



the Rhododendron, Camellia & Magnolia group

Bulletin 124 / August 2017 / www.rhodogroup-rhs.org



CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

We seem to have had a remarkable flowering season, certainly in the South of the England. A mild winter, followed by a warm spring brought everything out early but, as I suspected, we wouldn't get through the spring without a frost, and what a frost it was. We awoke on the 26th April to -4°C , and after the extensive new spring growth, this resulted in the worst damage I have seen for 25 years. Over the next couple of weeks, long shoots turned brown then black. It took weeks of agency staff, but we pruned off all damage to prevent rot extending further down the stems. This also aids quicker shoot regeneration which was important with so many shoots lost. After a couple of weeks, it seemed that flowering was back to normal and mainly on schedule for the rest of the season.

One of the casualties of the warm early spring was the Wilson 50 exhibit planned at Wisley for the 13-14th May. Earlier in the year, Polly and Barry Cooke kindly stepped in and took over the running of this Show, and enlisted the enthusiastic Jo Scrivener from Isabella Plantation to help with his extensive collection of these beautiful evergreen azaleas. However, it soon became apparent that flowering was about four weeks earlier than usual and despite the best efforts of all concerned, few of them would be still flowering in time for the Show. Undeterred, Polly and Barry produced a fine set of photographs and posters about Ernest Wilson and his Azaleas, and these really complemented the wonderful displays of later flowering plants and the Group displays in the prominent marquee at Wisley. Matthew Biggs, of GQT fame, kindly opened the Show and presented prizes, and it was estimated that more than 2000 visitors passed through the exhibits, with many favourable comments and several new members joining up. Welcome!

Also taking place at the same time, was Christopher Legrand's tour to Yorkshire that he had organised on behalf of members. You will read about this elsewhere in the bulletin, but I would like to thank Christopher for his meticulous planning of his first trip, which was an outstanding success and much enjoyed by all those who attended. This was confirmed by a very high satisfaction rate in the feedback survey at the end of the tour. In the evenings, presentations were made of possible tours to

France or Germany next year, but members expressed a preference to visit the gardens of Northern Ireland, so we are actively investigating this for next year. (Please note, this was suggested before the recent DUP agreement!)



Rhododendron 'Hatsugiri' exhibited by the Ray Wood Volunteers, Yorkshire Arboretum, at the RHS Harlow Carr Show.

Photo: Peter Furneaux

The Rosemoor Show at the end of April just gets better and better, and many Southwest gardens had avoided the frosts that week, and brought some outstanding exhibits. The Show was the first ever event to be held in the wonderful new Garden Room at Rosemoor, and the natural lighting was a great improvement on the previous yellow tinted marquee; on

entry, the flowers just glowed on the benches. Because of its success, the Show draws more and more enthusiastic members from around the country, some of whom drive miles with their prize exhibits and collect some choice silverware at prize-giving. Rosemoor has become a great social place to meet up with fellow members from around the country, and is something to be encouraged. This year a good contingent from Surrey and Sussex met for a lively meal in Torrington on Saturday night. On Sunday morning, a good number travelled to Barnstaple to visit Dr John Marston's extraordinary collection of rare and tender plants collected from around the world (see photos on next page). This frost free garden developed from a cow pasture over the past 30 years with views of the sea was a treat indeed.

We need more members to collect seed from their rhododendrons camellias and magnolias for donation to the seed exchange.

Unfortunately as expected, insufficient members attended the AGM to form a quorum, so whilst in Yorkshire, we held a resumed AGM where those members present formed the quorum and we were able to conduct the business of the AGM and pass an amendment to our Constitution to lower the quorate needed. To date I am still awaiting formal acceptance by the Charity Commission. The full minutes of the AGM are published on the RCMG website, but in particular I would like to welcome Polly Cooke on to the Committee, and to thank her for taking over the role of Secretary, and thanks also to Dr John Marston who joins as a Trustee. Finally stepping down after more than 25 years on the Committee, a Trustee, and having been Treasurer for two long sessions, we bid farewell to Alastair Stevenson who has served us all so well for so long. Many, many thanks Alastair.



John Marston (above) and a sundial presented by the National Gardens Scheme. Photos: David Millais

Seeds

The RCMG Seed List is a wonderful resource to share seeds amongst members, and is really sought after by a dedicated band of enthusiasts around the world. For some, it is one of the main reasons for joining the Group. But the Seed List is dependent upon the generosity of members to donate seed from our three genera and other good garden plants. Without wild collected seed from the Himalayas, we really do need more members to take the trouble to collect seed from their gardens and to donate it so that it can be shared. Whilst hand-pollinated seed is best, as Barry Starling pointed out in his article in the last bulletin, lots of open pollinated garden seed will grow true

to type. So please spend some time in early autumn harvesting seed and send it to The Convenor of the Seed Bank, Julie Atkinson, 184 Crow Lane East, Newton-le-Willows, St Helens. WA12 9UA. Some cleaning, sieving and legible labelling would be most appreciated!

For more information, please see the website:
<http://www.rhodogroup-rhs.org/seeds/donors>

Yearbook Editor

Yet again, it is necessary to make an appeal for volunteers to take up the position of Yearbook Editor. Pam Hayward has now done the 10 years that she originally agreed to, and you should have recently received her final edition –superb again! Pam has produced a list of the activities that she has undertaken on our behalf, and whilst ideally we would like one Yearbook Editor, we would also welcome offers to help with various sections such as commissioning articles and reports, photo editing, securing advertisements, proof-reading, layout and publishing, liaising with printers and mailing to members.

We have an active membership, with so much life experience of these very areas that could be invaluable to the Group, so please consider helping with this exceptional publication. We do need more volunteers to help the Committee in this respect. Please contact David Millais david@rhododendrons.co.uk if you can help at all.

David Millais

The RCM Group Tour 2018

I am delighted to tell you about the 2018 RCM Group Tour. By popular request we have arranged a tour of Northern Ireland and the dates are now fixed from April 10th – April 13th 2018. These dates do not clash with the Group and/or RHS shows so please book the dates out.

A really exciting programme is in preparation which will be published shortly and includes private as well as public gardens all of which feature our specific genera.

We will be based at the Clandeboy Lodge Hotel near Bangor www.clandeboyelodge.com, and I have reserved a number of rooms and negotiated 3 night rates of £165 per night for dinner, bed and breakfast for (double or twin) and £125 per night (single occupancy).

Whilst I know that the dates are a long way ahead, it will be most helpful to myself and the committee in assessing the numbers if you can give an early indication of whether you would hope to be on the tour. If you would like to come or wish to be sent further information when it is available so please email me at clegrand@pirltd.org.uk

Christopher Legrand

Apology

Unfortunately an error crept into the Forthcoming Events Section of the March 2017 Bulletin.

The entry for the SW Branch visit to Penberth on the 5th April states that Penberth was formerly Trewidden. That statement is incorrect. To be clear: Penberth has no former or present association with Trewidden.

This confusion has arisen because Trewidden Nursery was taken over as a going concern by Sir John and Lady Banham of Penberth in 2016 and is now established at Penberth under the new name of Penberth Plants.

We apologise for this mistake and for any distress it may have caused.

Editor

Correction

I don't know whether anyone has picked up the "new cultivar" that featured in my article on Mt Lofty Botanic Garden (Bulletin 123). I took a photo of *Rhododendron facetum* and sent it via my i-phone. The i-phone did what i-phones have a tendency to do and altered it to *Rhododendron 'Face-Time'*. I did not notice it until reading the article and I hope it has not offended anyone.

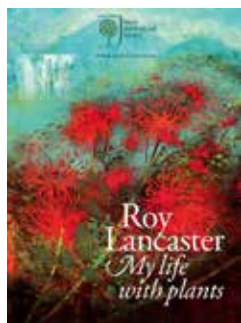
Robert Hatcher

Editor's Note

Copy date for the next Bulletin (number 125) will be October 2nd. In addition to the usual reports from Committee members I welcome letters from members on any aspect of our three genera. Please send your contributions to Lucton Court, Lucton, Herefordshire HR6 9PQ or peterfurneaux@gmail.com

Peter Furneaux

Book Review



Title: Roy Lancaster • My Life with Plants
Author: Roy Lancaster
Publisher: Filbert Press Ltd in association with the Royal Horticultural Society
Date of Publication: 2017 (Hardback) Size: near Octavo
ISBN: 978-0-9933892-5-2 Price: £25.00 (also exclusive RHS Edition with slipcase @ £35.00)

The eye-catching stylised coloured plant image on the front cover of this recently published title has had me guessing as to its true identity; hopefully my conclusion that it represents *Embothrium coccineum* is correct? I assume that Roy Lancaster is no stranger to our entire RCMG membership. For as long as I can recall - his name has been to the forefront in botanical and horticultural circles resulting from his engaging personality alongside his encyclopaedic plant knowledge, books, publications, media

exploits, lectures et al. However it did come as some surprise to learn that his considerable interests include worldwide fauna in addition to its flora.

This autobiographical account more or less brings his current life span of eighty years right up to the present moment and fulfils its initial promise of plants, people and places. His circle of friends and associates reads as a compendium of 'who's who' in the horticultural world covering some sixty-five years. It would appear that his initial introduction to catching the rhododendron 'bug' was the sighting of three vireyas (see p.88) in their Malaysian Cameron Highlands habitat during his period of National Service! For me the book contains a series of his life's anecdotes permeated with an obvious sense of humour presented against a background of useful plant information not readily and easily available elsewhere. As an acknowledged bibliophile I must admit that the chapter attracting my particular attention was mainly devoted to the preparation and publication of the 'greenback' edition of Hillier's Manual. I still recall the purchase of my own now well-thumbed hardback edition (576pp) in 1971 at the ginormous price of one pound and fifteen shillings (£1.75p). . . . and revised and illustrated editions are still proving an important text. I wholeheartedly recommend this title as a 'good read' which is presented in an easily absorbable style - interjected with a series of small coloured images many of which for me permitted putting faces to names from the plant world that have also been my contemporaries over a long period. It should have considerable appeal to anyone who has more than a passing interest in any plant genera. To summarise - it does much to enthuse horticulture as a career path.

John Sanders

Ivor Stokes, AOH

Many congratulations to our Vice Chairman, Ivor Stokes who received the Associate of Honour award from the RHS. The Associate of Honour "may be awarded to persons of British nationality who have rendered distinguished service to the practice of Horticulture either as employers, or employees during the course of their working career. The number of Associates of Honour may not exceed 100 at any one time."

This prestigious award recognises Ivor's huge horticultural contributions to plants and gardens including Clyne, from where he exhibited beautiful plants at Westminster shows, his position of Emeritus Curator at National Botanic Garden of Wales, an Assistant County Organiser for NGS, and of course his contributions to the RCMG. However, those who know him would suggest that Ivor's real contribution to horticulture is his infectious enthusiasm for both people and plants!

David Millais



Ivor Stokes receiving his medal from Sir Nicholas Bacon, President of the RHS. Photo: RHS



The Archery walk below the terrace at Harewood House.

Spring Tour Of North Yorkshire Gardens

Harewood House

Our first visit was to Harewood House. We were met by Jen Wood, who had responsibility for the walled garden and was keen to learn more about rhododendrons. We gathered at the side of the house for a brief introductory talk on the history of the house, the Capability Brown landscaping and the different elements of the gardens. Then we were led along the front of the terrace where there was an amazing border of tender plants, including *Magnolia grandiflora*, figs, *Pawlonia*, *Aralia*, banana and many others unexpected in North Yorkshire.

We then walked down through the Lakeside Garden to the Himalayan garden, which was the main focus of our visit. Here we were left to wander freely among a wonderful natural display of Himalayan plants (with the odd banana included!). The garden design made full use of a stream flowing through the valley along the banks of which grew copious primulas.

Of special note were *R. loderi* 'King George', *R. edgeworthii*, *R. coriaceum* (as labelled) and a particularly fine *Quercus dentata* with its huge shiny leaves.



Rhododendron edgeworthii



Rhododendron coriaceum (as labelled)



Quercus dentata



View from the bridge in the Himalayan Gardens at Harewood House. Photos: Richard Chaplin

After the Himalayan Gardens the group split up to enjoy other aspects of the gardens, the house and the café. One of the group discovered a book on “Chinese” Wilson for sale among second-hand books, whilst others visited the house and even an antique fair.

Richard and Mary Chaplin

Ray Wood

A cool, wet and windy morning was transformed as soon as we entered Ray Wood. Calm, quiet and at first glance a typical English wood, but glimpses of colour gave a hint of what was in store. Guided by Dr. John Grimshaw, Director, and Jonathan Burton, Manager of Ray Wood we set off and were soon in the thick of Jim Russell’s creation. Wow! A gentle introduction just got better and better. We were in prime rhododendron time and coupled with the bright greens of spring the overall effect was superb, startling, different, yet somehow quite natural. Highlights for me – John’s favourite spot above the grouped Pieris surrounded by Rhododendron colour, particularly *R. 'Butterfly'*. The ladies: ‘Yvonne Pride’, ‘Scarlet O’Hara’ and the unforgettably named ‘Zelia Plumecocq’. Tucked away was *R. 'Black Magic'* – the deepest red I have seen. *R. 'Loderi King George'*, just far enough away from the path to get a true perspective of its size yet still appreciate the scent. A *Davidia* in full glory in the heart of the wood, Snowdrop Trees in profusion and *Cornus 'North Star'* shining brightly.



Rhododendron 'Daydream'



Rhododendron 'Zelia Plumecocq'



Rhododendron 'Jock'



Rhododendron beanianum



John Grimshaw showing the group a young plant of *Stewartia pteropetiolata*. This and other plants, some from Vietnam, have been grown at Kew and planted out at Ray Wood. Photos: Peter Furneaux

This was my sort of garden and John was the perfect guide. “Nice red job over there” and “look how that fir complements this area” were typical and appreciated remarks. His enthusiasm and knowledge came across as did his concern for the future where funding for even basic maintenance seems in doubt. Fortunately our hierarchy were in earshot and I’m sure avenues of help may be opened. It’s a magical place – don’t miss it!

Chris Marwood

York Gate

Providing a real contrast to the morning that afternoon we visited York Gate, a one acre town garden in Adel, North Leeds.

The garden was designed and created by the Spencer family during the second half of the 20th century. Frederick Spencer laid down the bones of the garden and his wife, Sybil, was largely responsible for the planting. Their son, Robin, continued the landscaping work after his father’s death in 1963, making creative use of materials, with amazing attention to detail.

The garden contains a huge variety of perennials, shrubs and trees all looking extremely healthy in an entirely weed free environment! York Gate is now owned by the charity Perennial and run entirely by volunteers who not only maintain it to perfection but endeavour to retain the qualities set out by the Spencer family.



The clipped *Cedrus atlantica* at York Gate.



Further views of the garden at York Gate.

Photos: Peter Furneaux

The garden is divided by yew and beech hedges into a series of smaller gardens, each with its own theme and style. Yew, Cedar and Pyracantha are clipped into strong architectural shapes: it was the first time I’ve ever seen *Cedrus atlantica* clipped as an espaliered hedge! There are a number of fine specimen trees in the garden including *Picea breweriana*, *Cunninghamia*, and a mature fastigate *Betula*.

There were few examples of our genera but the garden is well stocked with unusual perennials and will surely be a blaze of colour later in the season. We were all delighted to wander around this gem in the warm sunshine enjoying the drifting scent of the Wisteria whilst marvelling at the high standard of horticulture, the superb use of natural materials, and then tuck into delicious tea and cakes!

Judy Hallett

Harlow Carr

We moved on to RHS Harlow Carr, once part of the Royal Forest of Knaresborough, where we were given a tour of the Woodland Garden by the Curator, Paul Cook. This area has been regenerated in recent years, by opening up the canopy and clearing the understory to create Rhododendron and Magnolia Glades. Paul has benefited from the advice of Jim Gardiner and Dr. John Grimshaw on different aspects of this project. Many young rhododendrons have been planted in these glades, in both the Woodland Garden and the Arboretum to the east of the site. It will be interesting to return in a few years’ time, to see how these plants have developed. Although Harlow Carr is in the shallowest of stream valleys, and thus presumably less sheltered from the wind than Ray Wood or the Himalayan Garden at Grewelthorpe (see below), the rhododendrons were clearly

thriving. We were told, however, that some *M. campbellii* had suffered from unexplained die-back.



Paul Cook, Curator of RHS Harlow Carr, showing the group the Magnolia Glade which is being replanted with this genus.



Some of the group enjoying *Rhododendron* 'Loderi King George'.



Enkianthus campanulatus 'Donardensis'.

Photos: Peter Furneaux

We admired some fine, mature Loderi Hybrids in full flower, their long, bare stems worn smooth by energetic young visitors to Harlow Carr (an effect easily achieved in one's own garden, given an adequate supply of grandchildren). *R. fortunei*, *R. decorum* and *R. galactinum* were among the species also in flower. We saw many other striking trees and shrubs, including a fine *Stewartia pseudocamellia* with

its beautiful bark and a notably floriferous *Enkianthus campanulatus* 'Donardensis'.

John Wotton

The Himalayan Garden, Grewelthorpe

We had heard or read expressions of excited interest in this garden. Nothing, however, could have prepared one for the opulence and splendour of the spectacle that greeted us – valley-sides clothed in rainbow hues, stretching enticingly down to the blue lakes and up towards the tree-covered ridges. The Himalayan rain that was falling seemed only to intensify the colours of the flowers and a pale green haze of emerging birch leaves added an extra glow to their spectrum.

Peter Roberts, owner and developer of the Himalayan Garden, described the opportunity which presented itself in this special environment with its acid soil, natural springs and frost-free microclimate when he embarked in 1996 on the transformation of hazel scrub into the magical 25 acre garden that exists today. (It may yet reach 50 or even 60 acres!) Planting begun in 1998 had proceeded apace and continues with undiminished vigour. 500 new trees and shrubs have been planted this spring alone.

Ray Abraham, the Head Gardener, and his colleague, Phil Cormie, then conducted the group through the garden, explaining the challenges of providing the appropriate locations for particular plants and ongoing efforts to avoid damage by deer and other animals. (Rabbits were no longer a problem but hares were still present and tolerated.)

Although we admired especially the rhododendrons – both the species, in incredible numbers (over 600 of them), and the many hybrids – other fine things have been planted, including scheffleras, embothriums, rare viburnums and bamboos, interspersed among the rhododendrons and azaleas, as well as a separate arboretum.



Rhododendron spinuliferum in bloom at the Himalayan Garden.



Phil Cormie talking to members of the group beside a fine specimen of *Schefflera impressa* GWJ 9375.

From among the many individual plants to which one could draw attention, let me merely mention personal delight in a superb *Magnolia* 'Sayonara', clumps of *Rhododendron exasperatum* displaying immaculate foliage and perfect habit, *R. oreotrephes* 'Bluecalyptus' looking equally perfect, a deep yellow *R. cinnabarinum* subsp. *xanthocodon* Concatenans Group, and a demure *R. cerasinum* 'Cherry Brandy'.



Rhododendron oreotrephes 'Bluecalyptus'.



Rhododendron cinnabarinum subsp. *xanthocodon* Concatenans Group.



A view of the lake and magnolia sculpture.



A 90 year old specimen of *Rhododendron* 'Loderi Venus' which records show to have been bought from the Crown Commissioners



Viburnum chingii



Rhododendron 'Markeeta's Prize'.



Magnolia 'Sunsation'.

Photos at the Himalayan Garden: Peter Furneaux

The collection will be even more satisfying when labelling catches up with the speed of planting – it is under way but at present often leaves the visitor in tantalising uncertainty. So far the planting of camellias is limited, but this is a garden very much in progress, to be visited again and again, to admire the new developments and to observe how the present planting matures. It is a garden with real vision and on a scale to match.

Brian Holt

Appreciations

Walter Schmalscheidt

The rhododendron world lost an outstanding hybrid expert on March 29, 2017. Walter Schmalscheidt died in his hometown Oldenburg in Northwestern Germany at the age of 86. Although few knew him personally, his long involvement with the rhododendron community leaves an important legacy.

From 1961 he worked for the Chamber of Agriculture in Lower Saxony as a horticulturist and became the driving force for the establishment of one of the largest rhododendron collections in Europe in Rostrup, Bad Zwischenahn, today a part of the 'Park of the Gardens', with more than 2,000 labelled and verified cultivars.

Walter was internationally extremely well connected; he kept careful records of his correspondence with rhododendron experts all over the world. In addition, his exceptional collection of rhododendron literature, including historic catalogues of rhododendron nurseries, is

a remarkable resource.

Walter Schmalscheidt wrote important and still pre-eminent books about the history of rhododendron cultivation and hybridizing in Germany. He continued to publish over fifty years, his work mainly concentrating on rhododendron cultivars. Group members might remember his contribution about the Seidel rhododendrons in Cynthia Postan's *The Rhododendron Story*.

He was well-known for the accuracy of his work: his articles about rare hybrids were full of detail, information which would otherwise have been lost without his meticulous research. Walter Schmalscheidt was a key supporter of the International Rhododendron Checklist and Register, working closely with the Registrar to provide information, mostly on German hybrids.

Since 1969 Walter Schmalscheidt was a member of the advisory committee of the German Rhododendron Society. In almost fifty years he hardly missed a meeting, always eager to discuss hybrid verification and the need to keep well labelled, highly maintained collections. He was a unique person and highly respected for his unrivalled knowledge about rhododendron cultivars.

Hartwig Schepker

Director of the Bremen Rhododendronpark & Botanic Garden and the executive director of the German Rhododendron Society



Walter Schmalscheidt at Schröder Nursery in May 2010. Photo: Hartwig Schepker

Martin Slocock VMH

Martin Slocock VMH who was the heir to a remarkable family of nurserymen, and served as Treasurer of the RHS for ten years, passed away on 4th June 2017.

Born in 1935, Martin was the third member of his family to receive the Victoria Medal of Honour. His grandfather, Walter Charles Slocock, received the VMH in 1916; he had taken over the Goldsworth Nursery, already well known as a tree and shrub nursery in 1877, and developed it into one of the country's most important rhododendron growers. His two sons, W.A. and O.C.A. Slocock, ran the nursery together, with Oliver concentrating on rhododendrons; he received the VMH in 1964. The third generation, first cousins John and Martin, eventually split the firm, both concentrating on rhododendrons; Martin received the VMH in 1973.

In 1976 Martin acquired the Knap Hill Nursery, formerly run by a branch of the Waterer family, and the Goldsworth site was turned into a housing estate. Knap Hill was already famous for its azaleas, and the site was eminently suitable for rhododendron growing.

He became a member of RHS Council in 1971, and served there for over thirty years. In that same year he joined Floral B Committee (later the Woody Plant Committee), the Rhododendron and Camellia Committee (of which he was Vice-Chairman from 1973 to 1991), and the Shows Committee. He was a regular judge of Rhododendrons at the Vincent Square shows.

David Millais

The Early Rhododendron, Main Camellia and Spring Ornamentals Show, 8-9th April

Due to the huge rebuilding project at Wisley, the Early Rhododendron Show in April was moved to Savill Gardens where we were made most welcome thanks to the wonderful efforts of John Anderson and Harvey Stephens and the team at Windsor Park. The marquee had been built in a great location for the public close to the restaurant, with easy access for exhibitors from the coach park, and a good supply of bacon rolls which are always popular with those setting up. The variety of exhibits was outstanding, and the ornamental plants section showed an eclectic range of rare plants from a number of leading gardens throughout the South East. The raised Chinese Pagoda just outside the marquee made an excellent podium to announce the class winners. The support from Windsor was most appreciated, and it is hoped that we can build on this success with another Show in 2018.

Results:

The Main Camellia Competition:

The Leonardslee Bowl, Trewithen Gardens

The Early Rhododendron Competition:

The Alan Hardy Challenge Salver

The Crown Estate, Windsor

The Spring Ornamental Plant Competition:

The Charles Eley Centenary Bowl

The Crown Estate, Windsor

David Millais



General view of the show at Savill.

Photo: Barry Cooke

Rhododendron, Camellia And Magnolia Group Show, Including The Centenary Cup Competition, Wisley 13th-14th April

For a report see the chairman's note on p.1



The Show theme, with Wilson's 50 Azaleas from the Isabella Plantation. Photo: Polly Cooke



Yvette Cooper, Keeper of the Herbarium, RHS Wisley, Richard Morton, Head Gardener, Trewidden and Matthew Biggs, broadcaster. Photo: Vanessa Penn



Magnolia 'Brooklynensis' exhibited by Brian and Iris Wright won Best in Class - Magnolia. Photo Vanessa Penn



Centenary Cup Winner, Brian Long of the Wessex Branch. Photo: Vanessa Penn



This unknown *Vireya* hybrid was exhibited by Robin Whiting and was the winner in the Tender Class and the winner of the People's Choice vote for the Centenary Cup. Photo: Polly Cooke



The Judges' decision. Winner of the Centenary Cup. Deciduous azalea: name unknown.

Photo: Vanessa Penn

RHS Main Rhododendron Competition RHS Garden, Rosemoor 22nd - 23rd April

The RHS Main Rhododendron Competition, in conjunction with the South West Branch Camellia, Magnolia and Floral Display competitions, was again held at Rosemoor. This year, we were in the splendid new Garden Room built on the site of the old marquee, but because of the addition of offices and ancillary rooms, the display space was not as large as it had been in previous years. This meant that the Floral Display Competition had to be held separately in the Lecture theatre, but there was signage between the two. Added to this was the fact that there was a very substantial increase of over 40% in the number of entries, making this a very well supported year. A great improvement over the old marquee was the large amount of natural lighting which did the glorious colours of the blooms justice - the old marquee produced a yellowish glow which was not flattering to the exhibits and made photography very challenging. We welcomed new entrants, which is also gratifying, among whom was NT Castle Drogo. It has been the first year for NT Killerton as well, who, having entered the early Spring competition, were enthused to enter again. From further afield, there were also entries from the Crown Estate, Windsor and Exbury Gardens as well as private individuals from other parts of the country. The weather was good and visitor numbers were very satisfactory as a result. Cups awarded were as follows:

The Main Rhododendron Competition:

The Rothschild Challenge Cup won by The Crown Estate with *Rhododendron argyrophyllum* ssp. *nankingense*, *R. falconeri*, *R. glischrum* ssp. *rude* 'High Flyers', *R. niveum*, *R. orbiculare* and *R. vernicosum*

The McLaren Challenge Cup won by Trewithen Gardens with *Rhododendron suoienhense*

The Roza Stevenson Challenge Cup won by Caerhays with *Rhododendron yunnanense*

The Loder Challenge Cup won by The Crown Estate with *Rhododendron* 'Chapeau'

The Crosfield Challenge Cup won by Colin Mugridge with his three unnamed crosses.

The South West Branch Camellia Competition:

The Williams Challenge Trophy won by Trewithen with a bloom of *Camellia japonica* 'Nuccio's Jewel'

The South West Branch Magnolia Competition:

The Quicke Cup won by Caerhays with a spray of *Magnolia* 'Caerhays Surprise'

The South West Branch Floral Display Competition:

The Colin & Mary Brown Cup won by Barry Starling with his beautiful informal arrangement of our three genera.

I feel a special mention should be made of Colin Mugridge's award of the Crosfield Cup which is awarded to three hybrids of the exhibitor's own raising. This is normally beyond the reach of amateur rhododendron enthusiasts and has been the preserve of the large gardens with hybridising programmes. Many congratulations to Colin for wresting it away and taking it up north. Our grateful thanks are extended to Diana Gilding and the staff at Rosemoor who once again made us very welcome. A very special vote of thanks must go to Pam and Sally Hayward on behalf of the South West Branch, and to Georgina Barter from the RHS Shows Department for their organisational skills in fitting all the entries in as well as dealing with all the paperwork and queries involved in setting up the show; a massive undertaking anyway, but especially so in an untested new exhibition space. There were inevitable hitches encountered in using the new building, but knowing these will enable us to produce an even better show next year.

John Marston



General view of the show at Rosemoor.



Winning spray of *Magnolia* 'Caerhays Surprise'



Colin Mugridge with the Crosfield Cup.

Photos: John Marston



Keith Rushforth presented with the Loder Cup by John Anderson, on behalf of the RHS in the new garden room at RHS Rosemoor.
Photo: David Millais

**RHS Harlow Carr Rhododendron Competition
May 13th-14th**

This year was difficult. About 2 weeks before the show we had horrible weather; after a warm start with no frosts everything was early, a fantastic bud set and all swelling. Then we had a very, very hard frost, strong icy winds, even hail. Not only was young growth and buds damaged but even last year's growth was scorched by the extreme cold. Only gardens with good shelter in the northern area would have had anything to show. I was the only private individual to exhibit and had to take the few blooms not damaged by the frost. Until the day before I thought I would have nothing.

Rudding Park Hotel entered a very few blooms, they have a fine old rhododendron garden with shelter. Ray Wood at Castle Howard entered quite a lot but not enough to create a show. The day was saved by the Crown Estate who brought a substantial number of fine exhibits. I was happy to get a second prize for my spray of *Rhododendron yunnanense* (first prize went to the Queen).

Marlene Storah



Rhododendron yunnanense exhibited by Marlene Storah



Rhododendron 'Tower Dragon' exhibited by the Crown Estate.



Rhododendron 'Olin O Dobbs' exhibited by the Crown Estate.



Rhododendron 'Dukeshill' exhibited by the Crown Estate. Above photos: Peter Furneaux

BRANCH REPORTS

North West England and North Wales Branch

Three events of note are worthy of mention - the first being the celebration of the new Penjerrick walk at Bodnant Gardens. The original walk was a favourite of Lord Aberconway but had suffered seriously with powdery mildew. The RCM group sponsored the micropropagation of the new plants, via the Duchy of Cornwall micropropagation unit. The new walk was opened on 11 April, in the presence of the Hon. Michael McLaren, Q.C., Helen Ghosh, Director General of the National Trust and Welsh T.V. presenter Iolo Williams, together with several of our colleagues from the branch and a large number of National Trust staff and volunteers. We look forward to seeing the new plants thriving.

The next event was the main Rhododendron show at Rosemoor, on 22 April. One of our members, Colin Mugridge, has been making deliberate crosses of numerous rhododendrons for many years, producing some lovely specimens. He decided to enter some in the category for plants raised from seed by the exhibitor, taking twelve of his crosses, most of which are not yet named. He was delighted to return to the exhibition hall after judging to find that he had won "First", "Second" and "Highly Commended" and in particular, the Crosfield Challenge Cup, quite the largest piece of silverware on the table and a well earned reward for the efforts of half a lifetime. See also John Marston's report of the Show above.



Ted Brabin presenting the Chairman's Award to Michael Reddington for exceptional service to the Branch.



Branch members, National Trust staff and others who attended the opening of the new Penjerrick Walk at Bodnant

The third celebration was the Group Chairman's Award to our Hon. Treasurer and Secretary, Michael Reddington, Mike has been the Hon. Treasurer since the branch was founded in 1990. In the last few years his wife, Ursula has taken over the Hon. Secretary's role from him but he continues as Treasurer. When Ken Hulme put forward his name for the post at the inaugural meeting Mike protested that he did not know much about Rhododendrons. Ken said that did not matter - it was his ability to add up that mattered! He has been adding up very accurately for twenty seven years and organised, with Ursula, most of our tours and branch shows. It was at this year's show that he received his certificate. The entire branch warmly thank him for his efforts.

Ted Brabin

RHS Rhododendron, Camellia & Magnolia Group Research Bursary

Building on our new charitable status, it was felt that the Group should be encouraging research into our three genera as part of its educational aims. A Research Bursary has been set up to fulfil this and makes a grant of up to a maximum of £1,000 available in any one year towards funding a relevant research project. Applications are submitted using a standardised form, and are considered by a panel of three scrutineers, and awards made if the research is considered to be relevant and well thought out. A stipulation of the Bursary is that the result of the research will be made known in a Group publication, or on the Group website, or both. It has been our pleasure to grant £500 to Harry Watkins from the University of Sheffield's Landscape department. He will be studying the extent to which Magnolia species can tolerate different urban environments in our changing climate and provide alternatives to the narrow selection of species of tree that landscape architects presently choose to be safe. We could see Magnolias planted more widely if they are shown to be tolerant of varied urban situations. Harry is working with the Sichuan Forestry Department to identify wild Magnolia populations that could be brought into our cities, widening the planting possibilities in our urban landscapes. More information on the project can be found by searching for 'magnolias' at: <https://cfde.co.uk>

John Marston



Harry Watkins has been awarded an RCMG bursary.

MEMBERSHIP *Rupert Eley*

We welcome our new members and hope they will enjoy all the benefits of membership of the Rhododendron Camellia and Magnolia Group.

UK

Mrs Sherry Tovey Broadwoodwidge, Devon
Mr Alan Pettitt Billingshurst, West Sussex
Mr Peter J Goodwin Birstall, Leicestershire
Mr Geoffrey J E Yates Milford, Surrey
Mr Mark Bobin Minterne Magna, Dorset
Mr Charles McCormick, London
Mr Rory Lunny Enniskillen, County Fermanagh
Joanne Everson Cuddington, Cheshire
Mrs Nicola Dollard Cornwood, Devon
Ms Myra Usher Effingham, Surrey
Ness Botanic Gardens, Ness, Cheshire
Mr Luke Holman Elstead, Surrey
Mr Lawson Ernest Rudge Morchard Bishop, Devon
Mrs J Austin Farnham, Surrey
Mrs Nuala Livesey Godalming, Surrey
Siu Choi Ealing, London
Mr J Peter Gellatly Sevenoaks, Kent
Ms Claire Price Sevenoaks, Kent
Mrs Wendy Curtis Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire

Ireland

Mr Charles Tindal Bruckless, County Donegal

USA

Mr Jeff Heon Sebastopol, California
Mr Chris Fallacara Levittown, New York
Cheryl Kearns Youngsville, North Carolina



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the Rhododendron, Camellia & Magnolia group forthcoming events



OCTOBER 2017

11th

Wessex Branch

Tea Room at Ramster 7.30pm

Talk by Rama Lopez on his foreign tours before he goes to Germany next year

18th

South West Branch

RHS Rosemoor Garden, Torrington 10.30 - 4pm

Plant and Book Sale, Quiz, Raffle etc. Talk by Russell Beeson on Botanical trip to SW China
£5 per person
Dr. John Marston,
artavianjohn@gmail.com

21st

North West Branch

Ness Botanic Gardens, 2pm

Steve Lyus
"J.D. Hooker, 200 years after his birth"

NOVEMBER 2017

11th

North West Branch

Ness Botanic Gardens, 2pm

Marcus Chilton - Jones, Curator "The new RHS Garden at Bridgewater, Salford".

DECEMBER 2017

2nd

Wessex Branch

Tea Room at Ramster 10.30am

Talk by Russell Beeson on Maddenias

JANUARY 2018

13th

North West Branch

Ness Botanic Gardens, 2pm

Tim Baxter, Botanist, Ness Botanic Gardens "Magnolias of Central America" followed by annual social.

FEBRUARY 2018

10th

North West Branch

Ness Botanic Gardens, 2pm

John Rippin, Head Gardener Bodnant Gardens
"Bodnant through the ages".

MARCH 2018

10-11th

RHS Rosemoor Show

APRIL 2018

7-8th

Early Rhododendron Show

YBA, Savil or Wisley

APRIL 2018

10-13th

RCM Group Tour to Northern Ireland
See Page 2

21-22nd

Main Rosemoor Show

MAY 2018

TBA

Harlow Carr Show

6-7th

North West Branch

Ness Botanic Gardens

Branch Show - Bulley Room

Event updates to Christopher Legrand please:

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