



the Rhododendron, Camellia & Magnolia group

THE ROYAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

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CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Andrew Simons

Chairman's Report to the AGM

15th June 2010

It cannot be denied that the last 12 months have been a difficult period for the group with the tragic loss of our Chairman Mike Robinson and the protracted negotiations with the RHS over the groups place within the broader society.

When I took over as Chairman I was clear with the group committee that we should not become distracted by the work necessary to produce an acceptable and modernised constitution for the group; I regret that it has not been possible to maintain the continuity of activities supporting the 3 genera whilst seeking to achieve a closer union with the RHS, it simply has been too distracting. It is essential that, as the negotiations with the RHS management continue, we do not forget that we are all about Rhododendrons, Camellias and Magnolias and not a group of administrators.

Turning to the negotiations on the revised constitution; it does appear that we are now making real progress that will allow the group to carry on its activities broadly unchanged but with a formalised and closer integration with the core RHS. It was important for the RHS to be comfortable that the group did not conflict with the society's explicit aims as well as its financial obligations as the leading gardening charity. It does appear that a draft constitution has been achieved that allows the group freedom of action within the overarching governance of the society and similarly maintaining financial autonomy within the society's accounting rules. Our plan for taking this work forward will be to work within the group committee with the RHS and achieve a fully acceptable constitution agreed by the RHS Council and suitable for distribution to the group membership around September this year with a view to a Special General Meeting at least a month later for its ratification. I must stress that this work has at times seemed permanently stalled and without the efforts of Philip Evans, Alastair Stevenson and Martin Slocock we would never have made any progress.

Group membership numbers have fallen again in the last year, and we have a membership of around 780. Although this is a relatively low reduction in numbers I think it possible that economic conditions may result in a further reduction in membership before we start to pick up again. The cost of membership is comparatively low but many group members are part of other groups and societies as well as the RCM group. Although it would be wrong at this stage to blame the poor publicity that Rhododendrons are experiencing at the moment, it must have an effect.

The imprecise publicity provided by government departments regarding "Toxic Rhododendrons" and *Phytophthora ramorum*



R. 'Beauty of Tremough', -

See the Report on Aberconway hybrids on page 6.

has been leapt on by the media as an easy story requiring no journalistic rigour. This lack of effort, or some might say intentional scare mongering, must be impacting adversely and cumulatively on the desire of the public to purchase and grow Rhododendrons. In the face of these 2 issues of falling membership

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and bad press, allied to the need to achieve a higher profile in gardening publications we must re-double our efforts on publicity. In the coming year it may be necessary to seek professional help in this specialist area of publicity, which could either be achieved through the RHS or directly. I know such assistance will be unpalatable to some, but I suspect it will become a necessary evil even at a minimum level.

As reported by our most efficient Treasurer Alastair Stevenson, the group's finances remain on an even keel with a reserve in the region of £30,000. However this situation masks the fact that our subscriptions are not meeting our expenditure. Other activities around publications and the group seed list, when combined with production efficiencies, are keeping us in the black. I regret that we cannot rely on these related activities to assure the group's financial viability. This is especially the case as the funds achieved through the seed list are likely to come under increasing pressure as regulations over the movement of plant material are continually increasing. Returning to the finances; it does now appear that we will need to raise the subscriptions, not because we need to maintain such a large reserve but rather so that we can maintain the quality of the group and intervene on issues that are important to it.

We have a real problem with the 2010 yearbook; it is now so good in terms of production standard, quality of content and balance across the 3 genera and beyond, that the prospect of maintaining this high standard in the years to come is daunting. The professional quality in all facets is genuinely amazing and I suggest in terms of value far outweighs the subscription fees by itself. I found the articles on New Zealand Magnolia hybridisation and Kalmias of particular interest. The time and commitment put in by Pam Hayward is unbelievable. It is essential that we do find ways in which this high standard is maintained into the future as the yearbook is our public face.

The challenges of producing a Bulletin with the need to generate novel content so regularly is something John Rawling has succeeded in so well over the last year as Bulletin editor. It is essential that the entire membership get behind both of our editors in order that the burden of producing high quality content is at least lessened. As mentioned in last year's report it is essential that we maximise the use of email in the distribution of the bulletin as the cost of postage is becoming punitive.

However. It is tempting to follow the concept of electronic information exchange too far, but as a traditional group we cannot expect that all our members are internet enabled and we should recognise that it will be a slow process to achieve much wider dissemination of group information via electronic methods. Key to this will be the group web site, the content of which has continued to expand over the past year and is now getting to the point that it can be used as a real reference tool, I think we should aspire to the web site being the first port of call for anybody, member or non-member to go to for information on the 3 genera (we may never achieve this but it should be the target). It seems likely that the closer union with the RHS will result in some changes to the web site as the templates and corporate branding of the society's main web pages flows down to us. I am sure our excellent webmaster Graham Mills will be able to achieve this, with help from the RHS if required.

Coming back to the Seed List, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Chip Lima, who has returned as its convenor, and all those involved in working on the seed list, as it can be an unpleasant if interesting task. As I mentioned

earlier, continuation of the seed list in its present form will be a challenge. Regulations both national and international are hemming us in, personal responsibility for those providing seed will become crucial and it may be necessary for the group to take on some role in securing official agreement to collect seed. Many members of the group are only members because of the seed list so we must recognise this and defend it as much as possible. As always we are keen to hear of any expeditions that will allow us to subscribe to a portion of the collecting activity.

I must come now to an apology, for more than a year we have been attempting to organise a group tour to New Zealand. I regret that I am unable to come to you with any firm proposals as the cost of such a trip is proving prohibitive when considering currency exchange rates and the impact of international events on the cost of air fares. We will continue to investigate options to reduce the price to an acceptable level. On a much more positive note Judy Hallett is to be thanked for organising excellent tours. The Spring tour to the Dresden area of eastern Germany was an enormous success and personally very enjoyable, it was a concern that the numbers joining this tour would be low, however a late surge resulted in around 20 members attending. Many fascinating and historical gardens were visited and the efforts of re-construction in this area post German re-unification were very impressive. Horticulturally the area is rather conservative and dominated by Seidel Rhododendron hybrids, we had the opportunity to visit the latest generation of the Seidel family at the large nursery they still operate. On a final note if you are concerned that 'Cunninghams White' is rarely seen in gardens, I can assure you it is safe and well in the Dresden area.

For this year's Autumn meeting/tour we are trying something different, in an attempt to widen the popularity of the event, we will be mixing a garden visit with a series of talks and lectures on a wide range of subjects and the event can be likened to a mini-conference with discussions on horticulture, propagation and plant collecting in the wild. As an example Mark Flanagan and Tony Kirkham will be conducting a joint lecture on the travels of Ernest Wilson.

The year has been difficult for group and RHS plant competitions, summer weather in 2009 promised that the spring flowering would be exceptional and indeed for Magnolias it proved to be the 3rd "vintage" year in a row. However the genuinely hard winter did significant damage to the Camellias and compressed the flowering season into a few weeks across all 3 genera. Weather conditions leading up to the shows caused a reduction in overall Camellia quality but the main Rhododendron Competition and South West regional show was spectacular with Rosemoor again proving the ideal venue for an impressive display. I would like to personally thank all Branch Regions for their efforts particularly in the area of shows.

The location of the 2011 main Rhododendron Competition remains uncertain, as the RHS naturally wish the show to move around the country; our balance is one of ensuring a high standard competition whilst visiting non-traditional Rhododendron areas.

I would finally like to thank all those who have assisted me in the last 6 months as I have taken over the Chairmanship of the group.

Andy Simons, June 2010

EDITOR'S NOTES

John Rawling

The death of Lady Anne Cowdray in May 2009 was reported in the last issue of the Bulletin. I am now happy to publish a fuller note about her life and particularly her love of Rhododendrons and Magnolias.

Lady Anne Cowdray

Lady Anne Cowdray was born in June 1913 at Weston Park and professed an interest in things horticultural from an early age. When she moved to Broadleas in 1947 that interest became a passion which remained with her until her death in May 2009. The acquisition of the rare and beautiful motivated her gardening efforts but without doubt Rhododendrons and Magnolias were always her first love. Lady Anne was fortunate in having friends who were both knowledgeable and helpful in furthering her plant knowledge and with developing her plant collection.

She was a member of the ICS and the International Dendrology Society, travelling with both groups, to visit gardens all over the world. She would freely admit however that her preferences were better served by the wider spectrum of plants embraced by the IDS group.

The gardens at Broadleas are Lady Anne's particular contribution to the world of horticulture. The unique and impressive *Magnolia sargentiana* 'Broadleas' has developed to maturity from a seedling she brought to the garden in the early fifties. In the early nineties Lady Anne lent financial support to a seed collecting expedition made to China. A distinctive plant of *R. argyrophyllum* grown from Chinese seed now thrives in the garden. The garden has been open to the public on a regular basis since 1982.

Lady Anne belonged to that great tradition of private gardeners whose love of plants and gardening was exercised through determination, enthusiasm and knowledge.

Ann Saunders, Broadleas

REMINDER FROM THE EDITOR

I need your letters, reports from branches, articles, future events etc, to keep the members up to date!

So, please send me your letters and copy
**for the November 2010 Bulletin
by 14th October 2010.**

Please send to: John Rawling, Hon. Bulletin Editor,
The Spinney, Station Road, Woldingham, Surrey, CR3 7DD.
E-mail: jr.eye@virgin.net or Tel. (&Fax) 01883 653341

The Australian Rhododendron Society Golden Jubilee Conference

has already received wide publicity in the Rhododendron world,
- not least in the July 2009 Bulletin of this Group!

The dates are:-

Sunday 17th to Wednesday 20th October 2010

and it is being held in the Dandenong Ranges, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.

For full details, including the full programme and garden visits, contact:- secretary@vicrhodo.org.au or visit their Website at - www.vicrhodo.org.au.

TOURS

Judith Hallett

Sadly, we are unable to arrange a viable tour to visit New Zealand in 2011, as explained in the chairman's report. Instead we plan to visit some fine Scottish gardens in May 2011.

There will be further details of this tour in the next bulletin,
Bulletin 104 - in November 2010.

'The Autumn Weekend' 2010

to be held jointly with the International Camellia Society.

See the enclosed leaflet with the full details:

Please send it off to Judy Hallett as soon as possible to reserve your place.

TOUR REPORT

Rhododendrons of East Germany
Spring Tour to Dresden,
11 -15 May 2010

Nineteen members, including five who joined a Group Tour for the first time, enjoyed a visit to Germany accompanied by Arena tour manager, David Caddick. Not fluent in German himself, David had arranged that we should enjoy the company of Suzanne during the tour. She accompanied us each day, interpreting for our garden guides, and explaining the history and culture of Dresden and Germany during our coach journeys. We certainly did enjoy her company, and I think she was almost persuaded to start growing rhododendrons herself!

Our garden visits were mainly to the large Baroque gardens so typical of Eastern Germany. Like us, Germany has experienced a remarkably harsh winter, so many rhododendrons were still in tight bud rather than being the mass of colour we had anticipated!

Dresden is a fascinating and beautiful city so one day was spent sightseeing, by coach and on foot, followed by some free time to enjoy the superb museums and galleries.

11th May /

After a 2-hour coach ride from Berlin's Tegel Airport, it was a delight to get straight into a garden - the Grosse Garten in Dresden - so large that we needed a little train to reach the Palace. There are 4 stations in the park, both open and roofed carriages, and the train service is run by children who were very proud of their jobs.

The park is full of tall trees, 12,000 of them, limes and chestnuts, beeches and oaks, conifers, long tree-lined avenues with grand views and focal points. Some grass is cut as lawns, other left long with profusion of wild flowers, dandelions, daisies, buttercups.

We walked around the big, square lake, in front of the Palace, whose façade has been restored and is now used as a backdrop for concerts, weddings, and parties, but the inside is still a ruin.

Lilac coloured *Syringa* is grouped in clumps close to the Palace, and formal, colourful bedding is on the opposite side from the lake. At both sides, across green sward from the Palace are large, semi-circular hedges of *Rhododendron* 'Cunningham's White', planted in the 1950s, replacing those destroyed in wartime.

Here we were met by a retired nurseryman, an expert in growing rhododendrons, and we saw a few old hardy hybrids left from the 1895 plantings. There was much interest in German propagation methods. Propagation is mostly by grafting cuttings

onto R. Cunningham's White rootstock, two Seidel nursery hybrids were R. 'Erica Seidel' and R. 'Renata Seidel'; R. *ponticum* rootstock was also used, and there was a nice R. 'Ponticum Roseum'.

There were also some new Hachmann rhododendrons and some Azaleas; R. *luteum* is much used as the understock.

As with us, the cold winter and recent cold weather had delayed the flowering season.

Joey Warren



An old Seidel hybrid and massed R. 'Cunningham's White

12th May / The Pillnitz Palace and Park

The first tour of the day took us by boat on the river Elbe from Dresden to the palace and park of Pillnitz. We passed wonderful palaces, castles, small village chapels and vineyards along the river banks. The weather was fine in contrast to other regions in Germany.

The Pillnitz estate has had a complex history since 1694 when it was purchased by Elector Johann Georg IV, passing to his brother Friedrich August on his early death - who became known as 'Augustus the Strong'. As a patron of the arts and architecture he established the Saxon capital Dresden as a major cultural centre. The palace is an extraordinary ensemble of architecture influenced by the Chinese style and fashionable landscape gardening. In 1706 he granted Pillnitz as a gift to his mistress Anna Constantia von Cosel, but when she fell out of favour, the estate once again became his property in 1721. His architect built the Waterside Palace (Wasserpalais), the Hillside Palace (Bergpalais) with the Pleasure Garden, in similar style to the first palace, and now houses the arts and crafts museum. In the late 18th century Pillnitz changed from the amusement palaces to the summer residence of the Saxon kings.

We were guided by head gardener Wolfgang Friebe who told us that he is in charge of 32 hectares, 2000 trees and, 450 potted plants recently brought outside for the summer. In the lilac courtyard of the New Palace he showed us the amazing one hundred year old lilacs, *Syringa x chinensis*, which came originally from France. They have remarkable decorative twisted trunks, are pruned as standards and extremely difficult to propagate. The Pleasure Garden takes up most of the gardeners' time with the Spring and Summer planting of 25,000 to 30,000 flowers, matching the colours of the Palace. Our guide then took us to the hedged pleasure garden with its rhododendron alley planted a hundred years ago. Unfortunately there were no labels which made it difficult to identify the names of these old cultivars.

The most famous sight at Pillnitz is the 235 year old *Camellia japonica* which received a splendid new greenhouse in 1992. This is moved on a track over the camellia for the winter months and is equipped with a temperature, ventilation and humidity system

regulated by computer (the outside winter temperature can fall to around -20C). In May the house is rolled away to the side for the summer months. It was astonishing that there were still numerous flowers to admire on this huge old camellia, in May.



The Pillnitz Camellia in its purpose-built mobile greenhouse

The history is that in 1779 the Swedish botanist Karl Peter Thunberg brought four camellia plants back from his journey to Japan, to Kew Gardens. One remained in Kew, the others went to Schönbrunn in Vienna, Hannover and Pillnitz. Only the Pillnitz plant has survived, despite a fire in its former wooden protection and the flood of the Elbe in 2002 when the camellia was under water!

I was also impressed by many very old trees such as *Magnolia tripetala*, *Quercus robur* 'Concordia', *Quercus cerris* and *Fagus sylvatica* 'Asplenifolia'.

Luise Wolff-Boresch

12th May / Karmenz

After the splendour of Schloss Pillnitz, it was a poignant arrival at the entrance to the Rhododendron and Azalea Hutberg Park, because of the monument commemorating Russian soldiers who died in World War 2.

Mrs Pallman, the retired head gardener was waiting to greet us. A former Forest Officer, she has been associated with the 50 acre park since 1990.

Originally the hillside was only meadows, until 1890 when Wilhelm Visor started the park. Walking uphill through a collection of fine mature conifers, some still planted in lines as part of the area had formerly been a nursery. We noted a group of 60 year old *Sequoia sempervirens*, *Tsuga canadensis*, *Abies concolor*, the beautiful Colorado White Fir, the curious *Picea abies* 'Virgata', together with *Pinus pinea*, the architectural Mediterranean 'Umbrella Pine', just some of the 135 species of trees in the collection.

Noticeable was the limited range of old rhododendron 'Hardy Hybrids' which endorses the severe winter climate in this region of Germany, reason no doubt for the planting of three very hardy *Magnolia kobus* which were a gift to the Park. The groups of *Rhododendron luteum*, some 80 years old, drenched the area with fragrance.

The park itself was memorable for its collection of fine trees, in particular two awesome mature specimens of *Fagus sylvatica* 'Pendula'.

Leaving Karmenz, we travelled to Grüngräbchen to visit the T J Rudolph Seidel Nursery.

Seven generations of the Seidel family have been nurserymen, starting in 1745 with Johann Heinrich Seidel. One of his sons founded the German Floral Society, which is similar to the RHS.

Rudolph Seidel was an internationally renowned lecturer who was actively involved with the nursery on which they had 84 glasshouses before WW2. During the war he was taken a prisoner of war, but his daughter continued the nursery until his release. Now her son Christian Schroder runs the 37 acre nursery which enjoys reasonably favourable climatic conditions and a moisture retentive moorland soil, one to one and a half metres in depth.

They grow 300 different types of rhododendron, some species but the majority hybrids, ten percent of which are sold from the nursery, the remainder going to Poland and Bavaria.

They graft their rhododendrons using 'Cunningham's White' as understock of which here are plentiful supplies in this area of Germany. Fifty of the old Seidel raised hybrids are still grown on the nursery.

Last winter the recorded temperature fell to -28C, thus varieties such as *R. ponticum* x *maximum* prove very tough and cold resistant. A large open nursery area was used primarily for potted young deciduous azaleas which were grown from semi ripe cuttings propagated under mist. They use a potting mixture of pine needle mulch mixed with sharp sand and peat and give a 6 month slow release fertiliser for the containerised plants, using a nitro-phosphate feed around the open grown stock. When temperatures fall below -18C they lower some plants into the ground and surround them with sawdust.

A most impressive traditional nursery with excellent stock. We very much appreciated Mr Schroder's kind hospitality and the time he spent showing us at his nursery.

Rosemary Legrand

13th May / Kromlau Park

With a relatively leisurely 9a.m. start and after passing the intriguing 'EROTIC CARWASH' signs, we were driven through very pretty new green forests to visit the vast (480 acres) Kromlau Park.

This park was started about 1815 by landowner Freidrich Herrmann Rotschke, who wanted to develop it along 'English Landscape' lines, as a breakaway from the traditional Baroque formality of existing German gardens. The very lovely existing beech forest was adapted and embellished by plantings of Copper beech (*Fagus sylvatica* 'Atropurpurea'), weeping beech (*Fagus sylvatica* 'Pendula'), Tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), Lawson Cypress (*Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*), magnolia, plane, and many varieties of fir and *Abies*. Enhancing all these great background trees there were plantings of thousands of Rhododendrons, (largely *R. ponticum* x *maximum*), *ferrugineum*, *smirnowii* and *R. luteum* (the Yellow Azalea) which constituted the majority of the flowers we saw, as our visit was a little too early for the former hybrids. However we enjoyed the great swathes of yellow blooms with their pervasive, if allergenic, perfume. One of the prettier sights, was a large group of *R. vaseyi*, the Pinkshell Azalea, with a good display of soft pink bloom, before its leaves unfurled. This early planting must have been done shortly after the species was discovered in 1878 in North Carolina, U.S.A.

Natural declivities in the terrain, lent themselves to the development of small lakes and ponds, one of which had little islands covered with Rhododendrons, now sadly grown too large for their allotted space (sounds familiar), and which will shortly be re-planted with smaller-growing types, more in keeping with the original plans. One of the casualties of this programme will see the removal of a large tree which we considered to be *Magnolia* x *soulangiana* in glorious full bloom.

The fanciful additions initiated by Herr Rotschke around 1844, consist of several sculptures made from basalt rock bases

with curiously slanted clusters of six-sided granite pillars, which were hauled by bullock cart from Saxon Switzerland. The large arched bridge over the Rakotzsee lake, grottoes, caves and pyramids, the 'Organ', 'Heaven & Hell' and other installations in the style we dubbed 'Gothic Bizarre', provided an interesting side-line for us.

Don Young

14th May / Fürst-Pückler Park, Bad Muskau

We were met by local expert Mrs Harszin and guided past a recently restored moat and buildings into the much beleaguered park itself.

The park, originally conceived by Count (later Prince) Hermann Pükler Muskau in 1815 was based on Humphry Repton's landscape style and was influenced by John Nash the architect, by Regents and St James's Park and the English landscape movements. Having spent a lot of time and money developing the park, Prince Pükler finally sold the estate (actually his divorced wife's) in 1845 having been absent for 6 years! The following owner, Prince Frederick of the Netherlands, developed it further adhering to the original concepts. The last private owners from 1883 to 1945 nurtured the estate and used American landscape artists to execute preservation and care programmes. This period straddled the end of the war, when shrapnel damage was incurred and parts of the estate were a battlefield.

The park now lies on the borders of Poland and Germany (in the former communist G.D.R). Following years of war, destruction, neglect, 'forestry' type management and faulty interpretation of original layout, many trees and shrubs were badly damaged and lost.

The two governments had differing priorities after the war, but the restoration of the park to original intentions began after German re-unification, beginning with the restoration of a double bridge between the two countries re-unifying the park which is bisected by the river Neisse.

The gardens are well on the road to recovery to an estate based on Prince Hermann Pukler Muskaus' original intentions. The park is now a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**.



Magnolia acuminata in Fürst-Pückler Park, Bad Muskau

Upon entering the park we found well placed mature trees, wide curving paths and flowering shrubs as border. A white flowering shrub challenged our skills, identified as a *Rosaceae*, possibly a *Niellia*. We observed mature specimens of *Syringa* x *chinensis*, *Aesculus* x *carnea*, *Aesculus hippocastanum*, *Quercus* species including the golden oak – *Quercus robur* 'Concordia' (from a Ghent nursery 1843), a *Catalpa* species, and a superb mature lakeside *Magnolia acuminata* with its splendid bluish yellow/green tepals to the flowers.

A row of superb small *Halesia monticola* probably var. *vestita* was identified beside the main pathway, with larger than usual creamy white 'bell' flowers.

Ornamental flower beds in the old pleasure garden area were well planted with annuals and seasonal perennials. At the front of the main restored buildings we found a copper beech (*Fagus sylvatica* Purpurea Group) which had been part felled due to disease, with the core excavated out and replanted within with a replacement copper beech.

We observed *Acer saccharinum* (not the sugar maple *A. saccharum*), a good sized tree, *Populus candicans* now known as *P. x jackii*, *Magnolia* with spent flower, possibly a *M. x loebneri* from an early C20 planting.

Borders were beautifully planted with a combination of white lily form tulips and *Omphalodes verna*, - a forget-me-not of moist alpine woodland.

A youngish *Calycanthus floridus* was in early stage of flower and looking healthy in spite of the -30C temperatures that were experienced in the winter of 2010. Also, quite remarkable was an *Aesculus parviflora* clump of more than 30 metres in diameter. With emerging flower spikes in plenty; we were too early to experience the perfume and flower cover due in July/August. This suckering shrub/tree introduced in 1785 from SE USA can grow up to 4m. high and colours well in autumn. This was the largest clump any of us had ever seen in Europe.

We were shown a *Quercus robur* referred to as 'Muskauense' a unique healthy young variety with nearly lobeless ovate leaves. Leaving the pleasure garden areas, we observed some fine *Juglans nigra*, *Acer tataricum* and *Chamaecyparis nootkatensis* and some recently planted varieties of *Cornus kousa* in flower.

Distant tree planting in the 'park' was mature and in English landscape style.

Our visit was a delight, but necessarily short.; I should certainly like to visit again to observe and appreciate the mature trees and to take in the original design.

Cheryl Sapcote

14th May / Lausitzer Findlingspark Nochten

This open, rather bleak site was developed recently on the huge site of an opencast 'brown coal' or lignite mine to explore what could be done on such sites to create attractive recreational and educational parks. Numerous large boulders of glacial origin had been exposed by the mining, and were added into the scene to make features and focal points. We were given a helpful and enthusiastic guided tour. Large areas were devoted to particular types of planting, for example, one for heath plants includes more than one hundred and sixty species of heathers, and a bog area is helping in the conservation of rare local plants. There was a fine alpine rock garden full of promise, including cacti and species tulips.

The Group's three genera were chiefly represented near the pond by a bank of rhododendrons and azaleas coming into flower - largely a selection of *R. yakushmanum* hybrids. It will be of interest to see how these plants progress (and survive) on this cold site as years pass.

The distant landscape was dominated by two large lignite-burning power stations. Nevertheless, it was a bold attempt to provide reclamation of the area and some colour into the views.

David Ives

15th May / Westin Garden

Just before we left Dresden on our last day we persuaded our coach driver and guides to make a detour to a little gem discovered by some of our group. The shelter of the Westin hotel

and proximity to the river seems to have created a haven for our genera and other delightful plants. As we approached the small garden we saw the most breathtakingly beautiful display: *R. yakushmanum* hybrids and evergreen azaleas at their prime, set among a selection of fine trees, including acers and a *Paulownia tomentosa*, and underplanted with hostas, *Brunnera* 'Jack Frost', and *Lamium variegata*. Clumps of *Paeonia suffruticosa*, a *Cornus kousa*, and tall spires of white *Eremurus* completed the picture. What a treat!

Leaving Dresden, we travelled back to Berlin. But on the way, we were welcomed to **Proschwitz Park** with a glass of 'champagne' from the estate and then shown around the house by a charming lady working for the owner Mr Peterson, and viewed the gardens. Much had been done to restore the house to its previous condition. The area close to the house had numerous shrubs and trees; a distant Summer House had been rebuilt to its pre-war design to restore the country park-like views. The few rhododendrons appeared to be *R. maximum* or its hybrids.

Returning to Berlin's Tegel Airport, we had a coach tour of the highlights of the city, including the Brandenburg Gate, The Parliament buildings, Checkpoint Charlie, the remaining parts of the Berlin Wall and the Jewish memorial.

An interesting and revealing tour over the five days, with several highlights and with many remaining memories of the times of the '39 - '45 war.

My personal memories are of The Pillnitz Palace with the trip on the river Elbe, the City of Dresden with the huge rebuilt Damenkirchen Church and of the landscape of the Furst-Puckler Park.

The Editor (Photos: The Editor)

RHODODENDRONS

1 Aberconway Hybrids at Bodnant. Update on the preservation of the hybrids at Bodnant by micropropagation

Progress Report - The first three plants were sent to Duchy College in August of 2008 for propagation, followed by a further ten early the next year - reports appeared in the Group's Bulletins No.98 and No.99. The first batch is now at the weaning stage, the new plants being set in 5cm. cells and kept under mist.

Ros Smith reports:

"46 *R. 'Penjerrick'* and 14 *R. 'Cardinal'* are weaning off under mist at the moment - see photo below. The second shows a selection in rooting jelly; more 'Penjerrick', 'Varna' and 'Mikado' in rooting mode. Propagation is going very well and there should be plenty of 'Penjerrick' available soon. Not every cv. is really vigorous, one or two are rather slow so it may take longer to achieve the required number.



Gill's hybrids from Tremough

The late Lord Aberconway brought car loads of Rhododendrons from Tremough up to Bodnant early in the last century and these are still growing in the garden at Bodnant. Tremough are unable to identify what hybrids they have growing in the grounds and so Alison Clarke, taxonomist at Bodnant, sent material from some of these plants for micropropagation which will not only ensure their continued survival at Tremough but will enable them to identify any of the original plants left. These are: *Rhododendron* 'Gill's Crimson', 'Coalition', 'Shilsonii', 'Cornubia', 'Rose Perfection', 'Richard Gill', and 'Beauty of Tremough' (See Front Page).



'In rooting jelly' (*Rhododendrons*. 'Penjerrick', 'Varna' & 'Cardinal' etc.)

This has given me a better understanding about the work and time scale involved. Bodnant will be propagating all the Aberconway hybrids over a period of time to ensure the continuity of the collection.

This is a most pleasing, whilst unexpected, consequence of the original initiative of the Rhododendron Camellia and Magnolia Group.

Wider Picture

Although the overall position is far from complete it is clear that many gardens have the problem of either the preservation of ageing specimens of celebrated hybrids (of which few plants are now identified) or suffering from *Phytophthora* infection or both. The degree to which the challenge is met varies widely but all have a current or contingent need of micropropagation and it is likely that this need will grow.

I welcome comments from others who have a similar problem and how they are meeting it.

John Harsant. May 2010

2 Tender Rhododendrons in a Lake District Winter

The recent mild winters have encouraged us to grow tender rhododendrons outdoors. So how did they fare this winter, the coldest and longest for several decades?

Our garden in Windermere, Cumbria is on a steep south-west facing slope, falling some 15 metres in 55 metres. It is well protected from the prevailing south-west winds, but more exposed to the northerly winds, except where shelter is provided locally by trees and shrubs. The frost tends to roll down the slope, so that the minimum temperatures were -5°C at the sunnier, sandy top to -7°C at the wet, shaded, bottom.

Last autumn I moved some of the tender plants - *R. nuttallii*, *R. burmanicum* and *R. dalhousiae* var. *rhabdotum* – from the higher slope, where they had flowered, down to the south-west face of our house where we usually have little frost, hoping to prevent the buds of *R. nuttallii* from being frosted.

However, the moved plants did not do so well. The flower buds on *R. dalhousiae* var. *rhabdotum* were all frosted. *R. burmanicum* lost half its buds, but the remaining ones did flower. Some of the buds on *R. nuttallii* were un-frosted, and are swelling now and should flower soon. The critical difference appears to have been the exposure to frost *and* wind, they could survive one but not both. The plants or parts of plants that kept their buds were either close to the house, protected from the frost by a balcony or by other hardy camellias, or if in the open were sheltered from the north winds.



R. edgeworthii

Photo: Mary Bradbury

R. megacalyx and *R. edgeworthii* which I left at the top of the garden in the protected, wooded area were fine and flowered beautifully, despite temperatures of -5°C.

R. lindleyi on the steep slope below the house also flowered beautifully.



R. lindleyi

Photo: Mary Bradbury

Robert Smith, another member of our Society, had a similar experience with his *R. nuttallii* in a protected spot experiencing temperatures of -6°C, which normally flowers beautifully. It lost all its buds. However, his other tender plants in the same location, such as *R. levinei*, have flowered well.

The explanation may be that the plants experience some kind of wind chill factor. A temperature of -5°C together with a 10 mph wind has the cooling effect of -12°C. So it continues to be possible to grow tender rhododendrons as the photographs from our garden this spring show, as long as they are not in a frost pocket *and* have close protection from the wind provided by other hardy shrubs, a fence or a windbreak.

Mary (DD) Bradbury, Windermere, Cumbria
The Lakeland RCM Society

3 Report of the Symposium in Bremen to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the German Rhododendron Society

The German Rhododendron Society, or more correctly the **Deutsche Rhododendron-Gesellschaft (DRG)** was founded in Bremen in 1935. To mark their 75th Anniversary, the DRG celebrated with a Symposium in Bremen from 18-20 May. This was followed by 5 days of festivities, special events and excursions to Rhododendron Parks and gardens throughout the regions of East Frisia and Schleswig-Holstein in Northern Germany.

The whole programme was superb, and ran with typical German efficiency thanks to the hard work of Hartwig Schepker, Secretary of the DRG and Scientific Director of the **Bremen Rhododendron Park**, aided by his team of helpers. More than 220 participants from 16 countries gathered in Bremen to hear leading international enthusiasts share their knowledge of Rhododendrons. I was kindly invited to speak about British hybridizers and hybrids, but the range of topics was certainly diverse. Presentations ranged from George Argent collecting tropical Vireyas in South East Asia, to John Weagle breeding cold hardy Rhododendrons in Nova Scotia, which particularly interested a group attending from Estonia and Latvia. Fortunately for me at least, all talks were in English!

Whilst most of the attendees were from Germany, there were good contingents from America, Australia, New Zealand and Northern European countries. It was such a shame that the Brits were notable for their absence, and that the RHS RCM group tour to Eastern Germany did not link with this comprehensive programme. Bremen is easily and cheaply accessible from Stansted in little more than an hour. The airport tram whisks you to the historic heart of Bremen in about 10 minutes. Here, the impressive Town Hall dating from 1410, was designated a UNESCO World heritage site in 2004. Below the Town Hall is the famous 600 year old vaulted wine cellar, the Ratskeller, which provided the atmospheric venue for the **Conference Banquet**. After the banquet and a few steins of beer, some of the international contingent took to the stage and congratulated the DRG on the occasion of their 75th Anniversary. I joined in and passed on my congratulations on behalf of the RHS RCM group, pointing out that they are 20 years junior to us!

From the centre of Bremen, there is another €2.25 tram to take the 30 minute trip out to the **Rhodopark**. This is a City funded collection containing more than 3000 Rhododendron hybrids and 550 species, set in 46 ha. (113 acres). It is all beautifully maintained with gardeners working hard everywhere. What a pity that our own Councils don't fund gardens like this! After a while in Germany, you can get Hardy Hybrid overload with so many similar looking plants bred to withstand the -22°C that this region can experience in winter. However at Bremen, species take a fairly prominent role and the setting is delightful. One of the highlights for me was the extensive collection of Deciduous Azaleas including many rare Ghents and Rusticas which were flowering at their peak.

Germany has some of the best labelled collections of Rhododendrons that I have seen. At **Bremen** there is a collection of evergreen azaleas, representing nearly all those varieties hardy enough for Germany. The Hardy Hybrid collection in **Bad Zwischenahn, Rostrup** was managed for many years by Germany's leading expert on Rhododendron hybrids, Walter Schmalscheidt. This extraordinary collection was planted alphabetically and in straight lines, and contains a huge number of mature old British hybrids that you just can't find in Britain nowadays.



Bremen Rhodopark: *R. canadense* 'Fraseri', in the foreground

Photo: David Millais

Of huge interest to all of us trying to identify old hybrids is the German Rhododendron Gene Bank Network, which seeks to identify, verify, label, document and photograph old hybrids in public and private collections. The collection at Bremen forms part of the backbone of this work, which extends to 50 gardens, and aims to propagate rare and endangered plants. So far, over a 3 year period using just one model of camera to aid uniformity, the flowers of 3850 cultivars and 600 species have been recorded, and it is planned that photographs and descriptions will be published on the internet by autumn 2010. Only 1240 cultivars are of German origin, and so there is a good chance that it should be possible to identify many old British hybrids once this website goes live. You can read about this work at: <http://www.lwk-niedersachsen.de/genbank-rhododendron>

About an hour to the West of Bremen is the nursery growing region of Oldenburg. In the town of **Westerstede**, the "Rhodo" event is held every 4 years where 80 local nurseries take over the whole of the square around the Church, and fill it and the adjoining marquees with Rhododendrons. It is a most remarkable event, being the largest Rhododendron Show in Europe (probably the world) and draws tourists from all over Germany. During the week it was open this year, about 95,000 people visited. Just for Rhododendrons! It is a showcase for the latest varieties from Hachmann, Bohlkens, and other German breeders. The nurseries do not have a formal stand like they might at Chelsea, but their exhibits seem to blend seamlessly with their neighbours to make one unified display. More pictures at: <http://www.rhodo.de>

No visit to this area of Germany is complete without a visit to **Hachmann's nursery**, without doubt the world's leading Rhododendron breeder. Between 1952 and 2004, Hans Hachmann made about 5000 crossings, and named 400 new varieties. Today that work is continued by his son Holger, who seeks to continually improve varieties with second or third generation crosses. Some of the new varieties that I saw in 2002 have already been dropped from production in favour of Holger's latest introductions and his ever changing catalogue. Whilst these are highly commercial plants, they are becoming more and more unrecognisable from the original species.

Due to work commitments I was unable to join the organised tours, but I understand that they were fabulous. These included sessions on plant identification at Bremen, and tours to a number of public and private Rhododendron gardens. There was even a visit to a nursery growing more than 3 million Rhododendrons each year, with more than 20 acres of stock beds, and its own gene bank holding 3 of every variety of Rhododendron they can find!

We really need to learn from the Germans who find funds for developing and maintaining public Rhododendron gardens and the Gene bank project. In Germany they value Rhododendrons for the tourism they bring to the **Ammerland region**, with coach after coach touring every spring. They are planted in urban front gardens, used for low hedges everywhere, and are clearly loved by so many people. Wouldn't it be great to adopt some of that enthusiasm in Britain!

David Millais

LETTERS

Bud initiation in *Rhododendron forrestii*.

B.E. Humphrey's interesting letter on rhododendron flower initiation (Bulletin 102) caused me to recall my experience with *R. forrestii* over the years. Growers of this species often blame its reluctance to flower on "poor flowering forms", but it occurred to me that those great plant hunters of the past who first encountered the species in the wild would surely collect seed where it was most abundant, that is from plants that flowered freely. Kingdom Ward writes "*Even more wonderful are the creeping neriiflorums of the Assam Himalaya which form sheets of scarlet on the rocks and hang down in curtains of fire, visible a mile away*". No poor flowering forms there!

R. forrestii pushes out new growth early in the season, especially if it is not flowering that year. Frequently, that new growth is frosted but undeterred the plant brings forth a second crop. However, these reluctant shoots rarely produce flower buds. By the simple expedient of protecting the first flush of growth from frost I have enjoyed flowers on *R. forrestii* most years. *R. williamsianum* behaves similarly when its new growth is frosted but while most plants of *R. forrestii* can be easily protected with a large cardboard box when frost is forecast, a mature plant of *R. williamsianum* is less readily covered.

Mr Humphrey's work has shown that flower bud initiation takes place in late May/early June in some 'iron clad'. Perhaps in some species, including those mentioned above, initiation is as early as April and if it is prevented then, no flower buds are produced subsequently.

Barry N. Starling, Drewsteignton, Devon

Protection from slugs and snails.

With reference to previous articles about different methods of dealing with slugs and snails and having little success with the usual repellents, I decided to try a different approach. Over the last few years I have lost several young plants of spring flowering magnolias due to the ravages of slugs and snails eating the leaves. When I now plant them out, I circle the stems with between 1 and 2 inches of axle grease – which has to be placed high enough up the stem to avoid soil splashing onto the grease when it rains. When I first used grease, I was worried in case it might affect the growth of the shrubs but fortunately once it had had the effect of stopping the pests, the plants continued to grow.

Lilies, *Cardiocrinum giganteum* and *Nerine bowdenii* when planted directly into the ground, were always eaten by slugs and snails. These are now planted into large plant pots (12½ inch, 15 inch or 16 inch) and then circled with the axle grease about two thirds of the way up the pot. (Do not put any grease near the top of the pot to avoid problems with moving the pots). I

also cover over the soil with fine grit. This method has proved successful, with the *Cardiocrinum* growing up to 7 or 8 feet tall.

I suppose this must be a similar technique to using grease bands on apple trees. Ladies Vaseline is just another type of grease and could be used in a similar manner.

Last year, lily beetles arrived in large numbers and already this year I have disposed of several. Snails are great climbers, and some years ago on a hot sunny day sitting out in the garden under the shade of a laburnum tree, two snails dropped to the ground – maybe the heat caused them to lose their adhesion. The main thing must be to keep one's drink covered and perhaps wear a hat!

On the vegetable plot, because of strong winds, I have to grow runner beans with the sticks in a circular 'wigwam' fashion with the sticks tied together at the top. This does create some shade where the snails congregate together but they don't appear to cause much damage to the beans.

Derek Faulkner, Blackpool, Lancs.

Dear Editor,

Does anyone else have any of Denny Pratt's late flowering deciduous azaleas? Or any information about them? I believe he came from The Wirral. I hope I have his name right. He might have named one 'Summer Solstice' but nothing is registered under that name. They would be in bloom about now, and we have a very fine red one.

Anne Boscawen, High Beeches Gardens

SHOW REPORTS

The Early Rhododendron Competition

April 6th 2010 Vincent Square

The unfortunate timing of the Early Rhododendron Competition, coming as it did on the day after the Easter long weekend, coupled with the effect of the threatened rail strike on people's plans, resulted in a rather disappointing event. Although the strike failed to go ahead on the day, visitor turnout was poor and many RHS committee members had sensibly taken the decision to stay put, so there was little buzz and bustle.

Regardless of the train situation, staging a show the day after a public holiday prevented entrants such as the Royal Parks team from entering, since they would have had to give up a day off to prepare. Their absence was particularly noticed on the Ornamental Plant Competition benches but they had intended to enter the rhododendron classes this year had the date not fallen as it did.

Thank goodness for John Anderson and his stalwart team from Exbury – does anything keep them down? Arriving at 7am on a brisk April morning to see them in full cry was a real joy – this is what exhibiting is all about! Exbury were the sole entrants in the Early Rhododendron Competition but were neither complacent nor uninspired – they compete to win 1st prizes and these don't come simply through being the only entrant – excellence is paramount.

The extraordinary winter (for recent times at least) inevitably impacted on the quality, size and variety of the blooms but it was good to see some unfamiliar rhododendrons and this is all part of John Anderson's crusading drive to educate and inform at the same time as competing.

Among the species, trusses of *Rhododendron anthosphaerum*, *R. cyanocarpum* and *R. coeloneuron* drew attention among the more familiar *R. macabeum*, *R. niveum* and *R. irroratum* entries. Hybrids such as the lovely *R. 'Lucy Lou'* – superior to the more widely grown *R. 'Snow Lady'* – and glorious, but frustratingly impossible to acquire, *R. 'Red Admiral'* blazed on the bench.

In particular, the influence of *Rhododendron calophytum* was striking, represented as it was not only in a superb exhibit of the species itself but also in such glorious hybrids as 'Nimrod', 'Robin Hood', 'Androcles' and 'Jocelyne'.

All in all this was a grand 'one-man show' by Exbury. Take note though: Trewithen, so impressive this year for making the effort to enter the Early Camellia Show at Wisley and then taking the Main Rhododendron Competition at Rosemoor by storm, have promised to take part in next year's Early Rhododendron Competition. Who knows what we shall be reporting this time in 2011!

Pam Hayward

Results:

Class 1 Any 3 species, one truss of each
3 entries

1st: *R. basilicum*, *R. macabeum*, *R. praestans*

Class 2 Any species, one spray or branch
2 entries

1st: *R. fulvum*

Class 3 Any species, one truss
2 entries

1st: *R. macabeum*

Class 4 Subsect Arborea or Argyrophylla, one truss
2 entries

1st: *R. niveum*

Class 5 Subsect Barbata, Glischra or Maculifera, one truss
1 entry

1st: *R. glischroides*

Class 6 Subsect Falconera or Grandia, one truss
3 entries

1st: *R. basilicum*

2nd: *R. falconeri* ssp. *eximium*

3rd: *R. anthosphaerum*

Class 7 Subsect Fortunea, one truss
1 entry

1st: *R. calophytum*

Class 8 Subsect Neriiflora, one spray
No entries

Class 9 Subsect Campylocarpa, Selensia, Thomsonia or Williamsiana, one spray
No entries

Class 10 Subsect Afghanica, Boothia, Campylogyna, Fragariiflora, Genestieriana, Glaucia, Heliolepidia, Lapponica, Monantha, Moupinensia, Rhodorastra, Saluensia, Scabrifolia, Tephropepla, Triflora or Virgata, one spray
2 entries

1st: *R. luteiflorum*

Class 11 Any species of subgenus Hymenanthes not included in any subsection mentioned in the foregoing classes, one truss
2 entries

1st: *R. fulvum*

Class 12 Any species of subgenus Hymenanthes not included in any subsection mentioned in the foregoing classes, one spray
No entries

Class 13 Three hybrids, one truss of each
1 entry

1st: 'Robin Hood', 'Androcles', 'Jocelyne'

Class 14 Any hybrid, one spray
1 entry

1st: 'Lucy Lou'

Class 15 Any hybrid, one truss
1 entry

1st: 'Our Kate Marise'

Class 16 Any hybrid of which one parent is a species of subsect Arborea, Argyrophylla, Barbata, Campylocarpa, Glischra, Maculifera, Selensia, Thomsonia or Williamsiana, one truss
3 entries

1st: 'Nimrod'

Class 17 Any hybrid of which one parent is a species of subsect Fortunea, one truss
1 entry

1st: 'Jocelyne'

Class 18 Any subgenus Hymenanthes hybrid of which neither parent is a species of subsect Arborea, Argyrophylla, Barbata, Campylocarpa, Fortunea, Glischra, Maculifera, Selensia, Thomsonia or Williamsiana, one truss

1 entry

2nd: 'Brian Howell'

Class 19 Any hybrid not catered for above, one truss
2 entries

1st: *grande* x unknown

Not placed: 'Chink'

Class 20 Any hybrid not catered for above, one spray
1 entry

1st: 'Crossbill'

Class 21 Any tender species or hybrid, one truss
2 entries

1st: *R. lindleyi*

Class 22 Any tender species or hybrid, one spray
1 entry

1st: 'Captain Scarlett'

The **Alan Hardy Challenge Salver** for the most points awarded at the Early Rhododendron Competition: Mr. John Anderson, Exbury Garden

Main Rhododendron Competition

April 24th/25th 2010 – RHS Rosemoor

Just 18 days separated the Early and Main Rhododendron Competitions in 2010 but with a few hundred miles between the venues and 22 more entrants, the two events could not have been more different.

Held in association with the SW Branch Camellia and Magnolia Competitions, together with trade stands from Millais and Trehane, and displays from Marwood Hill Gardens and Rosemoor itself, the Main Competition was once again spectacular, with even better visitor figures than 2009.

It has become fascinating to note the differences in each year's show created by the variability in the seasons. Markedly absent in 2010, for example, was the burgeoning bench of Loderi Group entries so impressive in 2009. Similarly, two thirds of the entries in the Arborea/Argyrophylla class in 2009 were from the Argyrophylla subsection whereas they were entirely absent this year.

Trewithen's return to the competition after a gap of some 50 years should be placed on record. When the McLaren Cup (for the best individual species rhododendron) was introduced, in 1932, it was won by Trewithen – they repeated that triumph in 2010 with a *Rhododendron arboreum* ssp. *delavayi* var. *delavayi* truss of the most intense glowing red. Gary Long and his team went on to take seven other first places and we are assured they will be back to build on this success and give Exbury (with 23 firsts) an even greater challenge.

Another new entrant of note was The Garden House in Devon, bringing exhibits from the notable collection created by Lionel Fortescue.

The new hybrid classes based on geographic origin were well supported despite the later spring and the new class for a first time exhibitor produced a magnificent win for Tom Clarke with a truss of *R. arizelum* from Trelissick.

A more detailed report about the SW Branch competitions will follow in a subsequent issue but mention should be made of the two awards introduced this year. Malcolm Pharoah from Marwood Hill Gardens was the winner of the Williams Cup awarded for the Best Camellia in Show (*Camellia japonica* 'In the Pink') and Jaimie Parsons of Caerhays Castle received the Sir John Quicke Cup for the Best Magnolia in Show (*Magnolia* 'Caerhays Surprise').

Pam Hayward

The full Results

Class 1 Any six species, one truss of each
The Lionel de Rothschild Challenge Cup
4 entries

1st: Exbury *R. falconeri*, *R. campanulatum*, *R. arizelum*, *R. morii*, *R. crinigerum*, *R. adenophorum*
2nd: Exbury *R. irroratum* 'Polka Dot', *R. falconeri*, *R. arboreum* f. *Roseum*, *R. hyperythrum*, *R. niveum*, *R. campanulatum*
3rd: Caerhays Castle *R. sinogrande*, *R. falconeri* ssp. *eximium*, *R. macabeum*, *R. morii*, *R. niveum*, *R. arboreum* f. *Album*

Class 2 Any three species, one truss of each
6 entries

1st: Trewithen *R. falconeri* ssp. *eximium*, *R. niveum*, *R. arboreum* ssp. *delavayi* var. *Delavayi*
2nd: Philip Evans *R. arboreum* ssp. *arboreum*, *R. pseudochrysanthum*, *R. pachysanthum*

3rd: Barry Starling *R. thomsonii*, *R. pseudochrysanthum*, *R. arboreum* ssp. *cinnamomeum*

Class 3 Any species, one truss
The McLaren Challenge Cup
16 entries

1st: Trewithen *R. arboreum* ssp. *delavayi* var. *Delavayi*
(See Photo on the back page)
2nd: Thomas Clarke *R. arizelum*
3rd: The Garden House *R. pseudochrysanthum*

Class 4 Any species, one spray
The Roza Stevenson Challenge Cup
9 entries

1st: Exbury *R. scabrifolium* var. *Spiciferum*
2nd: Barry Starling *R. thomsonii*
3rd: Caerhays Castle *R. albrechtii*

Class 5 Any species of subsect Arborea or Argyrophylla, one truss
9 entries

1st: Trewithen *R. niveum*
2nd: Marwood Hill *R. arboreum*
3rd: Terry Vince *R. arboreum*

Class 6 Any species of subsect Barbata, Glischra or Maculifera
8 entries
1st: Trewithen *R. pseudochrysanthum*
2nd/3rd: Brian Moss *R. pachysanthum*

Class 7 Any species of subsect Campanulata, Fulgensia or Lanata, one truss
4 entries
1st: Exbury *R. campanulatum*
2nd: Barry Starling *R. lanatum*
3rd: Philip Evans *R. campanulatum*

Class 8 Any species of subsect Grandia or Falconera, one truss
8 entries
1st: Exbury *R. arizelum*
2nd: Terry Vince *R. rex* ssp. *fictolacteum*
3rd: Trewithen *R. falconeri*

Class 9 Any species of subsect Fortunea, one truss
3 entries
1st: Exbury *R. oreodoxa* sp. *Fargesii*
2nd: None placed
3rd: Bruce Osborne *R. orbiculare*

Class 10 Any species of subsect Fulva, Irrorata or Parishia, one truss
5 entries
1st: Marwood Hill *R. irroratum*
2nd: Philip Evans *R. annae* var. *Laxiflorum*
3rd: Exbury *R. fulvum*

Class 11 Any species of subsect Taliensia, one truss
3 entries
1st: Exbury *R. traillianum*
2nd: Philip Evans *R. balfourianum*
3rd: Terry Vince *R. adenogynum*

Class 12 Any species of subsect Neriiflora, one spray
1 entry
1st: Exbury *R. sperabile*

Class 13 Any species of subsect Pontica, one truss
2 entries
1st: Exbury *R. hyperythrum*.
(One not as schedule)

Class 14 Any species of subsect Thomsonia, Selsenia or
Campylocarpa, one truss
1 entry (Not as schedule)

Class 15 *Rhododendron williamsianum*, one spray
No entries

Class 16 Any species of subgenus Hymenanthes not included in
the foregoing classes, one truss or spray
No entries

Class 17 Any species of subsect Edgeworthia or Maddenia, one
spray
3 entries
1st: Exbury Unknown species
2nd: Pam Hayward *R. johnstoneanum*

Class 18 Any species of subsect Edgeworthia or Maddenia, one
truss
7 entries
1st: John Jemmett *R. edgeworthii*
2nd: Barry Starling *R. lindleyi*
3rd: Exbury *R. horlickianum*

Class 19 Any species of subsect Triflora and Heliolepidia other
than *R. augustinii*
4 entries
1st: Trewithen *R. yunnanense*
2nd: Marwood Hill *R. davidsonianum*
3rd: Trewithen *R. rubiginosum* Desquamatum Group

Class 20 *Rhododendron augustinii*, one spray
6 entries
1st: Barry Starling *R. augustinii* ssp. *chasmanthum*
2nd: Trewithen *R. augustinii*
3rd: Exbury *R. augustinii*

Class 21 Any species of subsect Cinnabarina, Tephropepla or
Virgata, one spray
4 entries
1st: Marwood Hill *R. cinnabarinum* ssp. *xanthocodon*
Concatenans Group
2nd: Russell Beeson *R. auritum*
3rd: Exbury *R. cinnabarinum* ssp. *xanthocodon*

Class 22 Any species of subsect Campylogyna, Genestieriana or
Glauca, one spray
2 entries
1st: Exbury *R. charitopes* ssp. *tsangpoense*
2nd: Terry Vince *R. luteiflorum*

Class 23 Any species of subsect Lapponica, one spray
4 entries
1st: Barry Starling *R. orthocladum* var. *Microleucum*
2nd: Exbury *R. flavidum*
3rd: Exbury *R. orthocladum* var. *Orthocladum*

Class 24 Any species of subsect Saluenensia or Uniflora, one
spray
1 entry
1st: Barry Starling *R. pemakoense*

Class 25 Any species of subsect Scabrifolia, one spray
3 entries
1st: Exbury *R. scabrifolium* var. *Spiciferum*
2nd: Barry Starling *R. spinuliferum*

Class 26 Any species of subsect Pogonanthum or Lepidota, one
spray
1st: Pam Hayward *R. primuliflorum* 'Doker La'
2nd: Barry Starling *R. cephalanthum* 'Red Ness'

Class 27 Any lepidote species not mentioned above, one spray
No entries

Class 28 Any species of Vireya, one truss grown under glass
No entries

Class 29 Any species of deciduous azalea, one spray
6 entries
1st: Exbury *R. quinquefolium* 'Five Arrows'
2nd: Exbury *R. schlippenbachii*
3rd: Trewithen *R. schlippenbachii*

Class 30 Any species of evergreen azalea, one spray
1 entry
No place awarded

Class 31 Six hybrids, one truss of each
3 entries
1st: Pat Bucknell 'Taurus', Unknown, 'Grace Seabrook', 'Unique',
'Rubicon', 'Endsleigh Pink'
2nd: Trewithen 'Jack Skilton', Unknown, 'Boddaertianum',
'Endsleigh Pink', 'Elizabeth', Unknown
3rd: Exbury 'Quaker Girl', 'Queen of Hearts', 'Damaris', 'Unique',
'Ayesha', 'Rothenburg'

Class 32 Three hybrids, one truss of each
6 entries
1st: Pat Bucknell 'Unique', 'Endsleigh Pink', 'Taurus'
2nd: Exbury 'Gaul', 'Queen of Hearts', 'Colonel Rogers'
3rd: Marwood Hill 'Rubicon', 'Rothenburg', 'Queen of Hearts'

Class 33 Any hybrid, one truss
The Loder Challenge Cup
17 entries
1st: Exbury 'Colonel Rogers'
2nd: Pat Bucknell 'Etta Burrows'
3rd: Exbury 'Fortune'

Class 34 Any hybrid, one spray
5 entries
1st: Exbury 'Ayesha'
2nd: Exbury 'Unknown Warrior'
3rd: Marwood Hill 'Sir Charles Lemon'

Class 35 Three hybrids bred and raised in the garden of the
exhibitor, one truss each
The Crosfield Challenge Cup
3 entries
1st: Exbury 'Prelude', 'Fortune', 'Churchill'
2nd: Exbury 'Ayesha', 'Lionel's Triumph', 'Queen of Hearts'
3rd: Trewithen 'Jack Skilton', Unknown, 'Alison Johnstone'

Class 36 Loderi Group, one truss
2 entries, neither placed above Highly Commended

Class 37 Any hybrid of which one parent is of subject Fortunea
5 entries, only 1 placed above Highly Commended
1st: Exbury 'Calstocker'

Class 38 Any hybrid of which one parent is *R. williamsianum*
4 entries
1st: Marwood Hill 'Rothenburg'
2nd: Exbury 'Moonstone'
3rd: Trewithen 'Rothenburg'

Class 39 Any hybrid of which one parent is of subject Campylocarpa, one truss
10 entries
1st: Barry Starling 'Unique'
2nd: Pam Hayward 'Bruce Brechtbill'
3rd: Exbury 'Carita'

Class 40 Any hybrid of which one parent is of subject Neriiflora, one truss
6 entries
1st: Terry Vince Unknown
2nd: Barry Starling 'Katinka'
3rd: Pam Hayward 'W.F.H'

Class 41 Any hybrid of which one parent is *R. thomsonii*, one truss
3 entries
1st: Exbury 'Aurora'
2nd: Exbury 'Shilsonii'
3rd: Russell Beeson 'Aurora'

Class 42 Any hybrid of which one parent is of subject Grandia or Falconera, one truss
3 entries
1st: Pam Hayward 'Loch Awe'
2nd: Exbury Unknown
3rd: Thomas Clarke *sinogrande* x *macabeanum*

Class 43 Any hybrid of which one parent is *R. griersonianum*, one truss
5 entries
1st: Exbury 'Matador'
2nd: Pam Hayward 'Matador'
3rd: Exbury 'Ibex'

Class 44 Any hybrid of which one parent is of subject Taliensia, one truss
3 entries
1st: Alexander Craig-Mooney 'John Barr Stevenson'
2nd: Pam Hayward *yakushmanum* x *proteioides*
3rd: Exbury 'Lionel's Triumph'

Class 45 Any hybrid of which one parent is of subject Pontica, one truss
3 entries
1st: Bruce Osborne 'Teddy Bear'
2nd: Philip Evans *tsariense* x *yakushmanum*
3rd: Barry Starling 'Easter Chick'

Class 46 Any hybrid of which one parent is of subject Arborea or Argyrophylla, one truss
8 entries
1st: Pat Bucknell 'Rubicon'

2nd: Barry Starling *argyrophyllum* x *insigne*
3rd: Marwood Hill *arboreum* x unknown seedling

Class 47 Any hybrid of which one parent is of subject Cinnabarina, one truss
11 entries
1st: Trewithen Alison Johnstone
2nd: Terry Vince 'Trewithen Orange'
3rd: Russell Beeson 'Alison Johnstone'

Class 48 Any hybrid of which one parent is of subject Edgeworthia or Maddenia, one truss
7 entries
1st: Exbury Unknown
2nd: Russell Beeson 'Countess of Haddington'
3rd: Russell Beeson 'Spinbur'

Class 49 Any hybrid of which one parent is of subject Triflora, one spray
8 entries
1st: Exbury Unknown
2nd: Barry Starling Elfin Gold
3rd: Barry Starling *keiskei* 'Yaku Fairy' x *racemosum*

Class 50 Any other hybrid of lepidote, one truss
6 entries
1st: Exbury 'Yellow Hammer'
2nd: Barry Starling 'Charme La'
3rd: Exbury *impeditum* hybrid

Class 51 Any other hybrid of subgenus Hymenanthus, one truss
7 entries
1st: Robin Whiting 'Grace Seabrook'
2nd: Pam Hayward 'Lady Digby'
3rd: Pat Bucknell 'Grace Seabrook'

Class 52 Any other hybrid of subgenus Hymenanthus, one spray
1 entry
1st: Barry Starling 'Everlasting'

Class 53 Any other hybrid grown under glass (including Vireya), one truss
5 entries
1st: Exbury 'Peach'
– (See photo on back page)
2nd: Pam Hayward 'Cherry Glow'
3rd: Russell Beeson Unknown

Class 54 Any other hybrid grown under glass (including Vireya), one spray
1 entry
1st: Pam Hayward 'Lucie Sorensen'

Class 55 Any elepidote hybrid bred in North America, one truss
6 entries
1st: Exbury 'Taurus'
2nd: Pam Hayward 'Grace Seabrook'
3rd: Pat Bucknell 'Berg's Yellow'

Class 56 Any elepidote hybrid bred in UK, one truss
4 entries
1st: Barry Starling 'Unique'
2nd: Pam Hayward 'Loch Awe'
3rd: Pam Hayward 'May Morn'

Class 57 Any elepidote hybrid bred in Europe (excl.UK), one truss
3 entries

1st: Pat Bucknell 'Gartendirektor Rieger'

2nd: Exbury 'Queen Wilhelmina'

3rd: Exbury 'Rothenburg'

Class 58 Any elepidote hybrid bred elsewhere in the world, one truss
4 entries

1st: Marwood Hill 'Rubicon'

2nd: Pat Bucknell 'Rubicon'

3rd: Terry Vince 'Rubicon'

Class 59 Any rhododendron, one truss, by a first time exhibitor
who has not won a prize in the last 5 years at a previous RHS
rhododendron competition
1 entry

1st: Thomas Clarke *R. arizelum*

Class 60 Any evergreen hybrid azalea, one spray
7 entries

1st: Trewithen 'Hino Crimson'

2nd: Exbury Unknown

3rd: Brian Moss 'Hino Crimson'

Class 61 Any deciduous hybrid azalea, one spray
2 entries

1st: Trewithen Unknown

2nd: Caerhays Castle Unknown

The Camellia Competitions

I regret that I am not able to print the results of the
Early or the Main Camellia Competitions in this issue
of the Bulletin.

The Editor

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BRANCH REPORTS

New Forest Branch

Robin Whiting

Ray Thornton is a member of the New Forest Branch and the visit to see the Magnolias in his garden in March had to be put back because of the late season. The delay was worthwhile as it enabled us to see the many lovely Magnolias in all their glory. Ray planted two Magnolias in 1976 soon after moving in, but lost both plants to the long hot summer of that year. Soon after, he started growing Magnolias and Rhododendrons from seed. This has been carried on over the years aided and abetted by his son Tim. Two Magnolias flowered this year for the first time some 20 years from sowing. Other Magnolias in the garden were bought from nurseries around the country. Lovely specimens seen were 'Albatross', 'Phillip Tregunna', 'Apollo', and 'Black Tulip'. Ray travelled a great deal on business, and on one trip whilst in Darjeeling, collected seed from a *Rhododendron arboreum*. The seedlings came true and one of the resulting selections was named 'Alan Campbell-Johnson'. It was in full flower and made a fine sight. There is a continual battle in the garden against deer and rabbits, so many of the plants had cages to curtail damage. We all know that eucalyptus are rapid growers, but Ray must have a record breaker with his *Eucalyptus globulus* which has reached 24metres (80 feet) in just 14 years from seed!

The visit to John McQuire's garden, Deer Dell, in mid April was an event that had been savoured for many months and none of us lucky enough to go there were disappointed. Extending to around 7 acres, the garden is laid out with the Rhododendrons in their sections under a canopy of Scots pines. The paths are very narrow and to keep it manageable our party was split into two groups. John McQuire led one group and Roderick White, a friend of John McQuire with an intimate knowledge of the garden, took the rest of us round. We were all amazed at the size of the collection of Rhododendrons in the garden. Over the forty or so years that John has been developing the garden, he has searched for the very best forms of each species, and in many cases different forms of the same species. He was fortunate to know H. H. Davidian very well and was able to obtain cuttings and scions of plants from gardens with the best collections. As a result he has built a collection to rival any in the country.



R. neriiflorum var. *appropinquans*

Photo: Robin Whiting

It is not easy gardening in this part of Surrey. Roderick described the soil as 'dirty sand' and a great deal of watering is required during the growing season. In one part of the garden we noticed a large number of hose reels ready to be brought into action. It is amazing that John has no help in the garden save

for any tree work required. As might be imagined with such a large collection of species, few hybrids were to be seen. It is difficult to pick special plants out from this superb collection, especially when many of the photographs in “The Pocket Guide to Rhododendron Species” were taken in this garden.

Three plants stood out for this writer: *R. neriiflorum* var. *appropinquans* with most unusual and lovely flowers; *R. suoilenhense* from Vietnam and only introduced in 1992; and *R. platypodum* with superb foliage and its own separate cage surrounding it, presumably to keep off marauding rabbits.

West Midlands branch

Cheryl Sapcote

Visit to the Rhododendron Collection at Bowood House

4th May 2010

We arrived at Bowood in time for a splendid lunch in the excellent Hotel, spa and Golf resort within the grounds of Bowood estate. Our host, the Marquis of Lansdowne, made us most welcome, and we were impressed by the excellent facilities at the hotel, and the impressive glimpses of fabulous landscape out of every window.

After a short drive in convoy through bluebell copses along the estate roads, we arrived at the car park to the 60 acre Rhododendron Garden. The first rhododendrons were planted by the 3rd Marquis of Lansdowne around 1854, and each successive generation up to the present day has added to the collection. There are 2 miles of walks, but we took a sensible circular walk taking in some of the best parts of the collection.

We first saw an excellent large *Pieris formosa* in extended red bud some 10ft or more in diameter. This was complemented by some interesting home grown seedlings and a lush and fragrant *Rhododendron* Loderi Group ‘Saunders’s White’.

As we proceeded along the paths taking the ‘Pauline’s Ride’ route, *R. augustinii* was extensively planted around, with many subtly differing shades of purple and lilac, the effect overall was of bright ‘fluorescence’ in the light violet spectrum.

We observed, *R. ‘Mucronatum roseum’*, *R. Penjerrick* Group, *R. falconeri* ssp. *eximium*, a *R. ‘Carezin’* which was yellow, and *R. ‘Moonstone’*, *R. williamsianum*, *R. ‘Alison Johnstone’*, *R. Loderi* Group ‘Peter Veitch’. In the background were various Magnolias and Cornus. Lower down this pathway we observed some superb double Camellia plants in full flower –the variety identified as *Camellia ‘Cardinal’s Cap’*.

Past a large triangular clearing at the bottom of the pathway we turned into ‘Lady Lansdowne’s Ride’ and observed a tall specimen of what is often referred to as *R. ‘Cornish Red’* (syn. ‘Smithii Group’ *R. ponticum* x *R. arboreum*) much seen in the south of England

Various Rhododendrons lined the pathway with an interesting plant of *R. cinnabarinum* (often too tender for this type of location), a nice mounded *R. orbiculare*, *R. griersonianum*, *R. strigillosum* and a red *R. arboreum*. We observed spent *Magnolia campbelli* ssp. *mollicomata* and, on a small diversion, what was possibly a nice multi-stemmed *M. sargentiana* var. *robusta* or hybrid.

We observed a superb recent planting of newer *Magnolia* including Felix Jury hybrids with a *M. ‘Atlas’* showing flower. It was interesting to see new plantings of *Castanea sativa* where the young saplings had smooth bark quite unlike that of mature trees.

In a well sheltered position, specimens of *R. sinogrande* and other large leaf rhododendrons – *R. falconeri* plus possibly crosses made good progress.

Visiting the architecturally stunning Robert Adam Mausoleum on higher ground, we were able to view the lower areas of the gardens as well as the distant parkland.



R. augustinii ‘Electra’

Photo: George Hargreaves

Moving towards the Quarry area we saw more of the modern plantings included 3 *Liriodendron tulipifera fastigiata*. All around under the shelter of oaks and pines were superb examples of *Cornus*, *Stewartia* sp., *Cryptomeria japonica* and other fascinating ornamentals. We came upon a glade which was skirted by *R. lacteum*, *R. fictolacteum*, *R. rex*, *R. falconeri* and a *R. falconeri/sinogrande* cross. Everywhere we went *R. Loderi* Group perfumed the air.

Lord Lansdowne’s final treat was to take us to his private nursery area beside Keepers’ Drive, where the hybrids and plants initiated at Bowood were being ‘brought on’ for inclusion in the gardens.

We were also privileged to view a newly cleared, drained and part-planted area which will be an additional wing to the public areas of the gardens where we observed some superb young Rhododendron hybrids as well as some further newly planted *Stewartia* species and other trees and shrubs.

Lord Lansdowne made an enthusiastic and knowledgeable host, taking care to give us as much information as he could about all the plants that we observed. The Rhododendron Gardens of Bowood are open each spring from mid-April. Details at www.bowood.org

BRANCH SHOWS

Both the SE branch and the Wessex branch held their **branch shows** again in April and May respectively. In spite of the late and cold spring, both shows received many entries of a very high quality.

The **S.E. Show** entries were boosted by impressive displays in the entries from Exbury, Borde Hill and from High Beeches gardens. Whilst Exbury Gardens took much of the ‘silverware’, High Beeches took the ‘Best in Show’ with a huge truss of *R. macabeanum*.



SE branch Best in Show - *R. macabeanum* from High Beeches.

Photo: Sally Hayward

The **Wessex Show** was well supported by members with a splendid display of blooms, and from the near perfect trusses displayed, the Best in Show was won by Richard Thornton (see below).



Wessex branch 'Best in Show' - A hybrid of *R. wightii*, shown by Richard Thornton.

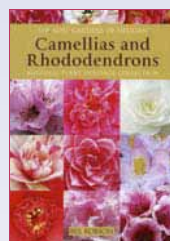
Photo: The Editor

MEMBERSHIP

Rupert Eley

We warmly welcome a number of new members to the Group, and we hope they will enjoy the many benefits of membership.

The following publications are offered to Group Members exclusively and are sold in support of the Group. Previously advertised titles not featured here may still be available – please enquire.



The Lost Gardens of Heligan **CAMELLIAS and RHODODENDRONS** **National Plant Heritage Collection**

Bee Robson

96pp Barman 2010

Full Price: **£9.95** Member's Price: **£8.50**

Postage: UK **£1.50**, Europe **£3**

Rest of World **£5**

Pocket Guide to RHODODENDRON SPECIES

John McQuire & Mike Robinson

704pp RBG Kew 2009

Full Price: **£59** Member's Price: **£42**

Postage: UK **£5.50**, Europe **£8.50**

Rest of World **£15.50**



SEEDS OF ADVENTURE Peter Cox &

Peter Hutchison

Full Price: **£35** Member's Price: **£27**

Postage: UK **£4**, Europe **£6**, Rest of World **£10**

CAMELLIAS: The Gardener's Encyclopedia Jennifer Trehane

Full price: **£35** Member's Price: **£23.50**

Postage: UK **£5.50**, Europe **£10**, Rest of World **£19**

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PUBLICATIONS

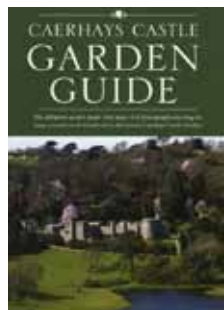
07/10

Over the last weeks three new 'guides' to important gardens/arboreta have come into my hands. Each is so much more than the usual 'what to see, where', 'use once and consign to the bookshelf' resource and I thought it would be of interest to share the details of these publications.

They are the *Caerhays Castle Garden Guide*, *The Lost Gardens of Heligan Camellias and Rhododendrons National Plant Heritage Collection* and *Lumoava metsäpuisto Arboretum Mustila* [Arboretum Mustila: Enchanting Woodland Park].

Common to all three books is the outstanding photography, attractive design and excellent maps. Indeed, although for the majority of us the Arboretum Mustila title is made somewhat inaccessible, published as it is in Finnish, the visual experience crosses all language barriers.

Similarly, each book provides an extensive history of its respective subject, which neatly weaves the past into present day descriptions of the plants and plantings.



Caerhays Castle Garden Guide

Charles Williams & Jaimie Parsons

104pp 170mm x 240mm

£7.95 (plus post)

Available from: Caerhays Estate Office

Tel: 01872 500025

Email: estateoffice@caerhays.co.uk

Caerhays Castle is a place intrinsically associated with our Group's history and this new guide brings together elements of interest to many of our members.

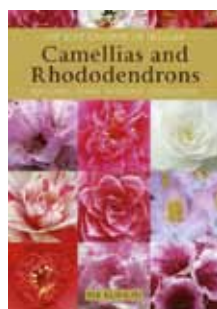
The book is presented in three main sections that describe in turn the history of the gardens, recommended routes around the gardens and a detailed appendix listing specific groups of plants raised or grown at Caerhays.

In describing its history, Charles Williams ably conveys his love and deep understanding of Caerhays; the importance of the wild collections which established the framework, the hybridisation work in our three genera over three generations, which has greatly enriched the plantings and the more recent expansion into a wider range of plants which demonstrates the commitment to the future of the garden. Caerhays is shown to be a vibrant and dynamic place and Charles himself responsive both to the sudden changes recent years have forced upon the garden and to the opportunities they present.

The 120 acres that comprise the garden at Caerhays have been arranged into four colour-coded routes differing in length and ease of walking, enabling each visitor to maximise their enjoyment. Each route is depicted clearly on an annotated map which links to the accompanying text. Plants of note are numbered sequentially around the route and through the text, and much is to be gleaned from Jaimie Parson's commentary along the way. As Head Gardener since 1996, Jaimie has clearly developed his own close relationship with the garden and his text is rich with information and anecdote.

The final section of this book is divided into 8 appendices detailing the various collections, outstanding plants and Caerhays hybrids, all beautifully illustrated and of great interest.

Although I believe this book has standalone merit, I would certainly recommend it to any potential visitor to Caerhays, it will enhance a visit greatly to have read it beforehand.



The Lost Gardens of Heligan, Camellias and Rhododendrons National Plant Heritage Collection.

Bee Robson

96pp 148mm x 210mm

£9.95

See Publications Ad in this Bulletin for availability

The story of the restoration of the Lost Gardens of Heligan is probably familiar to most members, but of greater importance to us than the landscape itself is the number of surviving historic camellias and rhododendrons.

Thanks to the efforts of Bee Robson, many of these varieties have been identified and their future assured.

As Curator at Heligan, Bee's specialist knowledge has enabled her to put together a remarkable account of the National Heritage Collection of camellias and rhododendrons at Heligan, which she has privately published.

The history of the garden is viewed alongside that of each of the genera's introduction and rise to popularity, which makes fascinating reading and places Heligan's development in context with contemporary events elsewhere. Thereafter, individual camellias and rhododendrons are described in detail and beautifully illustrated with both photographs and botanical drawings – most notably the reproductions of the Sikkim rhododendrons of J D Hooker. Maps display suggested routes and individual plants are numbered to link in with the text.

Finally, a consideration of the future of these plants mirrors the Caerhays volume and reminds the reader of the importance of a structured scheme of propagation when faced with ageing and threatened unique varieties.

I believe this book to be a worthy addition to members' bookshelves. It offers an excellent introductory history to camellias and rhododendrons along with detailed descriptions of specific varieties, all set against the background of a most important British garden.



Lumoava Metsäpuisto: Arboretum Mustila

Ed. Kristian Theqvist

160pp 178mm x 256mm

Availability – please enquire

Thanks to the internet it has become possible to appreciate the passion for rhododendrons in Finland.

Edited by Finnish member and talented hybridiser, Kristian Theqvist, this book opened my eyes still further to the sheer beauty of the cultivated landscape there.

The Arboretum Mustila is located in southeast Finland and was founded in 1902 by Axel Fredrik Tigerstedt (whose son's name was given to *R. brachycarpum* ssp. *tigerstedtii*).

Through Leena Härkönen's wonderful photographs the reader is transported through the seasons at the arboretum and made aware of the incredible range of exotic plants it has been possible to establish in this harsh environment.

There is a brief summary of the book in English, which is helpful but otherwise one can rely on Latin universality!

Kristian very kindly sent the book to me and I would be happy to lend it to anyone who is interested – provided they cover the postage and promise faithfully to return it.

RHODODENDRON, CAMELLIA & MAGNOLIA GROUP**Minutes of the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING****held on Tuesday 15th June 2010****at 2.30 p.m. at RHS Garden, Wisley****Present:** Chairman, Mr A Simons,

Mr E Annal, Mr R Beeson, Mrs PA Bucknell, Mr DJ Coombes, Mrs P Coombes, Mr P Evans, Mr MDC Gates, Mrs M Gunn, Mrs J Hallett, Mr BA Haseltine, Mr JG Hillier, Mr S Lyus, Mr T Methuen-Campbell, Mr D Millais, Mr JA Rawling, Mr K Sprague, Mr A Stevenson, Mr I Stokes, Mr C Tomlin, Mr R Whiting.

Apologies: Mr EJ Brabin, Mr CHT Brown, Mr RC Eley, Mr EAL Fitzwilliams, Mr JD Harsant, Mrs P Hayward, Dr D Ives, Dr RHL Jack, Mrs R Le-Grand, Mrs H Lyus, Mr G Mills, Mr J Sanders, Mrs N, Sanders, Mr M Slocock, Mrs E Tirard, Mrs J Warren, Mr C Williams, Mr B Wright, Mrs I Wright.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. It was the highest number of people attending an AGM for many years. He thanked John Anderson for his very interesting lecture which took place prior to the AGM and to the many people who brought Rhododendrons for display and discussion.

1. The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2009 held on 16th June 2009 and published in Bulletin No. 100 July 2009 were agreed to be a true record and were signed by the Chairman.

2. Matters Arising: There were no matters arising.

3. Chairman's Report: See Chairman's Notes on the front page of this Bulletin.

4. Treasurer's Report: The income and expenditure account, and the balance sheet for the year ended October 31st 2009 were tabled by Alastair Stevenson. At the time of the meeting the accounts had not been audited. He reported that the overall the finances of the Group remain in a sound state with total assets of £32,500 and a surplus for the year of just over £2,000.

The major area of cost for the Group is our publications. Between the Yearbook and Bulletins, both now produced to very high standard, the total cost (net of advertising sales) is some £12,000, an amount almost equal to our subscription income.

Particular highlights this year are the significant amount of income generated through the sale of publications and seed. Between the two they produced sales of over £14,000 and net income of just under £4,500. Without this income the Group would have a substantial annual shortfall. We should take a precautionary view of the sustainability of our income from these sources. Publications have benefited this year from some exceptional books and the initiative and work of Pam Hayward. Future seed sales are dependent on our ability to obtain good quality seed and increasing restrictions and regulations may limit this. Our thanks go to Chip for his hard work.

With basic subscription charges having remained unchanged for some 10 years (apart from covering increased postal costs) we should be considering an increase in the year 2011/12, i.e. when memberships are renewed in November 2011. He does not have a suggestion for the level of increase at this time and will work

with the Chairman and Committee over the next few months to determine the detail. He proposes putting a recommendation forward for agreement at next year's AGM.

He expressed thanks to Martin Gates in once again helping with the preparation of the accounts.

5. Subscriptions.

The views of the Hon. Treasurer in his Report were noted. He also pointed out that the work involved in the changing of Bankers Orders is considerable. Direct Debits are not considered to be an option for the Group at the present time. David Coombes stated that any change in the cost of membership should be fully explained to the members. This was agreed.

6. Election of Auditors: John Harsant was in the process of auditing the accounts. Alastair Stevenson expressed his thanks and proposed that he be asked to do the audit again for 2010/11. It is assumed that the RHS will carry out the audit when the current negotiations are finalised. This was unanimously agreed.

7. Announcement of Postal Votes: The Secretary had received 27 postal votes confirming all officers in post.

8. Report on the proposed change of the Group's status relative to the RHS: A revised Draft Constitution has been submitted to the Group by The Secretary of the RHS, David Farrington following a recent meeting, also attended by Mr. J. Gardiner, Director of Horticulture, The Chairman, Andy Simons, Vice Chairman, Philip Evans and Treasurer Alastair Stevenson.

It is hoped that a final version can be agreed during the summer and then approved by RHS Council in September, following which a Special General Meeting can be called in October to adopt it.

9. Any Other Business:

Membership. Rupert Eley although unable to attend the meeting, reported that membership had dropped during the current year to 782 from 805 at the AGM in 2009. Breakdown of membership show: U.K. 595, EU. 110, and Overseas 77.

The Chairman expressed his thanks to both Rupert Eley and Pam Hayward for their considerable efforts in collecting subscriptions.

10. Date of Next Annual General Meeting. It is proposed to hold this on **Saturday 18th June 2011** at RHS Garden Wisley at 2.30 p.m.

The success of the Lecture and the number of high quality blooms brought to the Lecture prompted the suggestion that A Late Flowering Rhododendron Competition could be held on the morning of the AGM

This was agreed.

The Meeting closed at 3.10 p.m.

We now have branch pages on the site for the North Wales & Northwest, Southwest and Wessex branches. These provide details of the activities being organised by the appropriate branches and include visits being organised at short notice to take advantage of weather driven events. Look for 'Branches' under 'Group Information' on the menu.

Members' Photographs

Members are reminded of the Members' Photographs section in our website. Currently we only have four plants with new photos supplied in 2010. It would be very helpful if we could have photos of Camellias 'Fire Falls' and 'Mathotiana Rosea' as these are now the only two in our dictionary that have no photographs. There must be lots of good plants which have been snapped this spring, especially Magnolias?

Further details of the competition and how to send photographs are given on the web site.

Seed List

The seed list will be open all year with updates to the list as seed becomes out of stock. First come first served!

Surplus plants

Members should be aware that a significant number of Magnolias have been recently made available through the Surplus Plants service. These are described on our website.

If there are additional features that you would like to see added to the site then please contact webmaster@rhodogroup-rhs.org

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the Rhododendron, Camellia & Magnolia group forthcoming events

OCTOBER / 2010

16

Ness Gardens - 2pm

Professor David Rankin
"Growing Rhododendrons on limestone"

North West Branch
Ted Brabin
0151 353 1193

23

Sir Harold Hillier Gardens

Lecture on "Camellias – Past Present and Future" by Jennifer Trehane

New Forest Branch
Martin Gates
023 8025 2843

23

RHS Rosemoor

Autumn meeting
South West Branch
Colin Brown
01647 177268

29-31

Malmesbury Wiltshire

RCM Group
Joint Weekend Meeting with the ICS

RCM Group
Judy Hallett
01981 570401

13

Ness Gardens - 2pm

Dr. David Davies "The International Dendrology Society – what is it and why is it coming to the North West next year?"

North West Branch
Ted Brabin
0151 353 1193

Visit the group website www.rhodogroup-rhs.org for up to date information.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Pictures from the shows



Winner of the McLaren Challenge Cup – Head Gardener from Trewithen Gardens – Gary Long receives the trophy from Andy Simons
Photo: Sally Hayward



Camellia japonica 'In The Pink' shown in the South West Camellia & Magnolia Show & winner of the Williams Cup.

Photo: George Hargreaves



R. 'Peach' (vireya) exhibited by John Anderson, from Exbury Gardens.
Photo: George Hargreaves



Malcolm Pharoah from Marwood Hill receives the Williams Cup from Charles Williams for the 'Best Camellia in Show' at the SW branch Show.

Photo: The Editor