



the Rhododendron, Camellia & Magnolia group

Bulletin 112 / July 2013 / www.rhodogroup-rhs.org



CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Andy Simons - Chairman

Chairman's Report to the AGM – 29th May 2013

I start this year's report by way of an apology for not being with you today. As many of you know my time is rarely my own and recently my international commitments have become even greater. This means that I lose this important opportunity to see at least some of you face to face and hear your concerns and suggestions for the Group. I trust that those Officers of the Group in attendance will cover my absence more than adequately. My thanks go to Philip Evans our Vice Chairman for covering for me yet again and Lord Lansdowne for hosting us at Bowood.

In what I had intended to have been my final formal report as the RCM Group Chairman, I find that we have some good news to deliver over the Group's direction with respect to the RHS, but some more acute concerns over the Group itself.

I have received comments that many of my Yearbook or Bulletin Notes are overly pessimistic and focus too much on Group administration, governance and, particularly, the evolving relationship of the Group with the RHS. I must confess that I am unrepentant on this point and as Chairman I have felt it necessary to report issues as I have seen them and let you know, as much as possible, what the issues are. Clearly, this has meant that as Chairman I have been less plant focused than I would have desired. Let us hope that most of these dull and tedious matters will have been resolved soon, allowing the luxury of focussing on plants and gardens.

It does seem that Rhododendrons may have come through the trough of fashion and may at least be acceptable to the general media. On top of the Millais Nursery stand at Chelsea, *R. yakushmanum* had a strong showing in the popular vote for plant of the century (although not actually successful) and probably more significant was the inclusion of Rhododendrons in more than one of the display gardens.

In the twelve months since my last rather disappointed report on the developing relationship of the Group with the RHS I am pleased to say that a very significant amount of work has been done in getting us to a nearly workable position. The direct intervention of the outgoing RHS President (Elizabeth Banks) initiated a process by which much of the ground I considered lost has been recovered.

The position that has been achieved (if adopted) will represent a fairly radical way of looking at the Group's governance. However the impact on the membership and the Group's activity should be minimal.



Magnolia 'Wildcat' – Growing at Botallack garden (see page 6). (Seedling selected by Larry Langford of Gibson, Tennessee from a batch of seed from *M. Kobus* var. *borealis*. (The plant flowers at the same time as other cultivars of *M. loebneri* and over a six week period.).

Photo: Richard Chaplin

These proposals will in due course require formal ratification by a Special General Meeting or equivalent engagement with

The Group will become an independent legal entity,
and in moving out from the protective umbrella of
the RHS, needs to decide 'what the Group is'

the Membership. The proposal is that the Group becomes a formal partner of the RHS with rights and responsibilities defined in an equally formal

partnership agreement. Negotiations on the wording of the draft Agreement are coming close to completion and will enshrine all the existing relationships with the RHS. The Group will become an independent legal entity, and in moving out from the protective umbrella of the RHS, needs to decide 'what the Group is'. At the moment it seems that the RHS may be willing under the Agreement for the Group to retain the name the 'RHS Rhododendron Camellia and Magnolia Group'. But the Committee believes that the independent Group should do two additional things – 1. Become a Company "limited by guarantee" in order to gain legal protection for both the financial assets and the personnel of the Group and 2. Apply to become a registered Charity. As it happens the Charity Commissioners, at the beginning of 2013, introduced a new hybrid of limited liability and charitable status for societies called a 'Charitable Incorporated Organisation' which the Committee intends to investigate for use by the Group. I regret that all this change will inevitably require some tweaking to our Constitution, but at this

Continued overleaf

time we can continue as we are until the details are firmed up and we can formally engage with you on a proposal or some options.

When the time comes to re-consider the Constitution we all need to look carefully at how the work of the Group is executed; it is easy as a member to look on the Group as it stands as a commercial society that you have joined and from which you can expect a range of professional services, indeed often those professional services are delivered to you at a membership fee less than the cost of producing the Group's publications! It is necessary to emphasise that this is not how the Group actually works and it is a few members of the Group Committee who do all the work on a voluntary basis. I have implored the membership to give more support on issues such as Committee Secretary, with no success, until recently. Consequently, it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain the outputs of the Group. In order to ensure the Group's ongoing success, and hopefully to build upon it, I see no option other than to contract out some of the Group's requirements. Clearly this will be more expensive and I do not know if we, as individual members, are able or willing to pay for it. However, it needs to be discussed and the options considered by all. I hope that I am wrong and that willing and able volunteers will come forward, but the modern world would seem to indicate otherwise. At any rate I am sure the shape and nature of the Committee will need to change, perhaps with a smaller management group that can meet "virtually" on a frequent basis, supported by a members representative group meeting less frequently? The Officers do already have frequent on-line meetings on an informal basis to aid administration, but these do not involve material decision making, which remains the prerogative of the Committee.

Changing tack, it does appear that the Group may be celebrating a 100 year birthday in 2016, as we trace our roots back into the Rhododendron Association etc. Consequently it could be appropriate for us to celebrate this milestone through some form of event; the Committee would welcome views on how this should or could be achieved - it could be through a show or similar activity. This year's showing season surprised me greatly from a Rhododendron standpoint, with all three RHS shows (including the new later show at Harlow Carr) producing some exceptional blooms. Plant health issues meant that the early show was somewhat hidden away at Wisley but the Main Show was reported as excellent. We should thank the RHS Shows Department's Georgina Barter for her efforts and particularly Colin Brown, Pam Hayward and the South West Branch for keeping the Main Show going so strongly. Camellias and Magnolias had a typically difficult UK season with periods of exceptional flowering munched by a series of inconvenient and late frosts.

The Group's finances remain strong and our Treasurer, Alastair Stevenson, continues to bring a common sense and an effective hand to the job which has made my task simple with respect to finances. Alastair has continued to advance the Direct Debit work with good progress; I have been surprised how complicated this area is.

I am frustrated by my inability to express adequately my appreciation of the work of our two publications' editors, Pam Hayward and John Rawling. Everything I say seems like empty words compared with the work they put in and the results they achieve.

The Yearbook is yet again a class leading marvel and the stated envy of many other Groups and Societies; we would be lost without Pam. The Bulletin is also a great source of up to date information and crucially allows the membership a voice (if they elect to use it).

I sincerely hope that we can continue supporting these two great publications and the editors who provide them for us.

I similarly hope that the Seed List will be allowed to continue. However, as I have reported previously, the rules and regulations pertaining to such undertakings are complex and ever changing, but our thanks and best wishes are due to Julie Atkinson, our new Seed Convenor, and all those involved in the production and management of the list.

Group Tours seem to be a vital glue that holds the group together; Judy Hallett has decided to step back from the role of Tours Organiser, but I hope to draw on her support at some level or another until a replacement can be found; at any rate we all owe her a debt of gratitude. This year's Tours have been another series of successes with fresh cut grapes from the glasshouses at Chatsworth a unique experience for all in attendance.

Although well managed by Graham Mills, and a great source of information, I am convinced that we are not making best use of the web-site; perhaps that reflects the computer utilisation of our members, and is a lesson to be learnt by the Committee. Anyway my thanks go to Graham, who, although not able to attend all committee meetings, really makes a strong contribution which I particularly value and also to Steve Lyus who has provided invaluable support and expertise to the site.

I am able to report that I expect a new Chairman to be appointed in two years time; I am prepared to remain in office until then, but I expect to call on the other officers for more support than I have heretofore. In that connection, I would like to thank all those who have assisted me in the last 12 months, the Branch Regions, Vice Chairman Philip Evans and particularly Barry Haseltine who has stepped into the role of committee secretary with great enthusiasm, an action which really saved the day.

Andy Simons, Chairman May 2013

EDITOR'S NOTES

John Rawling

OBITUARIES

Sadly we have to report the recent deaths of two rhododendron members.

Gene Reuthe, of Reuthe Nurseries in Kent. A specialist nurseryman and grower in West Kent, who was awarded the Rothschild Cup for his displays at RHS Shows in 1990 and again in 1993 – 1995. His nursery is now a part of Starborough Nursery. He was a member of the SE branch and my first serious purchases of rhododendrons was from him, with R. 'Nobleanum venustum', 'Crest' and 'Tally Ho'.

Also **Dr Alun Edwards**. A member of the SW branch and its Chairman between 1995 and 2007. He had a great talent for organising garden visits and making everyone feel welcome at branch events. Despite major surgery and subsequent arduous treatment he had entries from his garden at the Rosemoor Show and branch Camellia competition in April, and collected 'firsts' at both. Alun was a wise and charming man and will be much missed.

Apology from The Editor

I apologise to all members over the delay in publishing this July issue of the Bulletin. I have had a serious problem with my computer, that I can only describe as “a Melt-down”. Much of the data in my old computer has been lost, so I have had to start all over again to find and then edit and co-ordinate the articles and information.

Corrections and Omissions

It has been pointed out by several members that the photograph of the Rhododendron on the front cover of the July 2012 Bulletin – Number 110 – is not R. ‘Mrs Furnival’, but is in fact – R. ‘Mrs Lionel de Rothschild’. The photograph was taken at the Group’s Hardy Hybrid Collection at ‘Ramster’ Garden in Surrey.

FUTURE TOURS

Due to technical problems which have seriously delayed the Bulletin for 3-4 weeks, these tour details have also been delayed. See below for information and then contact Pat Short as soon as possible, if you wish to join THIS TOUR.

Our Autumn Break in conjunction with the International Camellia Society

To various Gardens in BELGIUM Thurs 24th to Mon 28th October

Full Details: from Pat Short, 41 Galveston Road, East Putney, London SW15. Tel. 0208 870 6884.

Details for other Tours and visits in 2014 – please see the next Bulletin in November (No. 113)

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 next issue

BY 13TH OCTOBER 2013

for the November issue No.113

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

IMPORTANT NOTICE

From September, I shall be using the remaining months of 2013 for the assembly of the last issue - under my care - of the RCMG Bulletin.

I shall be retiring as honorary editor of the Bulletin at the end of 2013

WE NEED A NEW EDITOR SOON!

I shall have produced *The Bulletin* for 13 years - 37 issues - but my age and my health have made it more difficult for the last two years to carry on!

Please contact the Chairman or the Vice-chairmen of the Group - or me - and let us know if you are interested in taking over this interesting and enjoyable task. I have much enjoyed the work of encouraging the fuller knowledge and the enjoyment and appreciation and the cultivation of our three genera.

(I do anticipate to be available to provide more information on the practical side of producing, assembling, printing and distribution of the Group Bulletins).

TOURS 2013

Judith Hallett

CORNISH TOUR REPORT

14th – 19th APRIL 2013

Despite my concerns about the recent poor weather, and the lateness of flowers this year, our trip to Cornwall was very successful, largely due to the wide range of garden styles and the fact that in many cases we saw examples of all our genera flowering at the same time! All our hosts were extremely knowledgeable and generous, and a couple even agreed to use our microphone so that even those at the back of the party didn't miss the horticultural gems of information!

The Alverton Hotel in Truro proved to be a convenient and comfortable base for our tour, and we were delighted to welcome a number of local members as day visitors. At the end of tour many of us stayed in the area and made our way to the RHS Rhododendron Show at Rosemoor on 20th April – a delightful end to the week.

Judith Hallett

This turned out to be a delightful week, so ably organised by Judith Hallett. Both the Hotel and the steadily improving weather turned out to be very satisfactory. The tour arrangements allowed plenty of time at each garden – we were not too rushed nor did we develop a long straggle of members (like me) that can so easily occur with their wide and different interests!

Well done again, Judy! Much enjoyed by all,

The Editor

Sunday 14 April

Lukesland, Ivybridge, (Devon).

We were delighted to make Lukesland Gardens, the home of member Rosemary Howell, the first visit of our tour. The garden has 24 acres of garden to explore but before venturing forth we enjoyed a delightful lunch in the Old Billiard Room, with vases of *Drimys aromatica* and camellias on the table to whet the appetite for our garden tour.

Refreshed after our journeys we set off around this mature woodland valley garden, with Rosemary as our guide. As we were to hear many times in the coming week, Rosemary regretted that so few rhododendrons were in flower. Despite a very late season, due to remarkably low temperatures during the first three months of the year, we were amazed to see so much colour in this garden.

The gardens contain fine examples of our genera and specimen trees, thoughtfully spaced to allow them to develop to their true shape. The information leaflet for Lukesland Gardens is highly informative and a comprehensive plant list is available for enthusiasts so I mention here a selection of plants and features that impressed on the day.

The pinetum, planted in the late 1970s by Rosemary and her husband Brian is interplanted with magnolias. The rare and graceful *Picea farreri*, from Exbury seed which was distributed to private gardens is probably the best in the country. What a magnificent *Magnolia campbellii*: planted in 1936, its exceptional spread makes it a Champion Tree, and the biggest Magnolia in Britain!

Continued overleaf



The Lukesland's 'Champion Tree'

Photo: The Editor

The 'Champion Tree' *Magnolia campbellii* (in the background – too large to photograph any closer) Only a very little colour showing in the buds.

Height – 19m, Spread 30m – (Girth 99cm? – appears much larger than this!) , the last time it was measured!

Magnolias, rhododendrons and camellias were all looking healthy and happy; obviously thriving after the heavy rainfall of 2012. *Magnolias* 'Royal Crown' and 'Big Dude' were just showing colour and *Rhododendrons niveum* and *R. sinogrande* were looking superb. We admired a fine gazebo designed by James Dunbar-Nasmith: this has recently been completed, in memory of Brian Howell.

Judy Hallett

Monday 15th April

Tregoning Mill

Our first visit of the full tour was to the garden of Graham and Sarah Mills at St. Keverne near Helston. 'Garden' is not really an accurate description – it is more a very fine, and extensive, collection of plants, particularly of our genera.

Graham moved here in the early 1990's to grow magnolias and to see them flower in his lifetime. He has realised his dream! Tregoning Mill now has a collection of 120 magnolias, 340 rhododendrons, 80 camellias and 20 species of acacia.

Now that the early planted shelter belts are doing their job, we were able to see fine examples of *magnolias*, including *M.* 'David Clulow', *M.* 'Silver Cloud', *M.* 'Vulcan', *M.* 'Star Wars', 'M.. Phelan Bright', and Graham's favourite - *M.* 'Caerhays Belle'.

Among the many interesting rhododendrons were *R. arboreum ssp. delavayi*, *R. macabeum*, a yellow *R. falconeri* and *R.* 'Rothenburg'.

There were many other tender and unusual shrubs growing in this delightful Cornish valley and Graham and Sarah did well to guide us round their collection in just over an hour.

Andy Hallett

Trewithen, Grampound, Truro

Arriving at Trewithen at lunchtime we were delighted to find that not only was the weather holding out and improving, but that delicious locally made soups and Cornish pasties featured on the menu. After feasting on the healthy fare, many of the group investigated the adjacent plant sales areas to discover and acquire plants grown by the gardens' own nurseries.

Gary Long, Head Gardener, greeted us after our refreshments, giving us a short history of the gardens and owners throughout the development period. Michael Galsworthy is now the owner of the estate, overseeing the present development with his wife and Gary Long.

First stop for our party was the Red Squirrel enclosure where we saw squirrels being bred and reared for release in the wild. They will not be released in the local area however due to the prevalence of squirrel pox. However, throughout the UK, in particular Anglesey and Scotland, there are suitable reintroduction sites.

We strolled along the pathways adjacent to the house buildings and observed some mature *Amomyrtus luma*. These are all now tree size with beautiful bark and fragrant flowers in the summer. A rather unusual young tree *Shefflera macrophylla* from wild collected seed was taking pride of place in a newly planted clearing within the beech wood area.

We passed a large *Davidia involucrata* which will be covered by 'handkerchief' type bracts later in the spring. Many of the plants here were raised from seeds collected in the wild from explorers, including Forrest's expeditions to China. (Apparently the plants do so well in the Cornish climate, that they are growing much taller than in the wild – to our benefit).

Trewithen has 24 Champion Trees, some of which we observed on our route down the grassy area of the south lawn towards the lower parts of the garden. There is an exceptionally tall *Stewartia sinensis*, a fabulously large *Magnolia campbellii ssp. mollicomata* which had been rendered flowerless by the persistent frosts of the preceding months, a very large *Magnolia sargentiana* var. *robusta*, and some fine, tall *Rhododendron arboreum* showing some flower. A large bumble bee joined us on the lawn to show willing and to demonstrate that maybe spring had indeed arrived.

Walking gently through the Heywood Bay and the Endean Bay we observed more woodland edge trees and shrubs, including *Acer laevigatum*, *Enkianthus species*, *Stewartia pseudocamellia* var. *koreana*, *Camellia reticulata*, *Corylopsis species* and an aromatic leaved *Laurelia sempervirens* (Chilean laurel).

The Cockpit, a sunken area of the lower garden, contained some tree ferns and 23 smaller fern species from South West Australia and Tasmania.

Attractive smaller *Rhododendrons* and *Camellias* featured within the sheltered area. An *Hydrangea petiolaris* clambered up an old oak, and Acers were planted here to some effect including *Acer maximowiczianum* - the Nikko maple from Japan, the new leaves glorious in spring colour.

The George Johnstone Walk is partly bounded by a hedge of *Crinodendron hookerianum*, showing a little frost damage, but full of flower bud and ready to recover later in the year. On this walk is the *Camellia* 'Donation', raised at Borde Hill. As the original died, George Johnstone's plant is the survivor from which all plants of 'Donation' in the world have been cloned.

Superb large specimens of *Rhododendron macabeum*, *R. sinogrande*, hybrids of these species and other interesting *Rhododendrons* were just starting to show flower and flower bud. Trewithen's *R. macabeum* flower has a strong yellow colour with contrasting red stamens and therefore cuttings and seedlings are much in demand.

Areas of old windbreak or where plants were in decline have been cleared and exciting new plantings are in situ now. More stand-alone trees of interest have been planted in adjacent areas

of parkland and meadow to extend walks and allow for trees to reach full size and natural shaping.

Although sustained frost of minus 5C had irreversibly damaged the *Magnolia campbellii* and *M. doltsopa* flowers, there was so much to enjoy at Trewithen with the arrival of spring at last. We are confident plants will recover in the Cornish climate and we look forward in anticipation to seeing the *M. campbellii* another year perhaps.

This is a superb garden of particular interest to a *Rhododendron*, *Camellia* and *Magnolia* admirer due to the comprehensive collections and established plants of good size! We joined our coach having only caught a glimpse of the treasures within Trewithen.

Cheryl Sapcote

Tuesday 16th April

Ethy, Lostwithiel

It was a beautiful early spring morning as we dropped down off the main road in Lostwithiel opposite the turning to the Duchy Nursery. Down primrose lanes we passed through the granite gate posts of Ethy Estate to be met by our hosts Andrew and Vanessa Leslie. We were served coffee and biscuits and given an introductory talk to the lovely garden.

Ethy House (pronounced Eethy) is listed Grade 2 and is in 17.5 acres facing South East and South West sloping down to the River Lerryn, a tributary of the River Fowey.

Andrew and Vanessa Leslie have been at Ethy for 16 years. It had been quite neglected having passed to the National Trust as part of the endowment for the St Aubyn Estate of St Michael's Mount near Penzance. It had overgrown, and was covered in sycamores, *Rhododendron ponticum* and brambles. Andrew's passion is for trees and great improvements to Ethy have been made during his time at Ethy, including the clearing of the brambles, sycamores and *ponticum*. He has planted many rare trees as well as camellias, rhododendrons and over a hundred magnolias.



Rhododendron macabeaeanum

To the side of the house facing south is an Italian knot garden planted with box. He has a photo taken in 1901 of this knot garden so it is quite old. He found the hedges seemed to be suffering from blight but with advice from an old gardener he gave it strong feed, lots of nitrogen, it has recovered well. In the same garden Andrew has planted an avenue of *Eucryphia x nymansensis*(?) which has grown well and he is looking forward to August when it should be in full flower. There was a huge fig tree in this garden which Andrew had taken down and replaced by a rill for the reflections. A *Magnolia* 'Caerhayes Belle' was doing its best having beaten most of the frosts.

Passing up some steps under an arch with *Exochorda* trained over it from both sides we entered the main garden. The ground was looking beautiful, covered in primroses and the bluebells just about to burst forth. We walked down to the raised walk between laurel hedges with views down towards the river and dating back to 1600, it is known as Admiral's Walk.

Turning to walk up through the garden, Andrew pointed out that the only things remaining were the specimen trees as everything else had been scrubbed out and he had replanted over the last 16 years. The canopy of beech and oak gave a lot of protection to the various new plantings. Many of the young rhododendrons growing were propagated by the Duchy College at Rosewarne using the micropropagation technique and come from the old rhododendrons from around the gardens in Cornwall.

We passed good examples of *Pinus patula* and *Magnolia* 'David Clulow' and *M. 'Manchu Fan'*, whites.

At the top of the garden which was cleared nine years after they arrived, the beech trees are growing tall and straight showing how tall the undergrowth was. This was mainly *R. ponticum* which has been cleared very successfully, they found a wonderful view to the River Fowey towards Golant.

The garden is protected by Ethy Wood which still belongs to The National Trust and further out by a Pine Wood which belongs to the Forestry Commission.



Camellia 'Forty-Niner', a glowing red *C. reticulata* hybrid.

Photo: The Editor

Wandering back down it was hard to take it all in, the holm oak that fell forming an arch has been left and is growing as it has fallen and is trimmed to keep it in shape. There are numerous trees, some just planted, others much older like the avenue of Chestnut trees. Some have been replaced and others left to stand. A lovely Chiean tree – the myrtle-like *Blephorocalyx*, and a *Magnolia* 'Heaven Scent' were growing well and a *Metasequoia* seemed to be enjoying the climate. Wandering back past all the new planting to the lake – called Lake Ernie – so named because it was paid for by selling some premium bonds it was easy to see that this is a garden that is still in the making.

The area by the lake had been planted by the National Trust but Andrew made the lake and replaced the majority of the trees with magnolias, a 'Leonard Messel' was looking very well, as was a *M. stellata* and a *Betula* with its long catkins (sourced from Ashdown Nurseries). The *Gunnera* came from the late Nigel Holman at Chyverton and there were *magnolias* 'Genie' and 'Shiraz' by the pond. The Long wall at the back of the Kitchen garden was planted with many varieties of *Camellia* which looked lovely in the sunlight.

Walking back to the Italian Garden we passed three yellow *magnolia*, *M' Gold Star*, 'Golden Pond' and 'Endeavour Carlos'. We looked at the massive *Rhododendron* 'Cornish Red' ('Devon Red' in Devon or whatever elsewhere in the Country!).

In the Kitchen Garden there is a wild rose growing up the wall brought back from China by Nigel Holman – *Rosa longicuspis* – nothing spectacular, but very large and has good hips.

A lovely feel to this garden on what was probably only the second perfect sunny warm day for the last 8 months. I am sure everyone felt as privileged as us to experience the magical garden at its best. What a beautiful garden, still being planted, what will it be like in five years or ten years time?

It was lovely meeting the group from far and wide. We hope you will all come back to Cornwall again soon.

Lyn Aldridge and Judy Lodge

Botallick at Lanreath, Looe

In glorious sunshine we arrived down a very narrow lane to Botallick. Pat and Peter Bucknell bought Botallick twenty years ago in 1993 with 14 acres of land. The site had been a working farm with no garden as such. The gabled farmhouse is built of local stone. A further range of barns and three acres of land was purchased in 1996.

It had been owned by the Bryant family for the previous ninety three years. The *Camellia* 'Bowen Bryant' has now been planted by the house in their memory.



Camellia 'Bowen Bryant'

Photo: Richard Chaplin

There is an old barn in which barn owls have bred for the last twenty years.

The Bucknells have created an informal garden including a large pond and a stream crossed by two bridges. There is also a delightfully planted small formal garden within a derelict roofless barn with a fountain and seating area.

Rhododendrons, Magnolias and Camellias dominate but the season is extended by Hydrangeas, Climbing Roses and Clematis. Every tree and plant with the exception of two 'Cornish Red' Rhododendrons have been planted by the Bucknells. They have imported a collection of Rhododendron "Loderi" from Oregon and also plants from New Zealand. Most of the major suppliers from this country have been used for this amazing collection. They have not been afraid to move plants that are not thriving to another location to give them another chance.

This year the season is very late and not as much bloom was evident, as one would expect. There had been an unusual number of frosts in December and January. Also several nights below freezing (-6C) in March. When we visited many of the blooms were smaller than normal.

There are quite a few tender plants which thrive in the normally mild climate including *Eucalyptus johnstonii* (?Tasmanian Yellow Gum) which they planted on the eastern perimeter. It was purchased as a £1.00 seedling from a local nursery.

They have a notable collection of Blue Rhododendrons hybridised by General Harrison of Tremeer, and named after local villages namely St. Tudy, St. Breward and St. Minver.

Excellent use has been made of *Acers*, *Cornus Controversa*, and other trees to give added interest. Of interest was a Magnolia 'Sweetheart', in flower, which had been grown from seed by John Rawling, a member of our Group.

The front garden was named the "Drying Ground" as it was used for grazing the dry cows who were about to calve, as it is in full view of the old kitchen window. This area is now a typical Cornish Spring Garden with some choice specimens. A twenty foot tall *Magnolia grandiflora* grows against the house giving a wonderful perfume when in flower. Two *Magnolia* seedling were purchased for £1.00 each in 1997. *Magnolia campbellii* ssp. *mollicomata* flowered for the first time four years ago and *Magnolia campbellii* flowered for the first time last year. Another tree of particular interest to the Group is a fine example of the Birch, (*Betula*) 'Maurice Foster' (who is a renowned Gardener and a past Chairman of the Group).

Delicious pasties and Cornish Saffron Cakes were served for lunch in a Barn. Thanks are expressed to the Bucknells for their hospitality and we wish their daughter, Jo, and her family well as they take over the house and some of the garden. Peter and Pat are downsizing and moving to an adjacent Barn.

Mary Chaplin and Richard Chaplin

Ince Castle Gardens, Saltash

Our third visit of the day was to Ince Castle, the home of Lord and Lady Boyd. The Castle is actually a brick-built manor house (but with battlements linking the four corner towers), dating from the 1640s and situated on a hill above the River Lynher where it flows into the Tamar Estuary.

Sadly the sunshine that had lit up our previous visit had gone, and it was decidedly chilly near the water. Where we entered the grounds there is a magnificent Turkey oak, planted in 1750, but which collapsed in 1900 and has since sprawled on props over a large area in front of the house.



Fritillarias in the lawns on the north side.

Photo: The Editor

The gardens were planted in 1960 by the parents of the present owner, and feature many fine magnolias and camellias, underplanted with fritillaries, with many primroses and species tulips in the open areas.

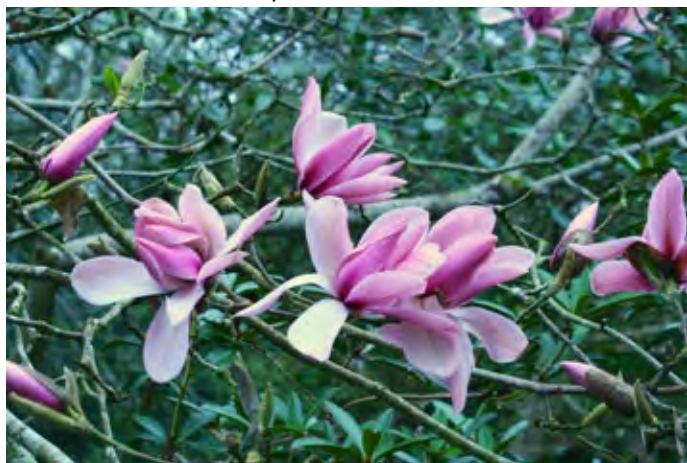
We were shown around by Lady Boyd, who pointed out the remarkable shell house, a small summerhouse also dating from 1960, the interior of which was entirely covered on sea shells. Our visit ended with a splendid tea, served by our hosts.

Keith Piper

Wednesday 17th April

Caerhays garden, Gorran

We were met by Charles Williams and he led both the morning and afternoon sessions. After coffee and biscuits we set off into the gardens. Caerhays holds the national collection of magnolias and it was very disappointing to see the devastation that the recent cold weather had wrought. Many of the very large specimen plants had flowered perfectly to begin with before being caught by the frosts. However there were some excellent examples still to be enjoyed. *M. 'Caerhays Surprise'* was looking perfect as was a graft of the original *M. Sprengeri* 'Diva'. Charles strongly recommended *Magnolia* 'Serene' for its late flowering; it was only just opening during our visit. *Magnolia* 'Pickard's Sundew' was in a sheltered position and was also perfect. I was surprised to see that *Michelia Doltsopa* was in full bud and totally unharmed.



Magnolia 'Caerhays Surprise'.

Photo: The Editor

This garden was the first to see the Williams hybrid camellias and I was thrilled to see the original plants of Saint Ewe and J C Williams both looking perfect. Charles explained that this was due to their having been hard pruned every few years.

There was also an impressive collection of rhododendrons. I was particularly taken by a superb example of *R. macabeum* in full unblemished flower. Other highlights included the deep red *R. 'Duke of Cornwall'* and enormous examples of both red and pink *R. aboreum*. The group owes Charles a particular vote of thanks since, although he was due to undergo a hip replacement the following week, he led us with enormous enthusiasm and vigour. As a sign of our appreciation the group presented Charles with a plant of *R. elliottii*.

Roger Newton

Trelissick, Feock

As we drove through the entrance to Trelissick Gardens the huge Germanic water tower took our immediate attention. Further on the manicured long lawn with immaculate borders prepared us for what was to come.

We were privileged to enjoy our tour when the gardens had closed for the day and were led round the garden by

head gardener Tom Clarke. The garden is justly renowned for camellias and rhododendrons but Tom has extended the season through plantings of ginger, cannas, dahlias and exotic plants which thrive in the gentle Cornish winters.

On the eastern side of the garden three terraces lead down to Carrick Roads and provide protection from the strong winds. Here a giant Japanese red cedar (planted in 1898) and a good example of *Quercus petraea* towering above rhododendrons and camellias.

Many of the plants in the garden originate from Exbury and Trewithen, although Tom is now successfully propagating from seed and cuttings and by layering. The *Rhododendron magnificum* is from seed collected by Kingdon Ward. (Tom is very keen to retrace the routes taken by KW with Gary Long of Trewithen!) Rhododendrons which particularly caught my eye that evening were: *C. magnificum*, *R. 'Dignity'*, and a vast *R. 'sinogrande'* – the last looking spectacular, as we gazed down on its mighty leaves from the terrace above.

Our visit ended in the propagation area where, besides giving many of us young magnolia plants, Tom explained the use of 'air pots' as a successful method of growing-on young plants.

Before returning to the hotel for dinner we presented Tom with two rhododendron plants, grown by John Rawling, in gratitude for showing us around the garden.

Christopher Mitchell

Thursday 18 April

Tremeer Gardens

The comparative novelty of blue skies and spring sunshine greeted our arrival at Tremeer. This was a garden which had fortunately escaped the frost blighting many others had suffered this year. We were welcomed by Lady George, who accompanied our tour of the garden, together with her gardener, Bradley Newton. She explained that when she and her late husband moved to Tremeer they were unaware of the significance of the garden, but she had since been fascinated to explore the roles of former owners General Eric Harrison and Roza Stevenson and to identify their plantings. Bradley pointed out that many of the plants which Roza Stevenson brought with her from Tower Court when she married Harrison, had since succumbed to honey fungus. Lady George is now encouraging a careful programme of replanting with new varieties where appropriate and the opening up of vistas.

The site has the benefit of spring-fed ponds, linked by a small cascade. As we approached the upper pond we were confronted by the splendid vision of *Rhododendron irroratum* x 'Mystic' rising high above the water's edge and covered in glowing pink flowers.

A recent enhancement to the upper pond is a Monet-style bridge picturesquely sited next to the weeping ash which overhangs the water. Nearby are many of the hostas which Bradley has recently grown from seed and a lovely plant of *R. 'Caroline de Zoete'*, its white flowers delicately tinged with pink.

Dominating the skyline was one of the largest known specimens of *Magnolia* x *veitchii*, its multitude of white flowers framed by blue sky. The well-known blue hybrids raised here, *R. 'Saint Tudy'*, 'Saint Breward' and 'Saint Minver' are represented, but Bradley drew attention also to the much less known 'Belle of Tremeer'.

Our eyes were also caught, as we proceeded, by the more demure beauty of *R. parviflorum* 'Ocelot' with its attractively spotted flowers. Not yet in flower was one of Roza Stevenson's yellow hybrids, *R. 'John Barr Stevenson'*. The garden also contains plants of 'Roza Stevenson' herself.

The garden contains some 200 named camellias and an equal number of rhododendrons. The camellias were looking very good. Particularly notable were *C. 'Mouchang'*, an impressive reticulata with pink flowers, and *C. 'Royalty'*. A fine saucer-shaped flower of unusual terracotta-pink was tentatively identified as *C. 'Saturn'*, a variety featuring in Harrison's meticulous planting records which Lady George had produced for our inspection.

The garden is also home to a collection of the famous 'Wilson 50' Kurume azaleas, planted below the terrace in full sun, but not yet in bloom.

Rhododendron 'Polar Bear', one of the original plants from Tower Court grew here and is believed to be have been the original plant. Looking very fine was *R. 'Edmondii'*, a Gill hybrid with many large deep pink flowers. What for me personally was the most exciting rhododendron, however, was a fine plant of *R. niveum*, with deep purple flowers of a quite sumptuous intensity.

Brian Holt

Tregrehan, Par

This large woodland garden, was rescued from total WW1 wartime neglect, from 1945, by Gillian Carlyon; "who was known as being the foremost and most active camellia hybridist in Great Britain" ... (a 1982 Tom Savige quote from *The Cornish Garden*, (The Cornwall Garden Society's Yearbook 2008, page 160).

Six of her Camellias were given Award of Merit in 1984 – Camellias 'China Clay', 'Duchess of Cornwall', 'Tristrem' 'Carlyon' 'Yesterday', 'Cornish Spring' in 1986. 'Jenefer Carlyon' (which also won the Cory Cup, and was the Best Hybrid in Show), and *C. 'Nijinski'* won a PC in 1986.

Tom Hudson inherited Tregrehan 25 years ago, coming from Australia/New Zealand, and has continued and enhanced the importance of the garden. He made big clearings, and created a very special collection of trees and plants from Australasia, mostly in the bluebell wood on the east bank of the stream.

Tregrehan "has one of the finest collections in Britain for its trees" (a quote from Alan Mitchell, by Christian Lamb, in her article in the *Rhododendron Yearbook* (1983/4); Tom drew our attention to two giant trees, a Cyprus and the Cork Oak, both planted in 1870 and to the huge *Rhododendron 'Cornish Red'*, *R. 'Russellianum'* (a *R. arboreum* hybrid), which never sets seed, so has great vigour.

The very large walled garden is also marvellous, now mainly grassed, the full range of south-facing glasshouses on its north wall, built in 1844, unheated, newly restored. The old vines have been replaced. There are shrubs, old camellias, and trees alongside the inside walls, and then outside, there is a 'Camellia Walk' (the camellias were meant to be fan-trained), and a 'Yew Walk'. Then steeply down into the valley – well clothed with rhododendrons, trees, and other delights – over the bridge, and into the many, strange Australasian plantings.

Joey Warren

BRANCH REPORTS

New Forest Branch

The New Forest Branch is very fortunate to have Exbury Gardens within easy reach, and although most of us have been to the garden many times, there are always plants to see that were not in flower in previous visits. Mid-April is normally the time when Camellias here are in flower but 2013 will go down as a year when blooming was delayed two to three weeks. John Anderson, the Head Gardener, took us on a tour through Yard

Wood. He explained that planting was still going on because of the lateness of the season. It was interesting to see major cutting back of mature rhododendrons in the rock garden over the last few years. Some plants had grown away well, others less so. But this gave an opportunity to introduce new young plants to replace the ones that had not responded.

Leaving the rock garden we came to a collection of quite mature large leaved hybrid rhododendrons that John explained were thinned out to allow the remainder to flourish into better shaped plants. Close by were magnificent specimens of *R. barbatum* and *R. fulvum* in full flower. Keeping a garden of 200 acres irrigated is a massive undertaking – some 20 miles of cast iron piping were buried around the garden during its construction, and this was augmented by aluminium pipes laid out on the surface to water various parts of the garden when necessary. The water is drawn from bore holes on the estate and stored in reservoirs.

John took us to the nursery where plants propagated by layering or bought in were grown on.

Adjoining the nursery were two lovely hybrids *R. 'Michael Hall'* with fine scented flowers and *R. 'Marie Louise Agius'*. We then walked along a new path created to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee, which gave an opportunity for new plantings, not all rhododendrons by any means, but nevertheless, a fine *Rhododendron montroseanum*, grown from wild collected seed, was growing away well.

Lastly we were taken to see the new camellia walk only recently planted with mature plants, kindly donated by Jennifer Trehane. This will be opened to the public next year.

Our **second visit of the year** was to three gardens, all very different and all under half an acre, and in Chandlers Ford in Hampshire. First was to the lovely garden of Peter and Cindy Schofield. They have been creating the garden over the last 33 years and have filled it with many fine and rare treasures. They are not Group members but there are two fine *R. augustinii* and a very large and floriferous *R. 'Bow Bells'*. Peter made a damp area to grow his trilliums by diverting the rain water from the down pipe of the house.

The second garden belonged to Olwen Bird. It was overrun with ponticum when Olwen and her husband moved in 46 years ago, but the garden was cleared and many hundreds of camellias and rhododendrons acquired, enabling a huge variety to be grown in a comparatively small garden. *R. 'Trewithen Orange'* looked stunning as did *R. 'Elfin Gold'* and 'Top Banana'. Notable too was a very fine *Camellia reticulata* 'Captain Rawes', a rather tender form and not often seen. Olwen recounted that sometimes there was hardly room for her in the car after a visit to a nursery!

We finally visited the garden of Martin and Margaret Gates. Many years of hard work have gone into making this a superb garden. Centrepiece on the lawn was a fine white barked birch. Nearby, *Camellia 'Lily Pons'* was a lovely sight, clothed to the ground with beautiful flowers. Using rhododendrons as ground cover is not often considered, but Martin had used *R' keiskei* Yaku Fairy' and 'Patty Bee' to great effect in one area of the garden. Martin and Margaret's garden provides proof, if any were needed, that you do not need a "woodland garden" to grow superb Rhododendrons and Camellias.

A fitting climax to the day was sitting on their patio in the warm sunshine discussing the splendid day amongst fellow enthusiasts and enjoying a sumptuous spread of strawberry scones, cakes and tea provided by Margaret and friends.

Robin Whiting

MEMBERSHIP

Rupert Eley

We are delighted to warmly welcome several new members.

LETTERS

Member Tim Atkinson, (also our Group Seed Convenor), has written to advertise that he is showing at the Stockport Show to both advertise his Nursery and to raise support for a small village school in Sikkim. He would like to invite and encourage members and their friends to visit him at the show

He writes:- "Basically I am building a garden which will contain lots of rhododendrons and other plants that are found in the state of Sikkim: there will be a school classroom made from tin roofing sheets, a small water-feature, prayer stones, etc, as much as its about showing the public about species rhododendrons its mostly about raising money for the school".



The corrugated iron school in Sikkim and it's pupils.

Photo: Tim Atkinson

GROUP NOTICES

Minutes of the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
held on Wednesday 29th May 2013
at 2.30 p.m. in the Bowood Hotel, Calne

Present:

Vice Chairman, Mr Philip Evans, Hon. Treasurer, Mr Alastair Stevenson, Acting Hon. Secretary Mr Barry Haseltine. Mr Aldridge, Mr. R Beeson, Mr and Mrs Bonfield, Mrs Pat Bucknell, Mr. Peter Bucknell, Sir Richard and Lady Carew-Pole, Lady J Colman, Mr. David Coombes, Mrs. Pam Coombes, Mr and Mrs Davison, Mr C Eley, Mr. And Mrs Gates, Mrs. Miranda Gunn, Mr G Hargreaves, Miss S Hayward, Miss S Haywood, Mr JG Hillier, Mr P Hipkin, Mr Humphrey, Lord Lansdowne, Mrs J Lodge, Mr and Mrs S Lyus, Mr. D Millais, Mr Newton, Mr JA Rawling, Mrs. R Rawling, Mr J Sanders, Mrs S Sapcote, Mr and Mrs Shepherd, Mr. K Sprague, Mr. I Stokes, Mr and Mrs R Whiting, Mr and Mrs B Wright.

Apologies:

Mr E Annal, Mr EJ Brabin, Mr. CHT Brown, Mr R Eley, Mrs J Hallett, Mr JD Harsant, Dr J Marston, Mr G Mills, Mrs E Tirard, Mr. C Williams.

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2012 held on Wednesday 30th May 2012 and published in Bulletin No. 109 July 2012 were agreed to be a true record and were signed by The Chairman.

Continued overleaf

■ **Matters Arising:** There were no matters arising.

■ **Chairman's Report** – see pages 1 & 2 of this Bulletin.

■ **Treasurer's Report:**

The income and expenditure account, and the balance sheet for the year ended October 31st 2012 were tabled by Alastair Stevenson. (Copies available from the Treasurer).

Overall the finances of the Group remain in a sound state with total assets at 31 October 2012 of £35,000, a decrease of over £2,000 in the year. The decrease was largely due to the purchase of new display material, which had been written off in the year, so would not feature in future accounts. However there would be a number of increases in cost, such as the move to Direct Debiting, postage rises.

Subscription income has remained broadly stable in the year at £12,300. The proposed increase in subscriptions would help to redress the reducing income from other areas and increases in costs.

The Treasurer gave particular thanks to Martin Gates who had once again helped with the preparation of the accounts and to John Harsant, who had audited the accounts.

Philip Evans proposed a motion to adopt the accounts. This was seconded by Ivor Stokes and carried unanimously.

■ **Subscriptions:**

Information on increases in subscriptions was in the last Bulletin. The Group was making small donations for visits that would benefit the Group in the long term, and these needed to be covered in addition to likely increases in costs.

The move to Direct debiting would give more flexibility on increases in the future.

■ **Election of Auditors:**

John Harsant was willing to continue to audit the accounts.

The Treasurer proposed that he be asked to do the audit again; this was seconded by Pam Hayward and carried unanimously.

■ **Membership:**

Rupert Eley was unable to attend the meeting, but he had provided a statement of membership. It was noted that Membership was down by 8 from 753 in June 2012 to 745. Whilst more members would be good for the Group, in the present circumstances, the number seems to be overall satisfactory.

■ **Group Tours:**

In the absence of Judy Hallett, it was reported that the Spring Tour to Cornwall had been a huge success, despite the poor spring weather. The meeting gave a vote of thanks to Judy Hallett for her hard work and noted that she wished to stand down. However, it was hoped that she would help with any arrangements for a little while, whilst a new Tours Organiser was found.

There was a full discussion on how the Group might arrange tours in the future. It was noted that no autumn tour had been organised for this year, and it was felt that such meetings might now be dropped.

Post meeting note: this statement was incorrect. There is to be an autumn meeting organised by the ICS to Belgium on 24-28 October.

There was a general fear about the cost of long distance overseas tours, with the considerable increases in air fares recently.

Four possible tours policies were considered and an indicative vote was taken on each. The results were:

Big tours of the sort done in the past: *6 votes*

Short study tours, weekends for example, with a strong educational element (which it was observed could help the Group obtain charitable status): *over 15 votes*

Locally organised garden visits or groups of visits: *7 votes*

Plant hunting tours of some sort: *12 votes*

The results would be considered by the Committee in order to decide on the best way forward.

■ **Election** of a second Vice Chairman and Honorary Secretary:

Second Vice Chairman: David Millais - proposed Alastair Stevenson, seconded Barry Haseltine. Carried unanimously.

Honorary Secretary: Barry Haseltine – proposed Alastair Stevenson, seconded Cheryl Sappcote. Carried unanimously.

■ **Report** on the final version of the Agreement on behalf of the Group (and also the other Groups who will be using the same Agreement).

At the moment there are three points that need further clarification:

a) the Clause relating to RHS access to the Group's Intellectual Property Rights

b) the exact manner in which the former responsibilities of the R & C sub-committee, now merged with the Group, can be fulfilled

c) the period of notice in the event either party wished to terminate the Agreement.

The RHS would like to complete everything by July, but we believe it more likely to be the year end before we can put the final version, plus a temporary amendment to our existing Constitution, to the membership. We anticipate that after that, in 2014, we will seek limited liability and Charitable status for the Group, after there will be a final version of a new Constitution.

Russell Beeson asked if there would be any change to the need or otherwise for members of the Group to be members of the RHS. The Vice Chairman confirmed that Group Membership will be independent of RHS membership.

■ **Any Other Business:**

a. David Millais proposed a hearty vote of thanks to the Officers who have been conducting the negotiations with the RHS on the Partnership Agreement; he wanted the meeting to appreciate the huge amount of work that had been involved. The meeting approved the vote of thanks by acclamation.

b. The Vice Chairman thanked Lord Lansdowne for making the meeting room in the Bowood Hotel available to the Group and for arranging the very enjoyable lunch. He also thanked Lord Lansdowne for the splendid walk through the rhododendron gardens in the morning.

c. Date of Next Annual General Meeting.

No date or venue was selected for the 2014 AGM, but a preference was stated for a similar visit/meeting to those held over the last few years. A suggestion will be made and details will be given in the Bulletin when available.

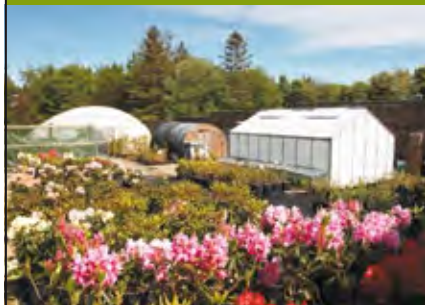
The Meeting Closed at 4.30 p.m

The Himalayan

Garden & Sculpture Park



Mail order plants and nursery



We supply a wide variety of high quality ericaceous plants to gardeners throughout the UK.

We are able to supply the rarer and more unusual varieties of Species and Hybrid Rhododendrons as well as Azaleas, Magnolias, Cornus and other Himalayan plants.

- The majority of our Rhododendron's and Azalea's are either sourced by seed from the Himalayan area or bought in as seedlings and grown in our nursery.
- Hardy, good quality plants at competitive prices.
- Mail order available throughout the year.
- Phone for our product list or see our website for more details.

Our plants come in a variety of sizes from small to specimen plants for immediate impact. Our product range is expanding all the time and it's worth keeping an eye on our website as new varieties are added regularly.

Visit our website for more details www.himalayangarden.com

The Hutts | Grewelthorpe | Ripon | HG4 3DA
P: 01765 658009 | E: info@himalayangarden.com

www. **LODER-PLANTS** .com

AZALEAS & RHODODENDRONS



HYDRANGEAS

CAMELLIAS



01403 891 412

MARKET GARDEN, LOWER BEEDING, HORSHAM, RH13 6PP

We have an encyclopaedic website, which contains a wealth of information. We have something here for both connoisseur and absolute beginner.

OPEN: MONDAY. - SATURDAY 10 - 4

MARVELLOUS MAGNOLIAS & CAMELLIAS

EISENHUT

VIVAIO

BAUMSCHULE



We offer over 450 species of grafted Magnolias. Among these are some of the latest hybrid Magnolias and selected clones of Magnolia species.

Our full list of Magnolias, Camellias and Wisterias is available on request.

Plants are despatched as one- or two-year grafts and in accordance with import regulations.

EISENHUT NURSERIES – SPECIALISTS IN MAGNOLIAS
CH6575 San Nazzaro/Ticino SWITZERLAND
Tel: +41 91 795 18 67 Fax: +41 91 795 30 29
Email: infoeisenhut@bluewin.ch
Internet: www.eisenhut.ch – now reworked with many more photos of our listed plants

Advertise here and engage directly with Rhododendron, Magnolia & Camellia enthusiasts both here in the UK and overseas

Contact John Rawling on 01883 653341 or email at jr.ey@virgin.net



the Rhododendron, Camellia & Magnolia group forthcoming events

AWARD

Distinguished Service to Horticulture

Barry is a long standing member of the Group and a very active member of the South West Branch. He is an acknowledged authority on the *Ericaceae*, renowned for his work with bi-generic crosses, and is a noted hybridizer of rhododendrons. His best known introductions are probably the named form of *Rhododendron keiskei* var *keiskei* 'Yaku Fairy' AGM and the outstanding x *Phylliopsis* 'Coppelia' which won the Reginald Cory Memorial Cup in 1982.

This award was established in 1930 and is conferred on those who have rendered a distinguished service to horticulture. There may be no more than 100 Associates of Honour at any one time.



Barry Starling receiving the Associate of Honour award by the then President of the Royal Horticultural Society, Mrs Elizabeth Banks, earlier this year.

Image Copyright RHS, 2013

OCTOBER / 2013

20/21

SW Branch
Rosemoor

Autumn Meeting.
Branch Plant Sale and
Lecture by Thomas
Clarke, Head Gardener
at NT Trelissick on
his trips to Arunachal
Pradesh

Colin Brown
01674 277268



24-28

ICS / RCMG
AUTUMN
GET-TOGETHER

Joint Tour to Belgian
Gardens with the ICS
(See Page 3)

Details and booking form
from Pat Short
41 Galveston Road,
East Putney, London SW15.
Tel. 020 8870 6884

Book as soon as possible.
Full payment needed by
31st August.