing a high percentage of oil, suitable for cooking and cosmetic use, *C. oleifera* was identified as being an excellent crop to grow. Now, things have changed.



Camellia oleifera in Hong Kong

Jennifer Trehane

Travelling in Yunnan, Sichuan and Hunan provinces in March 2000 we saw acres and acres (sorry, I should say hectares), of oil seed rape; many of the valley floors were a sea of pungent yellow flowers, where in the past it was all winter wheat and beans. Oil seed rape is now a main source of oil for cooking so camellia oil production has, to all intents and purposes, had its day. Plantations are no longer required, but the trees are not just dug up and used for firewood; they are given a new lease of life as stock plants for the nursery trade, and provide a useful source of income for their owners.

C. oleifera grows into a shrub or small tree sometimes reaching 7 meters in height, and, although it has very attractive, scented white flowers in mid-late autumn this is not sufficient reason for the booming Chinese nursery trade to keep them. Their customers like colour, especially red, and large, full, flowers. We visited several nurseries in Hunan Province and were amazed to see tall *C. oleifera* trees, with massive root systems wrapped in sacking, held vertically by wooden props and guy ropes from their trunks. Some, at the huge Bojia nursery complex (1200 acres of it), had their trunks bound in what looked like sisal rope, which was, we were told, there to give some protection from severe winter weather. All had their branches cut back to varying degrees and we could see small clusters of shoots growing from many of them. These were where scions of various varieties of ornamental *C. japonica* had been grafted onto them and we were told that these trees, when allowed another year or two in the nursery, were much in demand as street trees in the many rapidly evolving new city developments all over China.



Grafts onto *C. oleifera*

Jennifer Trehane

This year, 2003, we visited Jinhua City in Zhejiang Province for the ICS Congress and one of the first places we were taken to was a brand new Camellia Culture Garden. Sure enough, there were dozens of large camellia trees covered in flower and giving a relatively mature look to the Park. Instead of having their trunks protected by ropes they were covered with sphagnum moss held in place by string or wire. This time we understood that the bark of newly planted *C. oleifera* tends to dry out and crack in the warm dry climate of winter and early Spring in this area and the sphagnum is kept damp with water as needed. The trees certainly looked marvellous.

Here, in England we appreciate the hardiness of the species, and the simple white flowers, with their sasanqua-like scent in mid-autumn, and make the most of the rather open habit of the bushes by training them against a wall. Its a Chinese species which is often confused with *C. sasanqua* and there is ongoing confusion with the Japanese *sasanqua* 'Narumi-gata', but that's another story.....

Kunming Reticulatas - The Group Collection

The Group's collection of *Camellia reticulata* for planting at Abbotsbury Subtropical Gardens in Dorset is nearing completion, for planting in Spring 2005.

MAGNOLIAS

John Rawling

The Magnolia Society New Zealand Tour.

The Magnolia Society International raised some 36 members and partners from around the world (50% from the UK) for an extensive tour of both North and South Islands of New Zealand in September. The group gathered in Auckland, arriving via Los Angeles, Australia, Singapore and via Brazil (11 of the total are also members of this Group)!

We saw an outstanding collection of Magnolias, Camellias (particularly reticulatas) and early rhododendrons.

The timing was perfect for seeing most of the magnolias in full flower, many just beginning to 'go over' in the far north, perfect in the south of the North Island and just coming into flower in the South Island. Many of the most important gardens in New Zealand were visited in only 18 days - and encompassing private gardens, growers and hybridisers and commercial nurseries, many with their own gardens, along the way! An altogether exciting and busy trip!

It was quite a shock to arrive 'down under' in their early Spring, leaving the prolonged heatwave in the UK, and into cool "early March UK temperatures" with rain. However, we were quite lucky with the weather, although the New Zealanders complained that it had been a poor Winter and Spring so far.

I shall not list the highlights of each garden in turn, but give you my personal impressions of outstanding plants which attracted me on the tour. I am certainly not an expert in any of these three genera, least of all in Magnolias, but one of my many reasons for joining this trip was to experience and to learn, and I did indeed learn a huge amount and met very many interesting and delightful individuals. During our visits, I was delighted to meet Os. Blumhardt and Mark Jury, both of whom were presented with the D. Todd Gresham Award of the Magnolia Society by Jim Gardiner, the past President of the Magnolia Society (and the group leader).



Michelia maudiae

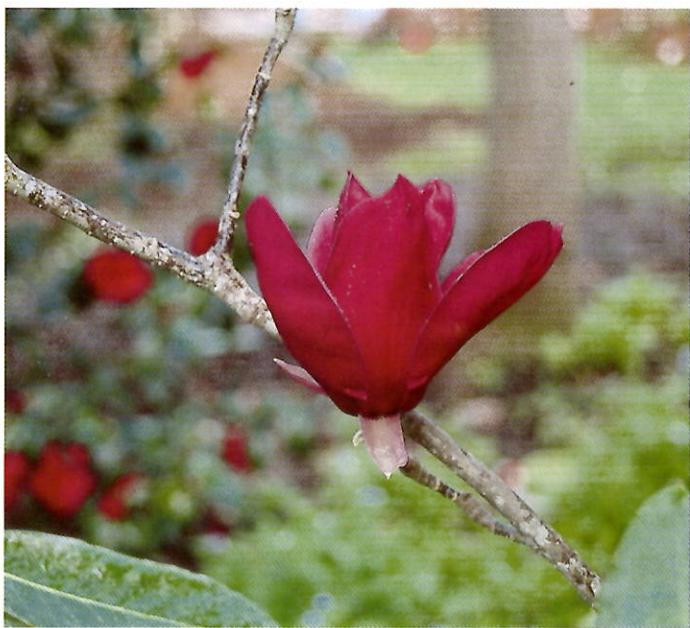
John Rawling

My first surprise was the amazing beauty and scent of the Michelas which met me on arrival at many gardens. *Michelias: maudiae, doltsopa, figo, yunnanensis* and many hybrids including the NZ hybrid 'Velvet'n'Cream', all growing in the open and with some *maudiae* and *doltsopa* grown to a very large size.

The beauty and diversity of the **Magnolias** in the gardens and nurseries throughout the tour, led many of us with smaller gardens to compile lists of our favourites and/or our 'want list' should we be lucky enough to have more space! My list of outstanding plants includes:

Of the newer hybrids:

Magnolia ‘Sweetheart’ Although plants seen reached 6-8 metres, a relatively new hybrid with beautiful pink flowers without a trace of purple. (A selected seedling raised by Peter Cave from ‘Caerhays Belle’). Probably my number one!



Magnolia ‘Red As’

John Rawling

M. ‘Red As’ (A new hybrid, a distinct red, with compact flowers, larger than ‘Vulcan’).

M. ‘Black Tulip’ (Flowers are a slightly richer and darker shade than those I have seen in the UK).

M. ‘Ruth’ (‘Lanarth’ x ‘Vulcan’ x ‘Pickards Ruby’) A new compact reddish purple from Ian Baldick, an amateur and enthusiastic grower.

And from the well known hybrids, all superbly grown, I admired **‘Star Wars’**, **‘Felix Jury’**, **‘Copeland Court’**, the notable **M.‘Vulcan’** (again a richer colour than in the UK) and of course **M.sprengeri ‘Diva’**.

Secondly, it was exciting to see so many *reticulata* **Camellias** growing in the open throughout New Zealand. Notable were *Camellias* ‘Clifford Parks’, ‘Valentines Day’, ‘Purple Gown’, ‘Confucius’, ‘Red Emperor’ etc. Others camellias include ‘Dreamboat’ (a sister seedling of ‘Water Lily’), ‘Our Melissa’, ‘Fairy Blush’ (Jury), the list is almost endless. A real feast of blooms.

The outstanding part of the tour for **Rhododendrons**, was the visit to Pukeiti, one of the finest rhododendron gardens in the world. I was looking forward to this visit with great anticipation, in particular for the very large *R. prostratum* KW21498 ‘Pukeiti’, grown from seed collected on Kingdon Ward’s last trip in 1953 (not in flower on my last visit). I was not disappointed; this very large tree was covered in a spectacular display of strong pink blooms above its large leaves. A sight not to be missed! In addition, scattered around the valleys, were a large number of *R.giganteum* seedlings (probably x *macabeum*), some having recently

been named in honour of past and present workers for the Pukeiti Trust. There were of course very many other rhododendrons in flower, notably various *arborea* species and many New Zealand hybrids. One of the latter that caught many members eye throughout the tour, was *R. ‘Kaponga’*, a glorious healthy red, (*arboreum* x ‘Ivery’s Scarlet’, according to Salley & Greer). I also photographed the beautiful yellow *R.chrysomanicum* (*R.chrysodon* x *R.burmanicum*) and the cinnamon-red peeling bark of an old *R.cubittii*.

The history, the sights and the countryside were not overlooked on the tour, with visits to the Bay of Islands and Treaty House, to Rotorua, to Mount Cook and to Queenstown, to the southern lakes and Milford Sound (no, we didn’t walk the track) and finally the Yellow eyed Penguins at Dunedin.

A glorious and instructive time with healthy, interesting and many rare plants growing in ideal conditions and plentiful rainfall. Well worth the long journey and the ‘jet lag’.

LETTERS

Powdery Mildew

I agree most heartily with John Rawling that we need more information about powdery mildew: an authoritative article that summarised current knowledge about the disease would be very welcome.

Three questions occur to me. The first concerns the means of transmission. Mildew on plants is generally very conspicuous, but with rhododendrons this is not necessarily the case. We had one plant, *R.‘Lady Chamberlain’*, where the leaves were entirely coated with white fungus, on deciduous azaleas leaves a patchy white manifestation, and white eruptions on the bark of *R. barbatum*, but numbers of other plants have defoliated and died without any such manifestation. I understand that the white patches are the fruiting bodies of the fungus, but if they do not appear how does it spread?

The next question concerns the variability of experience in the relative susceptibility of different species and hybrids. Michael Jurgens rates *R.‘Alison Johnstone’* as susceptible, and others have said the same about ‘Elizabeth’, but in our garden (where we have suffered grievous losses) these two hybrids are very healthy and have been for the last twenty-five years or so.

Thirdly, it is said that the mildew fungus comprises a great many species, each of which invades a particular species or variety of plant. Is this the case with powdery mildew in rhododendrons, and if so, do these different mildew species vary in their virulence?

John Lancaster

Balcombe Forest, Sussex

We read with great interest Michael Jurgens’ article about rhododendron mildew and as our experience is rather different, I thought you and he might be interested to know how we are affected here.

This is an old established garden with rhododendrons of every age from 100 years to the present. There are about 200 different varieties predominately hybrids, the pH is 4.8 and the annual rainfall about 28", although we are able to irrigate.

We have mildew, but is not a major problem. We spray affected plants when we spray the roses (every 2-4 weeks depending on conditions) with Nimrod T.

These are the plants sufficiently affected to warrant spraying:- R. 'Naomi' (var. 'Exbury' worse than var. 'Glow'), R. *campanulatum*, R. *keysii*, R. 'Alison Johnstone', R. 'Peace', R. 'Trewithen Orange', R. 'Crest' (not very bad).

Oddly enough we have a 'Lady Roseberry' growing next to a 'Peace' which is unaffected. We have old plants of 'Pink Pearl' and 'Cynthia' and a youngish plants of *R.hemsleyanum* which are also unaffected.

Regarding Mr Jurgens final query, Propicanazole is sold under the following trade names:-

Barclay Bolt	made by Barclay
Bumper 250	made by Makhteshim
Landgold propicanazole	made by Landgold
Tilt	made by Syngenta

Propicanazole with Tebucanazole is made by Bayer under the name Endeavour.

I hope this helpful.

John Greswell

Wecombe House, Taunton

Powdery Mildew??

Our long drive is lined with *R. luteum* that at one time had better Azaleas grafted on top of them. However, in the spring they are much admired for flower and scent.

This year, starting in June when they had just finished flowering, the leaves on about half of them developed a heavy covering of mildew. Since then, (end August), many of the infected leaves have shrivelled and fallen off.

The plants themselves appear to be quite healthy with many flower buds showing for next year. This is definitely not Powdery Mildew, which is more IN the leaves.

I have noticed the same thing on some of our older Hardy Ghent azaleas.

What is peculiar is not that they have developed this illness but that NOT ALL have developed this illness. Perfectly green and healthy plants stand right next to very sickly looking plants.

Why should some Luteums get it and others, right next door, be immune ? Are there different strains and in what other ways do they differ? I have noticed that some plants colour up in the Autumn better than others but I can't relate that to mildew on the leaves.

Perhaps someone, more knowledgeable than I, can explain this to us.

Michael. J. Jurgens

Silchester, Reading

A sporting azalea!

The pictured variation in color patterning on one plant is characteristic of many of the Japanese Satsuki azaleas and hybrids with Satsuki background. This behaviour was the basis for Robert Gartrell's naming of his Robin Hill hybrid 'Conversation Piece' (the pollen parent of which was 'Eikan'). If you have a way of forwarding this note to H.V.Gardiner, I would appreciate it.

Don Voss

Vienna, Virginia, USA

Mr Gardiner's sporting azalea shown in the July Bulletin is almost certainly one of the Satsuki Group.

I am aware of them being imported into the UK from Japan in the early sixties, although they may have been introduced some time before this. I know of sixteen named varieties of the numerous varieties that apparently exist, particularly in Japan. They have been skilfully bred to sport freely (just like the plant shown in Mr Gardiner's photo) which makes it difficult to propagate any of these cultivars true to type.

In Japan, Satsukis are much prized as container and Bonsai plants and, well-cared for, are very long-lived - up to two or three hundred years in some cases.

I have grown a Satsuki in my Sussex garden (over 800 feet above sea level) in a fairly exposed position and, over about fourteen years, has proved completely hardy.

Satsukis, which bloom in June and sometimes into July, are slow low growing plants that, along with *R.nakaharae* and its hybrids, are among the latest flowering evergreen azaleas.

Brian Wright

Crowborough, E. Sussex

BRANCH REPORTS

Peak District Branch

David Barnes

Our branch garden tour this year was to visit three gardens in Leicestershire, last visited in 1997. We began in the morning with "Stoneywell" the home of Donald & Anne Gimson who have gardened there for 50 years. We set off with a short introduction and history of the estate by Donald. The garden was ablaze with the colour of azaleas and plenty of rhododendrons, although many had flowered early this year. We admired many companion plants not often seen in this part of the country, because rumour has it that the climate is too harsh! The garden is sheltered by an extensive oak woodland to the north which allows several of the large leaved rhododendrons to flourish, notably a 5 metre *R.sinogrande* which has flowered for several years. Several Embothriums were in flower and we noted many other interesting plants and trees, including a 6 metre Davidia, a fine Stewartia, a *Crinodendron hookeri*, an Halesia, a Styrax, and numerous Magnolias, with *M.denudata* and *M.sieboldii* looking superb.

We were able to enjoy our picnic lunches sitting in their garden in fine warm spring sunshine. (see the photomontage on the back page.)

We travelled the short distance to view the garden of David Ives and his wife. We noted several promising Camellias but the two most outstanding plants were a *Rosa banksia* of immense proportions covering the west wall and roof of an outhouse and a *Magnolia grandiflora* covering much of the back wall of the house and occluding the windows, in spite of threats from the lady of the house to take drastic measures!

For our third garden, we visited "Long Close", the home of John and Pené Oakland. This 4 acre garden includes significant numbers of the genera of our Group. Several of the Magnolias have achieved tree-like proportions with *hypoleuca* and *kobus* the most outstanding. A fine collection of old Hardy Hybrid rhododendrons, purchased by a previous owner from Waterer's display at the Royal Show when it visited the county in the late 1930's has grown into a dense impenetrable thicket! Many of the flowers could be identified easily as they are still popular, but at some stage a delegation from our branch will need to visit the Hybrid collection at "Ramster" to try to identify the mystery ones. Other plants noted near the house or on the walls of the courtyard included a *Sophora tetaptera*, a *Clematis armandii* reaching to the eaves, an enormous and heavily flowered *Crinodendron hookerianum* against the north wall of the house (we had to wonder how the roots had kept away from the footings of the house as this is a lime-hating plant if ever there was!) A rarely seen climber, *Scisandra grandiflora* var. *rubriflora* was sharing the 10 foot high north facing wall with an equally vigorous *Schizophagma integrifolium*. There was much else to see but we much enjoyed the tea and cakes provided by Pené and found our visit had extended into the evening.

Wessex Branch

John David

On Saturday 5th April members of the Wessex Branch visited Abbotsbury Subtropical Gardens and we were fortunate in having a bright, sunny day to see the full glory of the asiatic magnolias in flower. Although *M. campbellii* was more or less over, the others were at their peak. The rhododendrons were well ahead and the camellias still covered in bloom. We visited the John Bond Memorial Collection of large-leaved rhododendron and saw the many interesting new introductions. Elsewhere there were maddenii growing and flowering fully in the open and these with the many other exotic plants clearly thriving and certainly confirmed the garden's claim to be subtropical.

Later in the month a visit to members' gardens was organised by Rod Wild. This year we visited two gardens in Worplesdon, near Guildford. The first was that of Roderick & Mary White and it was soon obvious that Roderick is a knowledgeable and keen gardener. Although confessing to be a rhododendron species man Roderick has the flair to place other shrubs and herbaceous perennials such that they complement each other to produce a satisfying harmony. Most of the plants are 'four star' and beautifully set out. Afterwards we visited Rod & Valerie Wild's garden. Rod has a fine collection of magnolias but sadly the recent frost had ruined the flowers of all except *M. 'Gold Star'*. They have landscaped their garden with great skill and design. Beyond

a moat, they have created a beautiful lake in what was a flat field of clay. This area has become an arboretum with many choice species such as *Maytenus boaria* 'Worplesdon', *Glyptostrobus lineatus* and the intriguing *Salix capusii* from central Asia. Valerie's speciality is growing herbaceous plants for which she has won many awards and has created naturalised plantings of fritillaries and snowdrops.

Our annual show was held rather later than usual on 1st June and we were fortunate again to be able to hold it at 'Ramster'. Oddly we had exactly the same number of entries as last year but their quality was high as usual and Richard Thornton, who kindly stepped in at the last minute to judge, had an extremely hard task. The lateness of the show meant that we had the opportunity to see some of the later flowering rhododendrons and that the azaleas were, perhaps, at their best. The Kathleen Beadle Shield for the most points went to Jim Inskip but the cup awarded for the best single exhibit in the show went to Brian Long for his truss of 'Pink Pearl'. The chairman's plate for the best three trusses of elepidote hybrids went to Lady Adam Gordon for a splendid combination of *R. 'George Hardy'*, *R. 'Lord Roberts'* and *R. 'Demoiselle'*.

MEMBERSHIP

Miranda Gunn

We are delighted to welcome the following new members:

UK

Mr J.Anderson,
Head Gardener, Inverewe Gardens, Poolewe, Achnasheen,
Ross-shire IV22 2LD. jxanderson@nts.org.uk

Mrs E.Bowes, (NOR)
Kirkgate House, Kirkgate Street, Holm Next The Sea,
Hunstanton, Norfolk, PE36
Tel. 01485 525387

Lady Crossman, (NOR)
Tetworth Hall, Sandy, Beds. SG19 2HU.
Tel. 01467 650212

Mr P.J.N.Ellis,
Rhydog, Ystrad Meurig, Ceredigion, SY25 6AJ.
Tel. 01971 633065

Mrs L.J.Farnfield, (WX)
Schiehallion, Steepways, Hindhead, Surrey GU26 6PG
Tel. 01483 403966

Mr S.J.Hayes, (SE)
Parrock Place, Parrock Lane, Coleman's Hatch, E.Sussex
TN7 4HS. [Tel. 01342 826404](tel:01342826404)

Mrs Helen Lyus, (WX)
13 Manor Drive, Surbiton, Surrey KT5 3NE.
Tel. 020 8399 4122 rlyus@care4free.net

Mr J.Petch, (SE)
The Ring Time, Poundsbridge Lane, Penshurst, Kent TN11 8AH.
Tel. 01892 871181 johnpetch@btinternet.com

Do keep an eye open for our publicity to see what is planned in the various gardens featuring trails. Incidentally, if any members have private gardens with Forrest collections, either species or hybrids and would be happy to open them for say a couple of days, we would be delighted to hear from you. It would be a valuable contribution to the project.

George Forrest wrote many letters and his plant documentation was extensive but unlike Wilson or Kingdon-Ward he wrote no books describing his travels. He died suddenly in the field in Yunnan while out shooting and thus enjoyed no leisurely period of retirement in which to write. He perhaps as a result does not feature in the public eye quite as prominently but he must surely rank with Wilson as our greatest collector in China. I hope our celebrations next year will prove to be some small tribute to his work and recognise the debt owed to him one hundred years on by all those who enjoy his plants.

In praise of the mulch

Driving up to the midlands via the home counties in mid-September, almost all the pasture was the same sere yellow as recently harvested cereal fields. Evaporation levels following record temperatures and drying winds had been excessively high. It was claimed by Philip Eden in the Sunday Telegraph that evaporation rates in June in for example the Vale of York are 65 times higher than on a typical January day. Evaporation rates, like rainfall are measured in millimetres or inches and he went on to point out that in the Home Counties evaporation ranges from 2mm in December and January to just over 100mm in June and July. Even in an average summer the moisture deficit is significant and after the recent period of heat and drought it is damaging in the extreme. The evaporation of moisture from prolonged contact between moving warm dry air and bare soil can be rectified by irrigation but if for any reason this is not practicable, then mulching is no longer optional, but essential. This season has convinced me that woody plant gardening in the south and east without mulching cannot succeed. It is especially true of young or recently installed plants. The difference in growth and appearance between the mulched plant insulated from excessive evaporation and its fellow growing in baked, cracked bare earth is too painful to contemplate...

EDITOR'S NOTES

John Rawling

The *R. yakushimanum* Trials at Wisley (Bulletin 82)

I have to advise members that the dates for the Woody Plant Trials Sub-committee to assess this Trial are not yet fixed, but are likely to be during May 2004 – see the March Bulletin.

My sincere apologies to any member who was disappointed by being unable to join the Magnolia Society tour to New Zealand. The invitation was listed in the previous two issues, but unfortunately by the time the details were published in the July issue, the tour was full.

Visiting New Zealand?

Kathryn Millar, the President of the New Zealand Rhododendron Association is always pleased to hear from members who are planning a visit to New Zealand. She holds a list of gardens to visit, both public and private ones, some of which you might not otherwise be able to visit. The list is available by e-mail: wendrum@paradise.net.nz

Tony Weston writes: Erratum - *The Garden* (October)

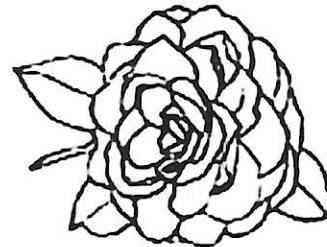
Due to my failure to vet the script of an article in *The Garden* entitled "Rhododendrons as nature intended" by Tim Longville with sufficient care, those of you who read the article will have noticed an unfortunate error on page 776 column 2, where the loderi hybrids are stated to be derived from crosses between *R.griffithianum* and *R.auriculatum*. Whereas, of course, the latter should have read *R.fortunei*.

I still need your letters, reports from branches, articles etc, to keep the members up to date! So, please send me your copy for the March Bulletin by 21st February 2004. Articles and letters etc. are preferred by E-mail or on disc.

Please send to: John Rawling, Hon Bulletin Editor,

The Spinney, Station Road, Woldingham, Surrey, CR3 7DD.
Tel. & Fax: 01883 653341 or E-mail: jr.eye@virgin.net.

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS – 2003 – 2004

Date	Organiser/branch	Event	Contact
November			
Nov. 8th	South East	Chris Franks, Head Gardener, on 'Developments at Heaslands'	Mike Robinson 01342 822745
Nov. 15th	South West	Autumn Meeting and Talk by Philip Evans	
Nov. 15th	Wessex	Talk by David Millais at Wisley on the Rhododendron Nurseries of Germany	Miranda Gunn 01428 644422
Nov. 22nd	N.W./N.Wales	Ness Gardens: Talk by Ted Brabin on Autumn flowering Camellias	Ted Brabin 0151 353 1193
Nov.25/26th	Group	Executive Committee	Joey Warren 01822 854022
Nov.25/26th	RHS	Show: Autumn flowering Camellias	Vincent Square
2004			
January			
Jan. 17th	N.W./N.Wales	Members' slides - Camellias & Magnolias	Ted Brabin 0151 353 1193
February			
Feb. 21st	N.W./N.Wales	Peter & Patricia Cox - Plant collecting by the Salween River	Ted Brabin 0151 353 1193
March			
Mar. 12th	Wessex	Mark Flanagan on Eastern Asia - Plants, People & Places.	Miranda Gunn 01428 644422
April			
Apr. 6th	Group	AGM & Executive Committee	Joey Warren 01822 854022
Apr. 6/7th	RHS	Camellia Show & Competition	Vincent Square
Apr. 7th	George Forrest Centenary Seminar (for details, see page 4)		
Apr. 25th-30th	Group Tour to Scotland (see page 3 & 4)		
Apr. 17th/18th	South East	Branch Show at Borde Hill	Valerie Archibald 01404 881221 Mike Robinson 01342 822745
May			
May 1st/2nd	N.W./N.Wales	Branch Show at Ness Gardens	Ted Brabin 0151 353 1193
May 9th	Wessex	Branch Show at Ramster	Miranda Gunn 01428 644422
May 15th	N.W./N.Wales	Visits to members' gardens	Ted Brabin 0151 353 1193
May 22nd	Wessex	Visits to members' gardens	Miranda Gunn 01428 644422



The Peak District Branch visit to "Stoneywell". See page 9.