

THE RHODODENDRON, CAMELLIA AND MAGNOLIA GROUP

Registered Charity Number 1161254

Patron: HRH The Prince of Wales



Minutes of the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING held on Saturday 1st June
at 11.30 am at the Exbury Social Club, Exbury.

PRESENT:

Chairman and Trustee: David Millais, Trustees: John Marston and Barry Cooke, Treasurer: Jenny Fly, Secretary: Polly Cooke, Year Book Lead Editor: Barry Haseltine, Bulletin Editor: Peter Furneaux, Events Co-ordinator: Christopher Legrand, Outstanding Gardens Scheme Co-ordinator: Nick Butler, Committee Member: Jackie Butler, Independent Examiner: Russell Beeson.

Jay Andrews Moore, Mark Bobin, Sarah Bray, (Jeremy Bray), Trudy Breen, Pat Bucknell, (Peter Bucknell), Alison Clarke, Tom Clarke, Felix Cleverly, Andy Fly, Dick Fulcher, (Lorna Fulcher), Charles Funke, Martin Gates, Sarah Gilbert, (Francis Gilbert), Miranda Gunn, (Paul Gunn), George Hargreaves, (Sylvia Haseltine), Rosemary Howell, Jim Inskip, Tara Jameson, (Melvyn Jones), Mathias Kurstjens, Rosemary Legrand, Nick Lightfoot, Chris Loder, Rama Lopez Rivera, Gary Lovelock, Seamus O'Brien, Ros Rawling, (Aileen Rosendale), Ray Rosendale, Lionel de Rothschild, Alexander Shephard, Nuala Sterling, Alastair Stevenson, Joey Warren, Rod White, (Mary White), Robin Whiting.

A number of volunteers and staff from Exbury Gardens were also present.

Tom Clarke welcomed everyone to Exbury and drew attention to the itinerary for the weekend and handed over to David Millais. The Chairman began by congratulating Exbury on its Centenary; he thanked both Lionel de Rothschild and Tom Clarke for inviting the Group to share in their celebrations at Exbury and welcomed everyone present at the meeting.

1. Apologies:

Eric Annal, Rupert Eley, Jim Gardiner, John Grimshaw, Andy & Judy Hallett, Pam Hayward, Sally Hayward, Steven Lyus, Therese McKenzie, Graham Mills, John Sanders, Ivor Stokes, Jill Totty, Ross Underwood, John Wotton, Brian Wright.

2. Minutes of the Last AGM:

The 2018 AGM was held at Westonbirt Arboretum on 28th April 2018. The minutes published on the website were agreed to be a true record and were signed by the Chairman.

3. Matters Arising:

There were no matters arising.

4. Chairman's Report:

The Chairman gave a Power Point review of 2018. This started with a screenshot from the Group website showing the availability of the Agenda and all Reports for the AGM to members.

A recent photo of our Patron, HRH The Prince of Wales, with Ireland Branch Chairman, Seamus O'Brien followed. The photo was taken during a visit to the National Botanic Gardens at Kilmacurragh. Seamus reported that the Ireland Branch is at 16 members and growing.

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The presentation included the 2018 Group Tour to Northern Ireland, where 44 Group members enjoyed visits to six Irish gardens. Christopher Legrand reported that the 2019 Group Tour to the Lake District was a great success, although fewer members attended. He shared his thoughts for the 2020 Group tour as possibly being a visit to Brittany or a small group visit to New Zealand.

The review continued with International Branch Chairman, Rama Lopez Rivera, who accepted an invitation to attend the 16th Rhododendron Exhibition in China. Rama enthralled the meeting with his experiences in China and the speed with which the Chinese organisers had converted acres of farmland into a Rhododendron Park.

Dr John Marston, who takes responsibility for the Group's Bursary Scheme, gave a brief report on the scheme. He explained that previous Bursary recipients would contribute reports for the Group's yearbook and highlighted the need for improved publicity for the scheme which he is working on.

The Chairman thanked all of the Branch Chairmen for their work throughout the year.

5. Trustees Report:

The Chairman drew attention to this report, required annually by the Charity Commission, which is available on the Group website.

6. Treasurer's Report:

The presentation included the Treasurer's Report and Accounts and the Independent Examiners Report, both of which can be viewed on the Group website. The Chairman gave details of a recent investment with the M&G Charifund and also the importance of using our funds to fulfil our charitable objectives. There were no questions. The Chairman thanked Jenny Fly for presenting a good set of accounts, and Russell Beeson for examining them on behalf of the membership.

7. Membership Report:

The Chairman showed the Membership totals from 2015 to 2019 in his presentation. He continued with details provided by the Membership Secretary, including complimentary membership for HRH The Prince of Wales and corporate membership for Taranaki Regional Council in New Zealand. The Chairman thanked Rupert Eley and Marie Pertwee for their continued contribution in managing Group membership.

8. Plant Committee and Conservation Report:

The Chairman summarised the activities of the Plant Committee. He highlighted the Camellia species collection at Ness Botanic Gardens and called on Nick Lightfoot, from Ness, to update the meeting. Nick explained that 30 plants of 8 different species had been received by Ness and were doing well. He continued that more species were expected in the near future.

Nick Butler gave a brief report about the Outstanding Gardens Scheme, including the first Scheme award, made to Caerhays for Magnolia and presented at Rosemoor. He added that Awards for both Rhododendron and Magnolia have been made to Exbury Gardens and the presentation would be made later in the day.

The Chairman concluded by thanking Ivor Stokes for his contribution as Chairman of the Plant Committee. He advised that as Ivor was standing down at this meeting, the role of Plant Committee Chairman would be taken over by Pam Hayward.

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9. Publications Report:

The chairman showed the Yearbook editorial team in his presentation and called on Barry Haseltine to report on the Yearbook. Barry advised that the 2019 yearbook is at the distributors and should arrive in about a week. He stated that he will continue in this role for one more year and asked that a volunteer might shadow him for at least a part of the next year to gain insight. He added that if nobody volunteers, then there will not be a Yearbook in 2021.

Peter Furneaux gave a brief report about the Bulletin. The next edition is the largest of the three published, as it covers the shows and many events and visits, with copy date being 28th June.

The Chairman reported that the Group website is filled with information for members and regularly updated. He thanked Graham Mills for his contribution in running it.

10. Election of Trustee:

Alastair Stevenson has volunteered to become a Trustee replacing David Millais, who has completed his 4 years. Alastair was proposed by Barry Haseltine, seconded by John Marston and elected unanimously.

11. Election of Chairman:

David Millais reminded the meeting that he is standing down and that Graham Mills has volunteered to become Chairman. Graham was proposed by Rosemary Howell, seconded by Barry Haseltine and elected unanimously. Polly Cooke delivered a message to the meeting from Graham Mills.

12. Election of Vice Chairmen:

David Millais has volunteered to become a Vice Chairman. David was proposed by Alastair Stevenson, seconded Joey Warren and elected unanimously.

Barry Cooke has volunteered to become a Vice Chairman. Barry was proposed by Miranda Gunn, seconded by Nick Butler and elected unanimously.

13. Re-election of Officers for 2019-2020:

Secretary: Polly Cooke

Treasurer: Jenny Fly

Membership Secretary: Rupert Eley

Bulletin Editor: Peter Furneaux

Webmaster: Graham Mills

Events Co-ordinator: Christopher Legrand

Advertising Officer: Stephen Lyus

Year Book Lead Editor: Barry Haseltine

Group Archivist: Pam Hayward

Outstanding Gardens Scheme: Nick Butler

Without Portfolio: Jackie Butler

All were proposed by Tom Clarke, seconded by Rosemary Legrand and elected unanimously.

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14. Election of Independent Examiner:

Russell Beeson has agreed to continue in this role. He was proposed by Ray Rosendale, seconded by Rosemary Legrand and elected unanimously.

15. Any Other Business (of which notice has been received)

Polly Cooke asked Charles Funke to come to the front. Charles then explained a little of his recent visit to the Rothschild Archive and how looking down at the roof garden from the 14th floor had reminded him of the need for the lightweight compost he had developed. He had enjoyed his visit to the Archive so much that, as a thank you, he presented Lionel de Rothschild with a leather bound copy of 'The Rhododendron Story', which Charles had been instrumental in publishing. Lionel thanked Charles and expressed his appreciation of such a wonderful surprise.

The Chairman asked if there were any questions. Dr Nuala Sterling asked about the Group's current relationship with the RHS. The Chairman replied that it was satisfactory but continuity was sometimes difficult due to staff turnover.

16. Venue and Date of the next AGM:

The next AGM will be held at Bowood, the date to be advised.

The meeting concluded at 12.40pm

The Centenary Cup Flower Show was held in the Five Arrows Gallery on June 1st & 2nd. This was arranged and run by Pam and Sally Hayward in conjunction with Exbury. The judges for this were Seamus O'Brien, Head Gardener at the National Botanic Gardens, Kilmacurragh, David Koning, Head Gardener at Dargle Glen, Co Wicklow and Alex Slazenger, Head Gardener at Powerscourt, Co Wicklow

At 2.15 pm in the Five Arrows Gallery, the winner of the Centenary Cup Competition was announced. Seamus O'Brien presented the Cup to Sarah Bray of High Beeches for her entry of *Chionanthus virginicus* in the Ornamental tree or shrub in bloom class. This was followed by the presentation of the Certificates and plaques for the Outstanding Gardens Scheme awards for both Rhododendrons and Magnolia to Lionel de Rothschild and Tom Clarke. David Millais then presented Lionel de Rothschild with Magnolia Centennial as a gift from the Group to mark Exbury's Centenary. He then presented a rhododendron to Lionel de Rothschild as a thank you for hosting the Group. He also presented Jenny Fly and Polly Cooke with Rhododendrons to thank them for their work in the past year.

Following the Garden tour and the Buffet meal, David Millais presented a second rhododendron to Lionel de Rothschild (Lionel's Triumph) and a rhododendron was given to Pam Hayward to thank her for her contribution. Rod White then presented David Millais with an "IOU". As a mark of thanks for his contribution to the Group and for his 5 years as Chairman, Rhododendron 'David' will be delivered to him as a gift from the whole Group.

The evening lectures followed these presentations and the weekend concluded with a behind the scenes look at Exbury glasshouses and archives on the Sunday morning.