



the Rhododendron, Camellia & Magnolia group

THE ROYAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Bulletin 105 / March 2011 / www.rhodogroup-rhs.org



CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Andy Simons - Chairman

For those of you who have been following our efforts to put a new constitution in place for the group, I can confirm that the process has now been brought to completion with the confirmed votes tallied and reported at the Special General Meeting on the 15th of February (see page 8). This means we now have a constitution that reflects the nature of the group as it stands in 2011 and it allows the RHS itself to be comfortable with the group's activities. The committee is now investigating how the benefits of the closer integration with the RHS core can be realised; the scale of the RHS enterprise should be used to yield improvements to the group. Having said that the work on the constitution has ended, it does not mean that either my work or that of the committee has ended with respect to "modernising" certain aspects of the group. The next step is to merge our group committee with the expert RHS plant committee which covers two of our three genera; this committee is the RHS Rhododendron and Camellia sub-committee. As many of you know I am chairman of this RHS committee as well as the group.

In an effort to facilitate the merger as smoothly as possible we have been holding joint meetings in one form or another for a few years now. Whilst this merger will have little visibility to the wider group membership, it will allow the existing committee access to professional knowledge that we as amateurs sometimes lack. Conversely it will provide a channel to communicate the views of you as group members directly into the RHS on matters pertaining to the three genera.

Such an issue may be the use of peat as the base/bulk material in potting composts and throughout gardening as a whole. DEFRA has launched a consultation process concerning the horticultural use of peat in England. The documents are available at the following website:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/peat/index.htm>

I was not aware of this consultation document until it was recently brought to my attention by an eminent member of the horticultural trade and rhododendron enthusiast. If you use peat or peat based products in your garden, I request you take the time to review the DEFRA documents and write to me with your opinions, I will then attempt to make representations on behalf of the group either directly with DEFRA or more likely through RHS channels. My personal opinion of the consultation paper itself is that it is potentially confused and confusing; its position with respect to the destruction of habitat and the release of greenhouse gases seem focussed at the national level when the issues need to be considered at the European or global level, indeed I cannot recall the last time I saw English peat for sale in a



Camellia japonica 'R.L.Wheeler'
See 'Camellias at Trewithen' on page 4.

Photo: Gary Long

garden centre. The proposition to remove peat from the amateur market by 2020 lacks the flexibility necessary to cater for plant groups that really do favour peat based growing media. This will be an emotive issue for many wishing to protect the environment but one size rarely fits all and I need your input before seeking further engagement.

When I wrote to you this time last year I complained about two difficult winters but remained positive that in the long run our plant collections would bounce back.... then this winter has fallen upon us.

Although the two preceding winters had been a nuisance with poorly timed frost and snow disrupting the flowering season, for me at any rate, this winter has proved a killer. I have seen two very interesting if painful phenomena after the last few months; firstly, *Camellia x williamsii* which may be more floriferous in the British climate than *Camellia japonica*, it is certainly no hardier. A number of *Camellia x williamsii* have been totally defoliated in my garden but no japonicas, so far. Secondly, variegated plants seem to have suffered more than the conventional type. I have one plant in which the variegated portion of the leaves has been 'burnt out' leaving the green areas intact and the variegated section dark brown or absent. However I do feel it necessary to repeat my message of last year which is to be patient with your plants, as those that appear dead in April may well show life by August.

On a final note you may not have noticed that it has been several years since it was necessary to increase the level of subscription to the group. Again it has been possible to maintain the level of subscriptions for at least a further year, holding the line

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With poorly timed frost and snow disrupting the
flowering season, for me at any rate,
this winter has proved a killer

against rising costs. Other fund raising beyond the subscription is expected to be increasingly difficult, and consequently an increase in subscription is inevitable in the coming years. I can assure you of fair warning if and when this occurs.

Andy Simons

EDITOR'S NOTES

John Rawling

The Christchurch earthquake, New Zealand

Our heartfelt sympathy goes to our members, friends and all in Christchurch, New Zealand, affected by the devastating earthquake. For those in the UK, living in a zone largely free from even tremors, it is a little difficult to comprehend the effects on the communities and life of those living in the areas affected. We pray that your life and homes return to normality, as quickly as is possible.

The Editor.

The restored Chiswick House Conservatory and Gardens, London

Few enthusiasts for camellias can have missed the wide publicity (incl. a two page spread in the *Daily Telegraph* on 19th February) for the restored Camellia Glasshouse and the 34 varieties of Camellia dating from the 1790's onwards. The £12m restorations of the Conservatory and gardens were completed last summer. I had the pleasure in visiting the gardens and the glasshouse on 3rd March this year. The collection in the Camellia House, up to 9 or 10 feet tall, were nearly all in full bloom, a fantastic sight and not a sign of the previous sooty mould or scale. They are mainly C19th japonica varieties with just one reticulata – 'Captain Rawes'. The 'Camellia Festival' is a sight worth travelling to see – the manned entry to the 'Festival' is only open until 20th March – but I am assured that after a two week closure, it will be open to all visitors from the 2nd April. Congratulations to Jane Callander, Herb Short, the late Marigold Assinder and members and the officers of the ICS for all their efforts to save this historic collection for the future.



Inside the 300 feet long conservatory



Camellia japonica 'Incarnata'. Imported from China in 1806.

NOTE 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 July 2011 Bulletin

BY 10TH JUNE 2011.

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

TOURS

Judith Hallett

Spring Tour to Scottish Gardens 9th to 15th May 2011

This tour is now fully booked (subject to any late cancellations).
(Contact Brightwater Holidays – 01334 657144)

Autumn Tour 2011

Joint ICS and Rododendron Group Tour

The annual joint 'get-together autumn weekend' is being organised by the International Camellia Society, and is to be held in Jersey, Channel Islands in mid October.

Full details on timing and costs will be available at the ICS AGM, on 29 March, at the RHS Lawrence Hall.

If you are interested, please send a note or email indicating your interest to ICS U.K. Region Hon. Secretary, 41 Galveston Road, London SW15 2RZ; e-mail: patricia-short@btconnect.com

Final Reports of the Joint Autumn Weekend with the International Camellia Society at Malmesbury

Due to a full issue of the Bulletin in November 2010, two reports were held over, and appear in this issue, below:

Magnolias

We were all very fortunate to hear this talk on Magnolias from Kevin Hughes, of Heale Garden Nursery.

Among his discussions and recommendations, *Magnolia* 'Aurora' was his first. This early-season tree has large *M. campbellii* type glowing reddish pink blooms, born on a fastigate tree which is said to grow to 7 metres.

Kevin thought that New Zealand hybrids like *M.* 'Felix Jury' and 'Black Tulip' should be planted either in a valley or against a dark background as this enhances the colour, whereas against a blue sky they can appear a bit muddy.

He then talked about *Magnolia* 'Spring Rite', a classic Gresham hybrid with white flowers stained rose pink at the base. This magnolia has a rich fragrance and is very hardy.

We also had a discussion on the yellows. Kevin showed a slide on a new clone of *M.* 'Butterflies' which was very attractive; this was surprising because Butterflies has had a bad press from many experts in the past. He thought that *M.* 'Daphne' was the best yellow, as *M.* 'Lois' suffers from Syringa Black Spot, a rather disfiguring affliction. (Kevin thought he may take a chain saw to his if it does not grow out of it!)

Kevin tends to specialise in American Magnolias and one of his favourites is *Magnolia macrophylla* ssp. *ashei*. This spreading

deciduous shrub or small tree has light green glossy leaves up to 2 feet long. It flowers in early summer with jasmine and citrus scented blossoms in white with maroon markings at the base. Each flower is up to 10 inches across.

He pointed out that almost all the new Magnolia hybrids are bred in either America or New Zealand and because of the effect of light levels and other climatic variations they do not always perform true to type in the U.K., e.g. *M. 'Vulcan'*.

Perhaps we should produce more hybrids in the UK so we can be sure that they will perform in our conditions.

Thank you Kevin for such a stimulating talk.

Peter Bucknell

Visit to Westonbirt Arboretum

Our expectation of viewing the National Collection of *Acer palmatum* at its colourful best on our visit to Westonbirt on Saturday morning was exceeded!

We arrived in glorious sunshine, and were divided into two groups, each with an experienced and knowledgeable guide, and set off to view the trees in their Autumn splendour.

The National Japanese Maple Collection in Silk Wood were looking perfect, and even the new area of this Maple collection, called Rotary Glade to mark the centenary of The Rotary Club, was beginning to show some impressive colour.

Other trees of note were the hybrid London Plane, *Platanus x hispanica*, growing alongside its parents from America and the Orient. We also saw some coppiced *Tilia* covering a large area, the segments of which had been shown by DNA to be the same plant and estimated to be well over 2000 years old.

As we departed crowds were still arriving and we gave thanks for our early start and a thoroughly refreshing and enlightening interlude.

John Mann

SPECIAL EVENTS

100 YEARS ON: GEORGE FORREST'S PLANT LEGACY

Monday 4th April 2011

Lecture by Kenneth Cox of Glendoick Gardens, and a Caerhays Garden Tour looking particularly at Forrest's introductions.

"I have been asked by Charles Williams to give an RHS lecture at Caerhays to celebrate the 100th anniversary of J.C. Williams first sponsorship of George Forrest in 1911. Forrest's first two expeditions had been sponsored by A.K. Bulley from Liverpool but relations had soured somewhat and by 1911 J.C. Williams could see an opportunity to hire Forrest as his own collector to search for and introduce exciting new material for his new woodland gardens at Caerhays. The fact that he offered George Forrest considerably more money than Bulley had, obviously helped persuade Forrest to accept the offer.

I have just spent a day going through the George Forrest Archive at RBGE Edinburgh where hundreds of his letters and photographs are kept in the library. Of course the garden also holds most of his herbarium specimens, Forrest's are considered the best of any collector in China, and the 4 RBGE gardens are full of his introductions with collector's numbers.

Though Forrest did not publish books like his rival Frank Kingdon Ward, he turns out to be a good writer and he wrote

hundreds of letters to his patrons J.C. Williams at Caerhays and/or Professor Bailey Balfour at Edinburgh at times every week. Many a letter begins 'Just a brief note....' before going on to cover 4-8 pages of detail. Most of these letters are archived at Edinburgh and they make fascinating reading. Only a small number have ever been published, though Brenda Mclean quotes from many of them in her excellent biography.

It is fascinating to see how J.C. Williams and Forrest forge this partnership which lasts until Forrest's death of a heart attack in China in 1932, on what he had already decided would be his last expedition. J.C. sponsored four expeditions, latterly as part of a large syndicate of garden owners, including my grandfather Euan Cox. The letters from all the syndicate members are also in the archive as are the notification telegrams of Forrest's two deaths!

The first one in 1905 turned out to be a false alarm, as he survived the massacre that claimed the lives of several French Missionary collectors. Forrest's wife believed him dead for several days before good news arrived in a second telegram. The letter that most amused me was the one complaining about how Lawrence Johnston from Hidcote had managed to persuade Forrest to let him 'come along' on the last expedition. Johnston was clearly totally unsuited to anything other than sipping gin and playing tennis and was set to ruin the trip. George Forrest was not far off murdering him. Fortunately Johnston fell ill and returned home before the deed was done. Forrest's letter to Wright Smith in Edinburgh after Johnston had headed home is definitely libellous! 'a person so utterly selfish I have yet to meet....'

All this and more will be discussed at my April lecture, details below.

Ken Cox

Lecture starts at 10.00am.

Coffee/Tea will be served from 9.30 am onwards.

RHS Members £20.00, Non-members £25.00

All tickets should normally be booked in advance.

For booking tickets to RHS events at **Caerhays**

By CREDIT CARD or DEBIT CARD – telephone 01872 501310 (weekdays 9am-5pm) or **By POST to:-** Lecture Reservations, Estate Office, Caerhays, St. Austell Cornwall PL26 6LY enclosing a cheque payable to *F J Williams Estate*, a membership number (where relevant) and daytime telephone number. State the title of the event and how many tickets you require.

Please note. If you have a query about tickets that you have received, call Lecture Enquiries on 01872 500025.

Those attending RHS lectures may drive up from Porthluney Beach car park and park alongside the castle.

RHS GARDEN HARLOW CARR Rhododendron Golden Jubilee celebration

21st–22nd May 2011

Join Harlow Carr's Rhododendron, Camellia and Magnolia Group – one of the oldest rhododendron organisations in the world – as it celebrates its Golden Jubilee with a special weekend programme of activities. Many large gardens, whose owners were original members of the Group, have been invited to provide trusses for display at a Rhododendron Show. There will be talks and guided tours of the ornamental collections in the Harlow Carr woodlands, displays, together with expert advice on cultivation and care.

Crag Lane, Harrogate, North Yorkshire HG3 1QB
Tel: 01423 565418, or Email: harlowcarr@rhs.org.uk

THE CAMELLIAS AT TREWITHEN

Gary Long. Head gardener at Trewithen Gardens

After taking over as only the third head gardener for over 100 years, the most daunting challenge, beyond managing a 12 hectare/30acre garden, was getting to grips with the plant collection and what we actually have in the garden.

Trewithen is justly famous for its collection of Rhododendrons, Camellias and Magnolias. The gardens today were laid out by George Johnstone, the present owner's (Mr Galsworthy) Grandfather.



C. japonica 'Drama Girl' and a view of the gardens.

The magnolias are well documented, with Trewithen's magnolias being the inspiration behind George Johnstone's famous book *Asiatic magnolias in cultivation* published in 1955. I have access to his notes and a complete list of all the magnolias growing in the garden up to 1955.

I am working steadily through the rhododendron collection, starting with the species, and getting visiting experts to work for their tour of the garden by helping to identify plants.

Then come the Camellias! The collection is vast and ranges from species to hybrids to self-sown seedlings. The International Camellia Register lists five Trewithen named varieties, *Camellia saluenensis* 'Trewithen Red' being the most famous. I have access to old nursery catalogues and some fairly random labelling within the garden as a vague starting point.

Again picking the brains of anybody and everybody that happens to know about camellias has been a great help and I'm sure Jennifer Trehane and Bee Robson will think twice before a visit, as a leisurely stroll always turns into an intense identification session - sorry!



Camellia cuspidata var. *cuspidata*

Photo: Gary Long

2004 saw work start on an Excel plant database with fields covering Genus, Species, Grid ref etc. All this is well and good if you have the information to fill the fields. Trewithen has fairly patchy planting records, most being anecdotal. Or so I thought. During a spring clean of the office three years ago a red ribbon bound pile of paper work was discovered. After collating the paper work into chronological order I started to discover and piece together information relating to our camellia collection, through both George Johnstone's correspondence to all manner of people, including J.C. Williams of Caerhays, and Sargent at the Arnold Arboretum and, this is priceless to me, a list of all the camellias growing in the garden in 1958.

A few wet days with the camellia register, Jennifer Trehane's and Stirling Macoboy's books - and the godsend that is Google images - I have built up a photo collection of most of the entire 1958 list. As the Camellia season gets under way I will use this huge resource to help identify plants that are on the list. Knowing the location of quite a few of these original plants I can work through the list.



Camellia saluenensis 'Trewithen Red'

Photo: Gary Long

A few interesting facts that have already come up are that *Camellia japonica* hybrids were the majority of the list; our "original" *Camellia* x *williamsii* 'Donation' was one of only three x *williamsii* hybrids, and that we have a bigger list of species than I first imagined. Adding to that list in recent years, we can now boast 16 *Camellia* species including *C. cuspidata* v. *cuspidata*, *C. fluvialis*, *C. fraterna*, *C. forrestii*, *C. granthamiana*, *C. grijsii*, *C. japonica*, *C. maliflora*, *C. oleifera*, *C. pitardii* var. *pitardii*, *C. saluenensis*, *C. reticulata*, *C. sinensis*, *C. taliensis*, *C. transnokoensis*, *C. tsaii*.

I will keep an eye out for more species as a first priority when planting in the garden.

I am hoping the identification and new additions will enhance the collection. I deliberately haven't mentioned the numerous hybrids that I have planted since 2004 purely on the basis this would read as one long list!

Having travelled to China in 2007, and hopefully will again in 2012, seeing camellias both in the wild and how the Chinese cultivate and use camellias, I have developed a greater understanding of the genus which has given me a better insight into how and where to plant within the garden at Trewithen.

If anyone has species plants or seed available please contact me at gary@trewithengardens.co.uk

A successful member and Camellia enthusiast reports on

The Camellias Australia Inc. National Congress

Which was held in Hobart, Tasmania, on 26-29th August 2010. The congress is held annually in various regions across Australia; in 2011 it will be held in Illawarra, N.S.W.

Thursday 26th / Registration was held in the foyer of the Hotel Grand Chancellor which is located opposite the picturesque Hobart waterfront and this was the main venue for all the activities of the congress.

Friday 27th / There was 9.00a.m. start, with a bus trip to the garden of Lorraine and Barry Davidson in the northern suburbs, this is a very steep garden but oh so beautiful, with many magnolias, rhododendrons, vireyas, camellias, orchids and many other rare plants. After completing a thorough walk around this garden the bus took us to the Bahai Centre which was designed and constructed with environmental sustainability, energy efficiency and water conservation principles in mind, for our lunch. Following lunch we headed out to the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens where we were free to wander around or join a guided tour.

Saturday 28th / Was the setting up and judging of the Camellia Show. Those not involved visited the Salamanca Market then went to Narayna Heritage Museum and the camellia garden, which is maintained by the local Camellia Society.

After lunch the bus took us to High Peak on the slopes of Mount Wellington; this home and garden were established in the late 1800's and has survived bush fires, storms and drought but is still a delight.

The results of the show:-

Camellia hybrid - 'E.G. Waterhouse' - Grand Champion

Camellia reticulata hybrid - 'Simpatica' - Reserve Champion

Guest speaker after the dinner was Dr. David Leaman who spoke on Charles Darwin's time in Tasmania.

Sunday 29th / Seminar 9.00a.m. First - Camellia Ark Project, trying to save lost old cultivars. Second - a report on a trip to the 2010 International Camellia Society Congress held in Kurume, Japan. Finally we had a passionate presentation by Andrew Raper imploring members of the society to breed the next generation of camellias as we are no longer able to import new varieties developed overseas into Australia.

Monday 30th / A group travelled out to Richmond, an early settlement with lots of old buildings and gardens.

Diana Ward, Kingston, Tasmania

MEMBERS NOTES

Dear John,

The Bulletin arrived today like a breath of Spring, the first mail to be delivered up my drive since December 3rd! God knows what it might have been like had we not the Gulf Stream on our side! My drive is a long one, and a real test for the various Posties!

Reading all the bits will be left to a warm fireside this evening, and a deep dram, but your plea for help over the Vietnam Rhododendron caught my attention, and before a table full of guests arrived, I went out with the camera, only to be caught clicking plants when they made it up the drive.

Some years ago now, Tony and Daphne Weston, the former seed-distributing committee member, visited me here. In his roof-box, he had a number of plants he had grown, and which he handed out as thank yous for meals eaten. I can't remember the menus, but amongst the plants he left here (we had known one another for years) were various pots of rarities, one of which he said was an unknown Vietnamese species of which Alan Clark had given him seed, and he hoped it might do well here. He did not give any name then, and it has gone for years here as *R. sine nomine*, TW/AC Vietnam.

I planted it originally at the end of the open ground of 'The Dell' plantation, in a fairly sheltered spot, underneath larch and behind a fallen defence of Wych Elm. It must be about 10 years ago that it was planted, and would have been at least 4 or 5 years old as a three litre plant, so I reckon it is from the same AC collection you mention.

It put on new leaves, which, in its fairly exposed position, were deeply veined, and very thick and tough. It got more and more wind-distressed and chewed up by passing red deer - they roam freely through the place, too many to cull and too large an area to fence, although both are attempted!

Two years ago in the late winter, I took pity on all the rare and good plants in the wild garden which were not doing well, and in one trailer load, I dug up the *sine nomine*. I decided that as it did not appreciate the spot I had given it, I would offer it the opposite, and moved it into heavy cover and planted it, if that is the description, placed it on top of a Noble Fir stump, two feet off the ground, and at least two feet across, and covered the root ball with loads of sphagnum moss, it grows 10" deep in places here, and nothing else. It would be the ultimate make or break site.



R. suoilenhense December 2010

Photo: Nick Reed

Peter Cox had always encouraged me to believe in the efficacy of a tree stump over a specially prepared hole, compost and prayers. (I used to work near his Perthshire home, and knew him well; a great many of the plants here originating from his collections.)

In one year the plant doubled in size, the leaves looking really fit and healthy, and it obviously loved the shelter, drainage and daily chat as I walked past it when walking round the garden with the hounds! I feared a deer would dislodge it from its resting place, for it was only resting on the stump top. I decided that it had to take its chance for water, deer and tree-borne diseases. There is so much fallen timber all about that honey fungus is, despite one's horror of it, part of the growing medium! The rainfall is another word which features on the negative side of the list.



The healthy leaves and buds

Photo: Nick Reed

We get a lot of rain. Over the past 20 years, the rainfall has steadily built up, year by year, and last year topped out at 100 inches.

I used to experience the same when I lived over at Ardanaisig, no longer the garden it once was, where the rainfall was regularly at least 100" and the rhododendrons magnificent. Leaching of nutrients is a problem with such rainfall, and although the plants there were growing in what became great peat islands, with large open cuttings/drains running between the plants at the worst and boggiest places, they luxuriated in such conditions.



R. suoilenhense – The leaves and indumentum.

Photo: Nick Reed

However, if it is *R. suoilenhense*, I might give it a dressing in the Spring of a few slack handfuls of Enmag (I still have some old stock of this wonder-product) and watch it grow in front of my eyes! Ever since this plant has been on its tree-stump, our rainfall has been huge, although coming irregularly over the 12 month period.

For the past 18 winters, there were merely a few days of frost, a little before Christmas time. Last year there was deep frost, snow, thaws and freeze-ups, so much so that the cars could not reach the house, and one, a tough 4x4, was marooned for three months! In the garden, however, fearing the worst for my growing collection of serrata hydrangeas, little rhododendrons of the tenderest types, all the usual West Highland suspects, Myrtles, Crinodendrons, Azaras, Embothriums, largely all came through the cold unscathed. The Crinodendrons suffered most, and had to be hard pruned in the late Spring/early Summer once new growth began to show.

High sited *R. sine nomine* lorded it over the others and broke into new leaf with most agreeable speed. All the other big-leaved Rhodos, and many smaller ones, including 'Lady Alice Fitzwilliam', *crassum*, *polyandrum*, *edgeworthii* (on well-drained rock ledges, in good leaf-mould), *burmanicum*, 'El Dorado', *leucaspis*, *johnstoneanum*, *scottii*, 'Michael's Pride', all flowered well. There is a much better budding up for this coming Spring from all of these. A 20 year old plant of *R. sinogrande*, a Glendoick plant which Peter assured me I would not see flower here, had over 50 heads of flower last year, and is well covered this season.

It is such a joy to see un-torn and un-stressed leaves on a plant, which considering we are not many yards from the Atlantic gales, is near miraculous!

So if this is the Vietnamese plant, it is a tough one, given cover of trees. Huge 250 year old Noble Firs surround its little clearing, a rock face one side, little wind buffeting where it is - although it had it until two years ago - and excellent drainage.



The root ball on the Noble Fir stump.

Photo: Nick Reed

If it is the Vietnamese plant which Tony brought me and which is now featured in the Bulletin, I can only hope I will see it flower, and in which case, I will perform a little Welcome to Mull dance when it does! If it is a rogue impostor, then the sooner it flowers the better, and its throne might be given to a more deserving young aspirant.

What harmless pleasure plants can give us all!

I shall be most interested to know whether you think this is the same plant.

***R. suoilenhense* - what a name!**

Yours aye, Nick Reed, Quinish Gardens, Isle of Mull

Dear Editor,

I thought members of our group might be interested in my method of growing Rhododendrons and Camellias.

I live on a housing estate with a tiny garden, and my soil is alkaline over clay. To plant a rhododendron, I firstly dig out an area of about 3 feet square and 18 inches deep, line the hole with polythene (sheeting), make some holes in the bottom for drainage, lay about one inch of gravel in the bottom and fill with a mixture of ericaceous compost, peat, bark and grit.

I have used this method throughout my garden. It was about 15 years ago when I first started and it has proved very successful. They are all thriving and growing well although, to be honest, I have planted some too close together, and have had to move some around.

One plant in particular, *R. 'Lord Roberts'*, is getting a bit out of hand – each year my lawn gets smaller because it is overhanging the lawn.

A lot of people comment on my garden, because in this part of Essex you do not see many rhododendrons growing in a garden.

Paul Scott. Witham, Essex CM8 1PD

Good morning John,

I just browsing through Bulletin No.104 with heavy snow falling outside - no gardening this weekend! I have been reading your notes, 'Some Reflections on this Year's Weather'.

The pictures are very reminiscent of scenes in my own garden here in Radlett, Hertfordshire over recent years and I suggest that the damage to the base of the trunk on *R. suoilenhense* could have been caused by squirrels. Squirrels are a major problem in my garden and by gnawing the bark they seem to create some sort of chemical reaction which ends up in the death of the plant.

The photo of *R. stamineum* looks very much like the end of the summer after an attack of mildew.

David Coombes

Squirrels are indeed a problem here in the Surrey Hills. Ed.

We heartily welcome our New Members. We hope they will enjoy the benefits of belonging to our Group.

BRANCH REPORTS

Peak District Branch

The members of the Peak District Branch had a most enjoyable visit on the 22nd May 2010 to the gardens of Arley Hall in Cheshire, the ancestral home of The Viscount Ashbrook.

This is a long renowned garden of 8 acres in several parts, beautifully planted and maintained, with many fine features such as large herbaceous borders, an avenue of evergreen oaks and a woodland garden.

We were given a most interesting tour by the Head Gardener, Mr Gordon Baillie. Mature rhododendrons and azaleas were to be found in the less formal parts of the garden. After lunch in the Barn, we explored independently 'The Grove', a pleasantly open woodland garden planted more recently with a large collection of azaleas, rhododendrons, other shrubs and exotic trees. A lovely day was enjoyed by all.

David Ives

Minutes of the Special General Meeting, held on 15th February 2011 RHS Halls Westminster

In accordance with the Notice that appeared in the September 2010 Special Issue of the Bulletin and after an extended period to allow postal voting, the Special General Meeting was duly re-opened with the Chairman in the Chair. There were 17 members of the Group in attendance.

The Secretary announced the result of the postal vote. There were **293 votes for** the resolution, **1 vote not in favour** and **1 abstention**.

The Chairman announced that the New Constitution was formally adopted and that he would inform RHS Council.

Hon. Secretary *Pat Bucknell*

Annual General Meeting 2011

NOTICE OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2011

This is to be held on Saturday 4th June 2011 at 2.30 p.m. at RHS Garden Wisley. Wisley has a good restaurant and café for lunch. We really would like more people to attend and support the Group at our Annual General Meeting.

The Officers:

Chairman..... Mr. Andy Simons
Vice Chairman..... Mr. Philip Evans
Hon. Treasurer Mr. Alastair Stevenson
Hon. Secretary Mrs Pat Bucknell
Hon. Yearbook Editor..... Mrs. Pam Hayward
Hon. Membership Secretary Mr. Rupert Eley
Hon Bulletin Editor..... Mr. John Rawling
Hon. Tours Organiser Mrs Judy Hallett
Archivist..... Mrs. Pam Hayward
Convenor of the Seed Bank..... Mr. Henry (Chip) Lima
Webmaster..... Mr. Graham Mills

Following the adoption of the New Constitution on 15th February 2011 these Officers are permitted to serve a maximum ten year term from this year.

The Committee:

Mr. Eric Annal
Mr. John Harsant
Mr. Stephen Lyus
Mr. Thomas Methuen-Campbell
Mr. Ivor Stokes
Ms. Cheryl Sapcote

Under the Rules of the New Constitution, the Committee elected in 2011 can serve for a maximum term of five years.

Hon. Secretary. *Pat Bucknell*

Tel: 01503 220215 email: patbucknell@btinternet.com

We continue to add further photographs of plants in our three genera and progressively at a higher resolution.

We have added two more groupings to the list of Rhododendron Dictionaries to cover the Ness Holt Azalea Hybrids (Pratt hybrids registered by Ness Botanic Garden) and the other Pratt Azalea Hybrids. Steve Lyus is using these entries to help Ness consolidate the information that is available on their hybrids. They have decided to record, identify and propagate the Pratt hybrids in an attempt to further the work of Denny Pratt to select late-flowering and highly scented deciduous Azaleas. They hope that this action over the next few years will secure their existence in cultivation.

Seed List

By the time that you read this the seed list will have been available for some time on our web site. It is intended to keep the list open all year with updates to the list as seed becomes out of stock. First come first served!

Garden visits

Our favourite season is about to arrive, so please look at the large number of wonderful gardens that we have compiled on our website (under Services and then Links). Each name is a link to that garden's own website, so that you can easily find out opening times and directions. Hopefully you will be reminded of ones you have enjoyed before, as well as ones that you always meant to visit.

Member's Photographs

Our plea for more members' photos certainly prompted a reaction and we eventually received 60 by the end of the year.

These winners can now be seen on our home page and overleaf. We will leave the full set of 2010 photos available on the Members' Photos tab for the next couple of months in order to enable members to view the large number of excellent photos that arrived in December.

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

Branch pages

We 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.

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

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OPEN: MONDAY. - SATURDAY 10 - 4

The following publications are offered to Group Members exclusively and sold in support of the Group. Back issues of the yearbook from 1946 and previously advertised titles not featured here may still be available – please enquire.

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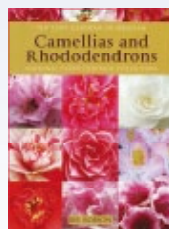
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Europe **£3**

Rest of World **£5**



Pocket Guide to RHODODENDRON SPECIES

John McQuire & Mike Robinson

704pp RBG Kew 2009 Full Price: **£59**

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Europe **£8.50** Rest of World **£15.50**

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03/11

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Our plea for some more photos in the last Bulletin certainly prompted a reaction and we ended up with excellent photos of 60 of our genera by the close of 2010. The breakdown was 36 Rhododendrons (23 species & 13 cultivars), 17 Magnolias and 7 Camellias. John McQuire again undertook the judging and this time has awarded 4 prizes.

The Winners were:

Rhododendron species: *R. faberi* ssp. *prattii*, Kristian Theqvist

Rhododendron Hybrids: *R. 'Naomi Stella Maris'*, Egbert Talsma

Magnolia: *M. 'Lanhydrock'*, Egbert Talsma

Camellia: *C. 'Blissful Dawn'*, Pam Hayward

These winning pictures can now also be seen on our home page and will remain there through 2011. We will leave the full set of 2010 photos available from the Members' Photos tab for the next couple of months in order to allow members to view the large number of excellent photos that arrived in December.

I think that the standard of the photos is steadily rising and the subjects are becoming more unusual. Our non-UK members are also starting to contribute a disproportionate number of them. We hope that these 2010 photos will inspire you all to go out this Spring to find some unusual plants and enter the 2011 competition.



M. 'Lanhydrock'



R. faberi ssp. *prattii*



R. 'Naomi Stella Maris'



C. 'Blissful Dawn'

the Rhododendron, Camellia & Magnolia group forthcoming events



MARCH / 2011	APRIL / 2011	MAY / 2011	JUNE / 2011
16 St Austell Visit to Porthpean House and Tregrehan Gardens South West Branch Colin Brown 01647 277268	7 Oxfordshire Visit to Harcourt Arboretum and Tim Whiteley's garden, Evenley West Midlands Alastair Stevenson 01989 780285	20 Bodnant Gardens Tour led by Head Gardener, Troy Scott Smith North West Branch Ted Brabin 0151 353 1193	9-15 Group Spring Tour to Scottish Gardens Judith Hallett 01981 570401
19/20 RHS Horticultural Halls London RHS Early Camellia Competition RHS 0845 370 0148	10 Sarum Visit to Roderick White's garden, Sarum, Worplesdon New Forest Branch Martin Gates 023 8025 2843	28 York Branch Tour North West Branch Ted Brabin 0151 353 1193	4 AGM RHS Garden Wisley Pat Bucknell 01503 220215
29/30 RHS Horticultural Halls London RHS Main Camellia Competition & Early Rhododendron Competition RHS 0845 370 0148	16 White House Farm Visit to Maurice Foster's garden Wessex Branch & SE Branch Miranda Gunn 01428 644422 Barry Haseltine 01342 713132	30 North Devon & Somerset Visit to Heddon Hall, Parracombe and Greencombe Gardens, Porlock South West Branch Colin Brown 01647 277268	25 David Millais Nursery Workshop - comparison of Denny Pratt azaleas in flower South East Branch Barry Haseltine 01342 713132
	16/17 Rosemoor RHS Main Rhododendron Competition in conjunction with SW Branch Camellia and Magnolia Show South West Branch Colin Brown 01647 277268	MAY / 2011 6 Cornwall Visit to Larcarffe, Bodmin and Trebartha, Launceston South West Branch Colin Brown 01647 277268	
		MAY / 2011 18 Hampshire Visit to Ten Oaks, Ringwood and Archer's Folly, Hale Purlieu New Forest Branch Martin Gates 023 8025 2843	OCTOBER / 2011 29 Rosemoor Autumn Meeting South West Branch Colin Brown 01647 277268
		7/8 Ness Gardens Branch Show North West Branch Ted Brabin 0151 353 1193	20 Shropshire Visit to gardens at Hodnet Hall and Wollerton Old Hall West Midlands Alastair Stevenson 01989 780285