



# the Rhododendron, Camellia & Magnolia group

Bulletin 120 / March 2016 / [www.rhodogroup-rhs.org](http://www.rhodogroup-rhs.org)



## CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

The countdown to a busy spring has started in more ways than one. This time last year I wrote about spring being early due to a mild winter – this year everything is earlier still. In the South of England, spring flowering camellias such as 'Desire' were flowering before Christmas, and we flowered *Rhododendron* 'Christmas Cheer' on Christmas Day without any forcing in the greenhouse – unheard of! And still the early spring continues; Jim Gardiner emailed me a picture of a lovely *Magnolia campbellii* 'Alba' in full flower in the Wild Wood at Wisley on 4th January, and Jaimie Parsons at Caerhays reports several magnolias in flower earlier than usual including 'Ethel Hillier', 'Todd's Forty Niner', and 'Red Lion'. At the end of January I pruned a branch off a young maple to raise the canopy and was amazed to find it bleeding with copious quantities of sap at a time it should have been fully dormant. As I write at the end of January, we are flowering *R. mucronulatum* 'Album' some six weeks earlier than last year. I fear we are in for some nasty surprises, either in early flowers being frosted, or from dreadful overwintering pests developing in spring. Using the Scouts' motto, 'Be prepared' with lots of fleece for early flowers, and a suitable chemical armoury to attack mealy bugs, aphids, scale insects, lacebugs and vine weevil as soon as you see them.

We are now racing towards our Centenary events, so do please make every attempt at joining in and supporting some of them. We are delighted that the events we have planned have caught the imagination of our members and the public alike. We have members from as far as Australia and Europe planning to visit either our Celebration at Wisley or our display at Chelsea Flower Show. The gardening press is also waking up to our stories that we have sent them, and we hope that this all raises the profile of the RCMG. Please do get involved with the events, and make the public aware of who we are – a group of gardening enthusiasts who love to share our knowledge of Rhododendrons, Camellias and Magnolias. I would like to welcome the many new members that we have gained this year, and hope that we can help you in broadening your knowledge and interest in our genera, as well as meeting new like-minded friends. All our Centenary events and publicity should give us an ideal way to gain even more new members, so please encourage friends and neighbours who might be interested to attend our events. We will have membership leaflets at all our events, so please talk to prospective members and encourage them to sign up.



*Camellia reticulata* photographed in Tengchong, Yunnan by Maurice Foster. See letter on page 9.

During the course of the winter, we have finally been able to re-structure the RCMG Committees, to enable us to respond to events and make quicker decisions. Up until recently, the Committee consisted of about 26 members, meeting three or four times per year. Inevitably, decisions needed to be taken between meetings, which involved numerous phone calls or emails between members. Whilst the four Trustees are ultimately responsible to the Charity Commission for the running of the Group, we have now formed a Management Committee with

twelve members, each with a specific role to offer to the Group. This Committee holds monthly electronic 'Skype' meetings so that matters can be discussed and decisions made promptly. The meetings are minuted and sent to

Branch Chairmen so that they are kept involved, and feedback from them is welcomed. So far these meetings are working quite well, and they link distant Committee members efficiently in time and cost, but can be subject to disruption from poor broadband service. We will continue to have two face-to-face meetings per year involving Branch Chairmen, who are vital to the workings of the Group on the local level. If you have any points you would like to raise with the Committee, do please contact us via Sally Hayward or your Branch Chairman.

We have also set up a Plants Committee, chaired by Ivor Stokes, to be at the heart of Group activity. It is early days and it will have to find its feet, but this Committee will consist of plant experts on our three genera to advise on plants matters. In

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due course, once the RHS have finalized a new plant award, we hope they will be able to nominate plants for awards at Shows. Due to the geographical spread around the country, the Plant Committee may need to co-opt local experts for some Shows.

The new Committee structures, together with their members and contact details, are now shown on the RCMG website. The rules under which the Group operate have also been updated to reflect the changes that have been made, and this document is also published online.

The Group receives an increasing number of requests for information on plant, pest and disease identification, and it is hoped that someone on this committee will know the answer. However, a photograph of a beautiful and quality campanulate deep pink flower from Borde Hill, flowering naturally in January stumped everyone! Can anyone help?



Could this be 'Unknown Warrior'?

Photo: Jim Gardiner

This lack of knowledge highlights the plight of many old plants in gardens, the importance of good labelling and record keeping, and the importance of the work of the Threatened Plant Project from Plant Heritage that Stephen Harding, our Conservation Officer is involved with. As you will read elsewhere in this Bulletin, Stephen's results in finding 'lost' rhododendrons over the past 6 months have been outstanding. Now there is a new Plant Heritage impetus to locate magnolias planted throughout the UK. Please give this project your support by listing the plants in your collection and sending this to Stephen.

Finally, if you have not booked your places for our Centenary Celebration, please do so as soon as possible. Please see all the details and booking form available on the website, or if you don't have internet access, please contact our Events Co-ordinator Judy Hallett for further information. I will be out and about at many RCMG events this spring. Have a great Centenary Celebration, and do come and introduce yourself.

David Millais

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Volunteers to help with the RCMG Group Stand at the Chelsea Flower Show 2016.

As you must be aware by now, the RHS have granted us a stand at the Chelsea Flower Show this year to mark the Centenary of the formation of the Rhododendron Society. We are planning to showcase the Top 100 Rhododendrons using a rolling slide show of photographs and also including a special display devoted to *Rhododendron yakushimanum* and some of the 'yak' hybrids. We plan to have a display demonstrating the many diversities of rhododendron species including vireyas and, of course, there will be a display of historic material too, relating to the early days of the Society.

This will be a valuable opportunity to talk to the public about rhododendrons and, with luck, to sign them up to Membership of the Group.

We have four passes for every day that the Show is open to the public Tuesday 24th – Saturday 28th May. The Show opens at 8.00am and closes at 8.00pm. It would be good to be able to have someone on the stand for most of that time, but with a team of four there should be plenty of opportunity to take breaks to see the Show too, and you even get access to the privileged catering facilities, preferential rates and no need to queue! Maybe the 8.00am start would suit you best, or the late finish. Our Stand is located alongside Millais Nurseries and Burncoose, in a very prestigious position. I am not allowed to divulge too much about this, but suffice to say, the public will certainly be drawn to where we are!

I really would like to hear from you if you would like to take advantage of this golden opportunity of a free pass in to the greatest Flower Show in the world and the chance to promote the Rhododendron, Camellia and Magnolia Group.

Sally Hayward

### Seed List 2016

As you are aware, we changed the list last year and we have not listed any wild seed collected after 2013 so that we were fully compliant with the requirements of the Nagoya Protocol. Recently, the Department of Forest, Environment and Wildlife Management in Sikkim enquired about some older seed we were still listing. They were concerned that some collectors had collected seed in their country without their permission, and unfortunately, we found this to be correct. The Group wants to work with the people of Sikkim and all countries where our genera grow in the wild, so that hopefully we can arrange suitable permits and Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) within the rules and spirit of the Nagoya protocol in the future.

We have therefore removed all wild collected seed so that we can show we are an honest charitable organisation, with conservation at our heart, and have integrity in our listings. Whilst we know this action may disappoint some members, we trust that you can understand that we must work within the laws of the host country. In the longer term we hope we can list some wild-collected seed, collected with the full permission of the countries involved, and hopefully in return we can assist them with their conservation projects or other appropriate benefits within their forests.

This year we would draw your attention to hundreds of wonderful offerings from members' gardens, especially some fine

## EDITOR'S NOTES

Peter Furneaux

I need your letters, reports from Branch events and articles.

**The copy date for the next Bulletin No.121  
is Friday 10th June 2016**

Please send your contributions to:  
email: [peterfurneaux@gmail.com](mailto:peterfurneaux@gmail.com)

or post to: Peter Furneaux

Lucton Court, Lucton, Herefordshire HR6 9PQ

Letters or articles on any aspect of our three genera are very welcome as also are illustrations.



Magnolias which should be sown as soon as possible. Remember that most new varieties have been developed by breeding good garden hybrids, so the opportunities to raise some fantastic new plants still exist, and your name (or your spouse's!) could be put on that plant for all to remember in the future.

For the next few years whilst our species offering is limited, it would be really appreciated if more members would get involved in providing us with seed next autumn. To do this, you need to make some preparations in your garden this spring. Anyone can try their hand at hand pollinating flowers whilst they are in bloom; the results are so much more satisfactory than open pollination. Try 'selfing' a rare species to conserve it for the future, or even better cross it with another form in your garden. Try breeding a new hybrid, and think about how you could improve a flower or a plant by creating some hybrid vigour, a bushier habit, some scent, wonderful foliage, or flowering at a different time of year. Think of this as your challenge for 2016, and we can all benefit for years to come!

The 2016 Seed List is now published on the Group website and Julie Atkinson, Convenor of the Seed Bank will despatch your order as soon as possible. If you do not have internet access, please ask and we will be happy to post you a printed copy.

*David Millais*

### **Annual General Meeting, Tuesday 10th May 2016 at 11.30am**

**T**he AGM of the Rhododendron, Camellia and Magnolia Group will be held at Ramster Hall, Chiddingfold, Surrey GU84SN on Tuesday, 10 May 2016 at 11.30am. Please contact the Secretary, Sally Hayward to confirm your intention to attend the meeting or to register your apologies for non-attendance. (Email: schaywar1@btinternet.com, telephone 01227 761369).

If you are planning to attend the AGM and wish to participate in the Centenary lunch immediately after the meeting, there will be a charge of £28.00, to include coffee prior to the meeting. You will need to book up for this, using the booking form on the Group website or by contacting Judy Hallett (Email judy.hallett@googlemail.com, telephone 01981 570401).

There will be an opportunity to visit the Group collection of Hardy Hybrids in the afternoon. There is a Tea House in the grounds which is open every day while the garden is open, serving cakes and sandwiches, snacks and drinks.

*Sally Hayward*

### **GIFT AID REMINDER**

**A**s you may recall, since the Group was successfully accepted as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, it became possible for us to claim Gift Aid relief from member subscriptions and other gifts to the Group from UK taxpayers. This will give us an additional 25p for every £1.00 of qualifying income which will help support our charitable activities.

Many members have confirmed their willingness for the Group to reclaim Gift Aid from their subscriptions, but there is still a large number of UK members who have not yet taken the necessary action.

The process for giving your consent could not be easier.

If you are a UK taxpayer and have access to the internet, could

I ask you use this link [www.rhodogroup-rhs.org/information/giftaid/](http://www.rhodogroup-rhs.org/information/giftaid/) to confirm that we may reclaim Gift Aid from your subscription. Please let Pam or Graham know if you have any problems at all with this process. (pam@woodtown.net or graham@tregoningmill.co.uk). If you do not have access to the internet, and need a Gift Aid form, please call me on 01227 761369.

Please take action and help the Group by providing more funding for our conservation and educational schemes.

*Sally Hayward*

### **APPRECIATIONS**

#### **Colin Brown**

**C**olin Brown, who was Chairman of the SW Branch of the Group for seven years from 2006 to 2013 died on February 2nd 2016, aged 81. After Cambridge, Colin worked in his family "En Tout Cas" tennis court construction business, where he started a plant nursery for clients who required landscaping around their courts. A skilled salmon fisherman, Colin, after he and his wife Mary retired to Devon, was much involved with the Club that held the lease on the Endsleigh estate and Tamar beat near Tavistock (before it became a hotel), and spearheaded a Lottery funded project to restore the celebrated gardens. The SW Branch benefited greatly from Colin's organisational skills, and both the RHS and the Group are indebted to him for the way in which, working with Pam Hayward, he built up the Main Rhododendron Competition and Show once it moved to Rosemoor from 2007 onwards. It took a great deal of effort and persistence on his part to get the Show to its present size and quality. Sadly, he was not well enough to attend either the 2014 or 2015 Shows, but they were a testimony to the sound foundation he had laid. Colin also expanded the SW Branch annual Rosemoor Day in October into a thoroughly enjoyable social and instructive occasion. Committee meetings at Colin and Mary's elegant house, looking out over the beautiful Dartmoor Village of Lustleigh were no hardship, and the hospitality from them both that invariably followed will long be remembered. Colin was greatly respected within the SW Branch and beyond, and he will be much missed.

*Philip Evans*



SW Branch Chairman, Colin Brown, making the presentations at the Rosemoor Spring Show, 2013

Photo: Sally Hayward

## PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

Only 5 of our members contributed pictures in 2015! In total there were 37 Rhododendrons (2 species, 15 hybrids, 20 vireyas); 5 Magnolias; and 13 Camellias. Please note, only 2 Rhododendron Species!

### The 2015 winners are:

#### Rhododendrons:

Class 1: *Rhododendron* species:

*R. protistum* entered by George Hargreaves

Class 2: *Rhododendron* hybrids:

*R. 'September Song'* entered by Russell Beeson

Class 3: Vireyas:

*R. 'Strawberry Parfait'* entered by Roy Bilbie

#### Magnolias:

*M. sprengeri* var. *diva* 'Diva' entered by George Hargreaves

#### Camellias:

*C. 'Ellie's Girl'* entered by Roy Bilbie

These winning photographs can now also be viewed on the home page of our website.

There are still lots more new AGMs without photos, so I am hoping that you will all continue to search for them this Spring.



*Rhododendron protistum* Photo: George Hargreaves



*Magnolia sprengeri* subsp. *sprengeri* 'Diva' Photo: George Hargreaves



*Camellia* 'Ellie's Girl' Photo: Roy Bilbie



*Rhododendron* (vireya) 'Strawberry Parfait' Photo: Roy Bilbie



*Rhododendron* 'September Song' Photo: Russell Beeson



### Conservation of Threatened Plants and the Centenary Appeal

With the recent formation of the Group's Plant Committee coinciding with the Centenary of the Group's foundation, along with us becoming a registered charity, I think it appropriate to outline a few of the activities planned for the future.

Our charitable objectives include the conservation of endangered taxa in each of our three genera, not just the species but also hybrids that are at risk of being lost to cultivation. This will be undertaken by a programme of propagation and the establishment of reference collections, currently around Britain, that will be accessible to members.

We have already established four reference collections of rhododendrons and one of magnolias. We aim to extend these collections and set up others, in co-ordination with members and gardens around the country.

Steve Harding, our Conservation Officer, has been working with the charity Plant Heritage to identify and locate many of the old cultivars that have fallen foul of changing tastes in modern times and are no longer available commercially. Once found and considered, these plants will be propagated and distributed to ensure their survival.

With the devastation wreaked by the recent outbreaks of *Phytophthora* in many gardens, traditional propagation methods are often not appropriate and we are now commissioning the micropropagation of threatened plants from affected sites to ensure that we are distributing healthy plants. Furthermore, in cases where there is only a single plant remaining, micropropagation offers the potential to produce far more progeny than conventional techniques.

The Group has already helped to save some of the important *Rhododendron* hybrids that were bred at Bodnant Gardens in north Wales, through funding a programme of micropropagation. Newly planted young specimens of several cultivars were seen by members who were able to visit the garden during the 2015 AGM Tour.

Additionally, some of the unusual *Rhododendron niveum* hybrids raised at Clyne Castle Gardens, in Swansea, which was badly devastated by *Phytophthora*, are also being micropropagated so they too can be disseminated amongst interested members once they have roots.

A real benefit is that, over recent years, we have set in motion the mechanism to reunite plants with the gardens from where they originated but have subsequently been lost.

Whilst I am sure you will agree that all this is most worthwhile, there are inevitable costs associated, which are currently beyond the financial resources of the Group. To meet these costs, we are launching this Centenary Appeal to start a separate fund which will be ring-fenced from other Group funds for the purposes of conservation and to further develop the Group's Collections. You will find a leaflet included with this Bulletin mailing and details are also available on the Group website. The simplest approach is being adopted so that payment can be made by any method convenient to the donor. Should any member wish to make regular donations to this cause, please contact the Treasurer, Alastair Stevenson [alastairstevenson@mpaconsulting.co.uk](mailto:alastairstevenson@mpaconsulting.co.uk)

Your comments and suggestions will be most appreciated.

Members will be regularly updated on progress and we would be pleased to receive information on the whereabouts of any of the plants listed on the Group's website. [www.rhodogroup-rhs.org/information/conservation](http://www.rhodogroup-rhs.org/information/conservation)

Ivor T. Stokes - Plant Committee Chairman

Email: [ivor.t.stokes@btopenworld.com](mailto:ivor.t.stokes@btopenworld.com)



Young Rhododendrons at the Duchy micropropagation laboratory.

Photo: Ros Smith

### CONSERVATION REPORT

Stephen Harding

We have made real progress in finding 383 Rhododendron Hybrids on the list posted on the Group website. Many thanks to all those who took the time to look through the list and send me their information. We are drawing up an action plan to propagate some of these plants and distribute them throughout the UK membership. We will be in touch to let members know which plants will be propagated and how you can help.

One of the rules of the RCMG becoming a C.I.O is that we have to undertake conservation activities, hence the reason for this project. But I still need your plant lists. We are keen to find 'Best Forms' and plants raised from seed with collectors' numbers, as there is no record of where these plants are in the UK. We are not interested in any commercial activities with these plants, purely conservation, although some of these plants will have to be raised in a nursery environment. We have already had offers from members to propagate and grow on some of the plants and any other member interested in helping should let me know.

We are still interested in lists of species *Rhododendron*, *Camellia* and *Magnolia* so please keep the lists coming.

We appreciate that some gardens do not have up-to-date records of which plants they have and may need help in identifying plants. Please ask any member of your committee, who will pass on the information so we can help you. We have a wealth of knowledge and expertise within the membership but need to act sooner rather than later whilst we are still young enough to travel around the country!

A revised, updated list of Threatened Plants will be released by the RHS and Plant Heritage soon. As soon as we have it we will post it on the website.

We can only achieve positive results if you, the members, get involved. A list of plants sent by email is great, but even a handwritten letter is perfectly acceptable. Some members have

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only one plant on the list but when added to the other members' contributions it really does make a difference. Please get involved.

On the website, under the 'Conservation' tab is a link to the *Red List* of species *Rhododendron*. Thanks to all those bodies who have kindly given their permission for us to add this link. Please do take a look at the *Red List*. It makes interesting reading.

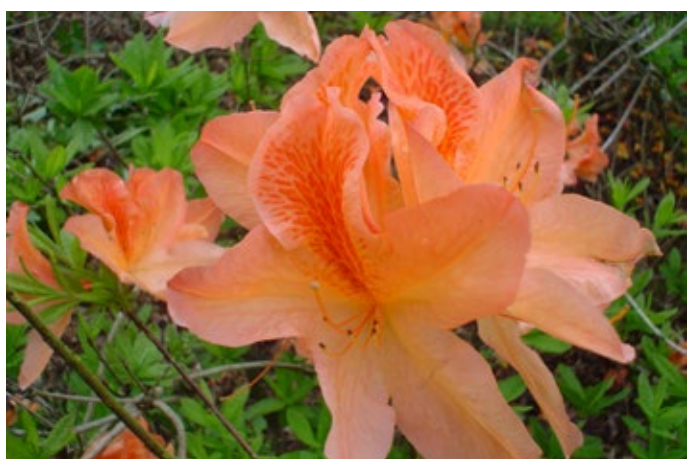
The following 6 photos are of endangered deciduous azaleas. All the photos are by Stephen Harding.



*Rhododendron* (Azalea) 'Queen Louise'



*Rhododendron* (Azalea) 'Amber Rain'



*Rhododendron* (Azalea) 'Alice de Steurs'



*Rhododendron* (Azalea) 'Comte de Gomer'



*Rhododendron* (Azalea) 'Flaming June'



*Rhododendron* (Azalea) 'Eva Goudé'

### **Your Group needs you!**

**I** make no apology for appealing again to members to come forward and join the Committee, and participate in the operations of the Group. The facts are that several members of the Committee have done some outstanding work over many years, and while they will be hard acts to follow, it is only right that they are allowed to hand over their duties and responsibilities to others. These Committee members kindly agreed to stay on longer while we sorted out our charitable status and while we planned our Centenary Celebrations. By the time we reach our AGM in May, that time will be over, and it is now imperative that we have some new volunteers in place from 10th May.

This year, the most immediate position to fill is that of Treasurer. Alastair Stevenson has held various roles on the



Committee for more than 25 years, which is just remarkable! However, he has now indicated that he wishes to retire at the AGM, and this is only fair. Alastair stepped into the role of Treasurer when the accounts were in a muddle and needed rescuing, but he does not come from an accounting background. This shows that we just need someone with a sharp eye for detail and good record-keeping skills, though someone with book-keeping skills would be wonderful! Alastair will be retiring after sorting out the reporting requirements of the Charity Commission for our first full year, so that everything should be in order for a smooth handover.

As you know, Pam Hayward is busy preparing a bumper Yearbook to help celebrate the Centenary. This is her ninth year of being Editor, and she would like it to be her last, but she has offered to oversee next year's edition to enable her successor to gain experience and have a good handover. Pam's time as Editor has seen the publication go from strength to strength, and it is one of our major membership benefits, as highlighted in last year's membership survey. Pam has found the Yearbook rewarding and satisfying, and has made many contacts and friends with enthusiasts and experts all around the world. I really hope that there is a suitable person amongst us who would like the opportunity to work with Pam for a year, and to discuss and commission interesting articles from noted experts on our three genera, so that our membership can continue to read an excellent yearbook.

Judy Hallett's tours and weekends have been popular with all those who have joined her. She has wanted to step down for some time, but kindly agreed to stay on and organise the Centenary Celebration which, as you can imagine, is a large event. Now we need a new Events Co-ordinator to arrange our events and tours around the country and even further afield in conjunction with a tours company. It's another fascinating role for someone, and it could be relatively simple for a year or so, before following up invitations to visit gardens in Brittany and events in Germany. I do hope that amongst all you budding holiday planners that relish the planning as much as the holiday, someone will offer to arrange our events next year.

Our overseas members are a vital part of our membership, and we need to serve them well. Not surprisingly, they often cannot attend our events, but they appreciate our publications and our seed lists, and being part of the community of our three genera. The overseas 'branch' is the largest of all our branches, and represents some 37% of our overall membership. Miranda Gunn has been Chairman of the International Branch for many years, and has stayed on for our Centenary year so that she can be a familiar contact for those who may seek some help whilst visiting this spring. We need a new International Branch Chairman to represent those members. Remember, these members are amongst the keenest of all our members, as they have joined a Group in a foreign country. Over the years, Miranda has met some of the most knowledgeable specialists from around the world, and has found it an interesting role.

We urgently need members to come forward and volunteer their time for the benefit of our charity. Please consider if you would be willing to serve our Group in any of these critical roles. Do make contact with the retiring Committee member, the Chairman or the Secretary to discuss the position as soon as possible.

*David Millais*

## EAST ANGLIA BRANCH

### Visit to Stody Lodge Gardens near Holt, North Norfolk, Thursday 12th May 2016

Unfortunately, East Anglia has been without a Branch Chairman for a while, but now we are delighted that Kate MacNicol has offered to host a meeting at her wonderful garden near Holt, in the hope that we can re-establish the East Anglian Branch. We know there are a number of members in East Anglia, and that there are some fine collections of plants where the lovely peaty soils permit the growing of ericaceous plants. We therefore hope that as many members as possible from East Anglia and further afield will take the opportunity to join in this visit, see the lovely gardens, meet new friends, and discuss further visits and activities.

Members are invited to this spectacular garden for a visit hosted by owner, Kate MacNicol, and Head Gardener, Richard Hulbert. Stody Lodge boasts over 200 varieties of rhododendrons and azaleas across 14 acres, all underplanted with spring bulbs and interspersed with camellias, magnolias and ornamental and specimen trees. Its Azalea Water Gardens are believed to have the largest single planting of Mollis azaleas in the country. [www.stodyestate.co.uk/stody-lodge-gardens](http://www.stodyestate.co.uk/stody-lodge-gardens)

Visitors are welcome to arrive at Stody Lodge for a 2pm guided tour of the gardens. This will be followed by a cream tea at Stody Lodge at 4pm. Price of the visit (garden entrance, guided tour and cream tea) £15.

Alternatively, you can enjoy an excellent lunch at the local Hunny Bell pub in Hunworth ([www.thehunnybell.co.uk](http://www.thehunnybell.co.uk)) before your garden visit. Please arrive at 12.15pm for a delicious two course set menu (including tea/filter coffee but excluding alcoholic or soft drinks.) Price of the visit (two course lunch, garden entrance, guided tour and cream tea): £30. Please let us know if you have any dietary requirements.

For further information, please contact Kate MacNicol, [kate.macnicol@stodyestate.co.uk](mailto:kate.macnicol@stodyestate.co.uk) or 01263 860572

*Kate MacNicol*



A view at Stody Lodge.

Photo: Kate MacNicol

## THE TOP 100 RHODODENDRONS FOR THE CENTENARY *Sally Hayward*

I am very pleased to be able to reveal the final list of the Top 100 Rhododendrons at last, the result of combining all the lists of '10 favourite rhododendrons' submitted by 258 members from around the world. Together we have created a marker in time for the end of our first one hundred years that we can be proud of, and something that will stand up to the scrutiny of those that follow us in the years to come. There will be more information about the whole project in the 2016 Yearbook but in the meantime I hope that you will enjoy studying the list and comparing it with your own entry. The whole process was entirely democratic and the end results extremely close. The front runners were neck-and-neck for most of the time but in the end the number one choice was *Rhododendron yakushimanum* and I can confirm that it received global support. We are extremely fortunate that our top choice was a rhododendron that is naturally in bloom at the time of both the Centenary Event at Wisley and also for our exhibit at the Chelsea Flower Show which should enable us to showcase an actual plant in full bloom on both occasions.



*Rhododendron yakushimanum* 'Koichiro Wada' AGM 1993

Photo: Sally Hayward

1	<i>yakushimanum</i> 'Koichiro Wada' AGM 1993				
2	<i>macabeanum</i> AGM 1993	35	<i>wardii</i>	68	'Crest' FCC 1953
3	'Loderi King George' AGM 1993	36	'Nancy Evans' AGM 2002	69	'Elizabeth' FCC 1943
4	<i>augustinii</i> AGM 1993	37	<i>sinofalconeri</i>	70	<i>grande</i> FCC 1901
5	<i>falconeri</i> AGM 1993	38	<i>orbiculare</i> AGM 2002	71	'Phyllis Korn'
6	<i>cinnabarinum</i> ssp. <i>cinnabarinum</i>	39	<i>kesangiae</i>	72	<i>davidsonianum</i> AGM 1993
7	<i>bureavii</i> AGM 1993	40	<i>souliei</i> FCC 1909	73	<i>irroratum</i> 'Polka Dot' AM 1957
8	<i>arboreum</i>	41	'Rubicon'	74	'Mi Amor' AM 1975
9	<i>pachysanthum</i> AGM 1993	42	<i>trichostomum</i> FCC 1976	75	'Hotei' AM 1974
10	<i>sinogrande</i> AGM 1993	43	<i>lacteam</i> FCC 1926	76	'Hydon Velvet'
11	<i>edgeworthii</i> AGM 1993	44	'Taurus' AGM 1993	77	'Yellow Hammer' AGM 1993
12	<i>schlippenbachii</i> FCC 1944	45	'Loderi Venus' AGM 1993	78	<i>platypodium</i>
13	'Polar Bear'	46	'Lady Alice Fitzwilliam' AGM 1993	79	<i>protistum</i>
14	<i>calophytum</i> AGM 1993	47	<i>quinquefolium</i> AM 1931	80	<i>excellens</i>
15	<i>thomsonii</i> AM 1973	48	'Alison Johnstone' AM 1945	81	<i>oreotrephes</i> AGM 2012
16	<i>auriculatum</i> AM 1922	49	<i>keysii</i>	82	<i>mucronulatum</i>
17	'Fragrantissimum' AGM 1993	50	<i>griffithianum</i> FCC 1866	83	'Cilpinense' AGM 1993
18	<i>williamsianum</i> AGM 1993	51	<i>vaseyi</i> AGM 1993	84	'Point Defiance' AM 1992
19	<i>maddenii</i> ssp. <i>crassum</i>	52	<i>pseudochrysanthum</i> AGM 1993	85	'Queen of Hearts' FCC 1986
20	<i>mallotum</i> AM 1973	53	<i>yuefengense</i>	86	'Horizon Monarch' AGM 2002
21	<i>luteum</i> AGM 1993	54	<i>campanulatum</i>	87	'Teddy Bear'
22	<i>niveum</i> AGM 1993	55	<i>oreodoxa</i>	88	'Fortune' FCC 1938
23	<i>barbatum</i> AM 1954	56	<i>griersonianum</i> FCC 1924	89	<i>fulvum</i> AM 1933
24	<i>lindleyi</i>	57	'Sappho' AM 1974	90	<i>elliottii</i> FCC 1937
25	<i>roxieanum</i>	58	'Lem's Cameo' AGM 1993	91	'Cornish Cross'
26	'Sir Charles Lemon' AGM 1993	59	<i>lutescens</i>	92	'Markeeta's Prize' AGM 1993
27	<i>yunnanense</i>	60	<i>montroseanum</i>	93	'Countess of Haddington' FCC 1862
28	<i>fortunei</i> AGM 2012	61	'Lem's Monarch' AGM 1993	94	'Matador' FCC 1946
29	<i>rex</i> AGM 2012	62	<i>argyrophyllum</i>	95	'Loder's White' AGM 1993
30	<i>decorum</i> AGM 2002	63	'Lady Chamberlain' FCC 1931	96	'Seta' FCC 1960
31	<i>campylogynum</i>	64	<i>cerasinum</i> AM 1938	97	<i>sutchuenense</i>
32	<i>nuttallii</i>	65	<i>viscosum</i> AGM 1993	98	<i>neriiflorum</i>
33	<i>dalhousiae</i> AM 1930	66	<i>dauricum</i>	99	'Nobleanum'
34	<i>hodgsonii</i>	67	<i>calostrotum</i>	100	<i>recurvoides</i> AM 1941



## The Wisley Centenary Weekend

For those of you that are intending to come to the Wisley Centenary weekend, 7th/8th May, and I really hope that many of you will, I would like you to study the list to see how many of the Top 100 might be in bloom in your garden at that time. We would like to create a display of sprays and trusses representing as many of the 100 as possible, to show to the general public. You are invited to bring along your cut flowers for this display – even if you only have one.

There will also be a very simple competition that I hope you will make time to enter. We invite you to bring along any rhododendrons that are looking good in your garden, trusses or sprays and not just those on the Top 100 list. These will be arranged in very simple classes ie Species, Hybrids, Evergreen Azaleas, Deciduous Azaleas and Vireyas. Yes – that simple! We want this to be educational for the public too. The competition will be judged to find the best exhibit in each class, and from these five entries, the overall best exhibit will be chosen by the judges and the exhibitor will be awarded the Centenary Cup. This is a new RCMG cup which will then be awarded annually. We are also planning a ‘People’s Choice’ award. Members of the public will be invited to cast a vote for their favourite of the best five. This competition will go on over the two days of the event and the result will be announced in the following Bulletin.

I will be preparing an information pack giving all the details about entering your Top 100 exhibits for the display and the Competition. This will include guidance for access to the marquee for staging and an application form which you will be able to use to tell me what exhibits you are planning to enter. This information pack will be emailed out to all members nearer the time. In the meantime, if you have any questions relating to the Wisley weekend, please do not hesitate to contact me by email [schaywar1@btinternet.com](mailto:schaywar1@btinternet.com). If you do not have an internet connection and would like to enter the competition or have any questions, please call me on 01227 761369 so that I can make sure that you receive the information pack by post.

This is a wonderful opportunity to really show off rhododendrons in a spectacular way to the public, so please do your bit and contribute to the extravaganza!

Sally Hayward

### MEMBERS’ LETTERS

#### *Camellia reticulata* in Tengchong, Yunnan

Like a number of other early Chinese plant introductions, mainly from nurseries in the treaty ports, a semi-double garden form of *Camellia reticulata* was introduced before the true ‘wild’ form was discovered. This semi-double garden form – Captain Rawes – was introduced in 1820 and flowered in England for the first time in 1826. According to Dr Macqueen Cowan, in his book on George Forrest, it was over a century later that Forrest introduced the single flowered ‘wild’ plant, as *Camellia speciosa*. It was sent to Kew by JC Williams and identified by Stapf as *C. reticulata*. An examination of Forrest’s herbarium material indicated that he had first collected the species earlier in 1912 and on three other occasions, all in the region of Tengchong (Tengyueh) in SW Yunnan.

All Forrest’s gatherings ‘were made from open pine forest, scrubs and thickets in the Tengyueh area’.

Last November, a party of members of the International Dendrology Society stayed in Tengchong. Forrest died there in

1932 and the group visited his burial place in an overgrown and unkempt plantation of *Camellia oleifera* in woodland at the base of Laifeng hill, just outside the town. The grave is unmarked and there is no memorial stone. He is buried next to his great friend George Litton, the former acting British Consul in Tengchong. The group paid their respects to the great explorer and collector with a moment’s silence and a short prayer which was quite poignant, particularly given the fact that there was nothing there to recognise his last resting place nor acknowledge his great achievements. His grave is not even a space in the weeds.

The group gradually straggled up the metalled road to the top of the hill to view Second World War trench systems used in the battle of Tengchong to repel and ultimately defeat the Japanese. A few members, perhaps reasonably described as the ‘usual suspects’, did not make it to the top, but left the road to inspect interesting trees, including some magnificent pterocaryas. A single *Camellia reticulata* was spotted just below the road with a scattering of flowers and to all appearances it looked like the original wild form, *Camellia reticulata* Lindl f. *simplex* Stapf and it was easy to speculate, not more than a mile from the great man’s grave, that Forrest himself might well have collected seed here. Conditions were ideal: light woodland, a lot of *Betula alnoides*, with plenty of light and sunshine filtering through the trees, some of which, in November, were just coming into leaf after a summer leaf fall. (At an altitude of 5300ft, the climate in Tengchong is benign, with an average annual temperature of 60F, from an average low of 47F in January to a high of 69F in July/August. Average rainfall is 59”. The southwest monsoon makes the wettest months July and August, with comparatively dry winters.)

More *Camellia reticulata* were discovered further into the wood, all somewhat drawn up by the shade, to an average height of 4–5m. They all appeared to be roughly the same age and some differences in flower form began to be noticed. In addition, some substantial stone-built inscribed tombs were encountered in the same area as the camellias and it soon became evident that the trees were probably not naturally wild plants, but almost certainly ex situ plantings in association with the Chinese graves.

On returning home, with plenty of photographs to compare with plants illustrated in the literature, it seemed possible that a few were actually recognisable named selections. This assumption was strengthened by the fact that, in the past, some had been selected and named from open pollinated seedlings in Tengchong. Colour, but more important, the flower style and shape, the number of petals, the relationship of stamens and pistils, with the latter sometimes longer, all helped to suggest a close affinity, indeed close enough to be able to reasonably assume they were the same thing.

For example, the flower of the cultivar ‘Fenyu’ is described as ‘pink with white, diameter 8–9cm, petals 10, stamens and pistils well developed, pistils higher than stamens.’ Perhaps significantly, ‘selected from an open pollinated plant of *C. reticulata* Lindl. f. *simplex* Stapf in Tengchong.’ Also named from Tengchong seed is Qiaoyulan, with a narrower chalice-shaped flower. Yulan is the ancient name for *Magnolia denudata* and reflects the general shape of the flower, which occurs in several *C. reticulata* cultivars. Photographic comparisons suggest that these may have been two of the plants we saw.

There are complex variations within the species, with some of the cultivated multipetalled forms making spectacular trees, many going back centuries in association with shrines and temples; also over centuries, hybrids have occurred with

*C. pitardii* and *C. saluenensis*. This has created an enormous range of cultivars that have been widely planted and the interpretation of what may be included in a definition of *C. reticulata* has become a taxonomists starting point for argument.

Whatever the outcome of such debate and our own speculation as to the status of the specimens we saw on Laifeng hill in Tengchong, the sight of these wonderful plants just at the opening of their flowering season with sunlight filtering through the trees was a privilege and a real delight.

References: *Yunnan Camellias of China*, Science Press, Beijing  
*The Journeys and plant introductions of George Forrest VMH*, Dr J M Cowan CBE, Oxford Univ Press, for the RHS.

Maurice Foster



*Camellia reticulata*. Standing right foreground is Mme Elizabeth Ryelandt.  
 Photo: Maurice Foster



Flower and leaf showing reticulate pattern of what may be the cultivar 'Fenyū'. See Maurice Foster's letter. Photos: Maurice Foster

## MEMBERSHIP

Rupert Eley

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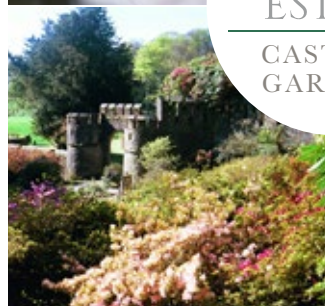
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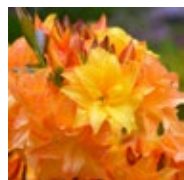
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## MARCH

12/13

**RHS / South West Branch**  
RHS Rosemoor

**RHS Early Camellia Competition**

SW Branch Early Rhododendron, Magnolia and Spring Ornamental Competitions

Georgina Barter  
georginabarter@rhs.org.uk  
020 7821 3142

Dr John Marston  
artavianjohn@gmail.com  
01271 323202

## APRIL

7

**South West Branch**  
Caerhays Castle

RCM Group Centenary Celebration Day. Garden tours, exhibition and lunch

Dr John Marston  
artavianjohn@gmail.com  
01271 323202

9/10

**RHS**  
RHS Wisley

**RHS Early Rhododendron, Spring Ornamental Plants (including Magnolias) and Main Camellia Competitions**

David Millais  
david@rhododendrons.co.uk  
01252 792698

Sally Hayward  
schaywar1@btinternet.com  
01227 761369

10

**Wessex Branch**  
Worplesdon, Surrey

Garden visits:  
am Frosbury Farmhouse  
pm Sarum

Andy Fly  
pinecroftgarden1@btconnect.com  
01903 742350  
07710 452870

14

**New Forest Branch**  
Spinners Garden

Garden visit  
Martin Gates  
mgates@talktalk.net  
02380 252 843

18-22

**North West Branch**  
Hampshire

Branch Tour  
Ted Brabin  
angela.brabin@btinternet.com  
0151 353 1193

23/24

**RHS / South West Branch**  
RHS Rosemoor

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

Georgina Barter  
georginabarter@rhs.org.uk  
020 7821 3142

Dr John Marston  
artavianjohn@gmail.com  
01271 323202

## MAY

1/2

**North West Branch**  
Ness Gardens

**Branch Show**

Ted Brabin  
angela.brabin@btinternet.com  
0151 353 1193

6-10

**RCM GROUP**  
Wisley

**Hillside Events Centre**  
Wisley and local garden visits.

**4 day Centenary Celebrations including the 2016 AGM**

David Millais  
david@rhododendrons.co.uk  
01252 792698

Sally Hayward  
schaywar1@btinternet.com  
01227 761369

14/15

**RHS**  
Harlow Carr

**RHS Late Rhododendron Show**

Georgina Barter  
georginac@rhs.org.uk  
or 020 7821 3142

## JUNE

18/19

**RHS**  
Wisley

**Plant Society Show**

David Millais  
david@rhododendrons.co.uk  
01252 792698

Sally Hayward  
schaywar1@btinternet.com  
01227 761369

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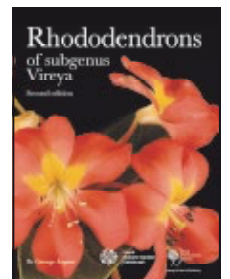
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Second Edition

**Peter & Kenneth Cox**

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

## PUBLICATIONS

03/16

Event updates to Alastair Stevenson please:

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Herefordshire HR9 7UL

alastairstevenson@mpaconsulting.co.uk

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