The Royal Horticultural Society

The Rhododendron Story

200 Years of Plant Hunting and Garden Cultivation

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TO THIS ONLINE EDITION

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RHODODENDRON, CAMELLIA & MAGNOLIA GROUP

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Rhododendrons are promiscuous. Such an anthropomorphic statement cannot be judgemental but we can be grateful that they are so; quite what rhododendrons would make of us with our families of hybridists is another question. It is certainly true that the history of hybridization is written in blood lines, with the same families of rhododendrons and the same families of people occurring generation after generation. The obvious reasons – that gardens and nursery businesses tend to be handed down from father to son and that the crosses of one generation may not appear until the next – are not, I think, the only ones to explain the peculiar fascination exerted by the possibility of breeding something new: a case of exergi monumentum, perhaps, or as James Mangles wrote over a hundred years ago, 'It may almost seem, for instance, a profanation to think of refining the ineffable delicacy of R. veitchii, or gilding the golden glory of R. javanicum, and yet I do not envy the cultivator who has no ambition to leave his own mark among his flowers, for the sake of science as well as for his own.' (The Gardeners’ Chronicle 9.4.1881). It sometimes seemed to me, as I researched this article, that there were few cultivators indeed who lacked such an ambition: the problem has been, quite literally, to see the wood for the trees. If, therefore, I omit someone’s favourite hybridizer or hybrid or insert others deemed less worthy, I would ask the reader to forgive it as the lottery of the author’s memory and the threat of the editor’s red ink.

The 19th Century
By common consensus the first hybrid was an azaleodendron, *R. ponticum* x *R. periclymenoides* at Mr Thompson’s Mile End Road nursery at the turn of the 19th century: the result, now known as ‘Odoratum’, was recorded in the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh by 1814 and won an Award of Merit (AM) in 1994, surely the longest delayed recognition to date! While this hybrid has always been spoken of as
an accident, I prefer to believe it was deliberate (cf. R. Gorer *RYB* 1980-81).

Azaleodendrons, popular at the time, represent something of a genetic dead-end (not least because they are usually sterile, 'mules'), though one to which we shall return. Purposeful breeding of rhododendrons began in the second quarter of the 19th century with a handful of major species. The dates of their introductions vary from source to source, so I shall pick one while well aware that another article in this issue may well give another. For our purposes the most important species were *R. maximum* (1736), *R. ponticum* (1763), *R. caucasicum* (1803), and *R. catawbiense* (1809) and to a lesser extent, *R. dauricum* (1780), *R. campanulatum* (1825) and *R. barbatum* (1829). These rhododendrons all introduced certain characteristics: for example, *R. catawbiense* had great hardness and a good habit; *R. maximum* was late flowering and hardy, as well as giving the distinctive blotch on the upper lobe so beloved by Victorian hybridizers; *R. ponticum*, as we all know, adapted to its new surroundings all too well; *R. caucasicum* flowered earlier and for longer; *R. campanulatum* introduced a different shape to the flowers; *R. dauricum* flowered even earlier but had to wait until 1853 for its lepidote groom *R. ciliatum* for its moment of glory in 'Praecox' (I Davies; cf. Bean for parentage error in Register).

However, while some crosses were made between these species, such as 'Everestianum', 'Album Elegans' and 'Roseum Elegans', or occurred naturally, the single most important species was *R. arboreum*: to some extent the early history of hybridization can be seen as combining the colour of *R. arboreum* with the hardness of the rest. The blood-red *R. arboreum* was first seen by Captain Hardwicke in 1796 in Kumaon (of Corbett's man-eating tigers appropriately enough) and this magnificent rhododendron was not introduced until about 1809-10 (Davidian) and did not flower until 1825 at The Grange, Alresford. The pollen was used the following year by J R Gowen (later Secretary and Treasurer of the RHS) for the second Earl of Carnavon of Highclere to produce 'Alaclerense' (the latinization of Highclere, now orthographically corrected, in line with *Ix* 'Alaclerense') from a *catawbiense x ponticum* hybrid. Two other crosses were figured in the same year (1831) as 'Alaclerense', namely 'Smithii' (*arboreum x ponticum*, made both ways, possibly containing *R. maximum*, possibly syn. 'Cornish Early Red'), made by William Smith, gardener to the Earl of Liverpool and later nurseryman at Norbiton, and 'Russellianum' (*catawbiense x arboreum*), of which an enormous clump, under its synonym 'Southamptonia', graces the lawn at Exbury House. From this point hybridization took off, with much back-crossing to reinforce the hardness.

Carnavon may well have been inspired by his younger brother, Rev. William Herbert of Spofforth (later Dean
of Manchester), a man of considerable learning who urged, among other things, the use of *R. maximum* to promote later flowering. Herbert himself made several crosses, notably the azaleodendron ‘Hybridum’ (*viscosum x maximum*, 1817), ‘Jacksonii’ (*caucasicum x ‘Nobleanum’ or *arboreum*, 1835; W Jackson & Co probably also raised a similarly named hybrid and there is some confusion) and ‘Aprilis’, said to be *ponticum x dauricum*, 1843, but Gorer (*op. cit.*) thinks *R. caucasicum* more likely in these cases rather than breaching the elepidote-lepidote divide.

One of the more adventurous hybridizers was William Smith, mentioned above: he (presumably) made ‘Smithii Album’ (probably again *arboreum x ponticum*, there being white forms of both; the later similar cross ‘Boddaertianum’ [Van Houtte, intro. 1863, probably *arboreum x ponticum or ponticum* hybrid, not *canpanulatum x arboreum* as registered, cf. Bean] is particularly wonderful in the garden as I write these words); he certainly made ‘Venustum’ (‘Nobleanum Venustum’, *caucasicum x arboreum*, 1829), which my grandfather thought ‘easily the best of that hybrid...a much clearer pink than the dull form which is sometimes exhibited’ (RYB 1953). Smith was also responsible for some highly popular yellow azaleodendrons, notably ‘Norbitonense Aureum’ and ‘Norbitonense Broughtonianum’ (both *maximum x ponticum* x *molle*, syns. ‘Smithii Aureum’ and ‘Broughtonii Aureum’) in the 1830s.

Many other firms were active (for example Lee & Kennedy, and Loddiges, notably associated with *ponticum*) but pride of place must go to the extraordinary dynasty of Waterers. I shall not attempt a detailed exposition of the Waterer family tree: suffice it to say that there were eventually two branches, running nurseries at Knap Hill and Bagshot, and that I shall differentiate between generations with regal numerals, as in the excellent Note on the family in Bean by G Donald Waterer, a paradigm of clarity.

Thus after Michael I (1745-1827) and II (c. 1770-1842), ownership split with Bagshot going to Michael II’s younger brother John I (1784-1868), thence to his son John II (1826-93) and then to his sons John III (1865-1948) and Gomer (1867-1945) (who ended up back at Knap Hill); Knap Hill went to Michael II’s youngest brother Hosea I (1793-1853), thence to his nephews Anthony I (1822-96) and Robert Godfrey and then to Anthony I’s sons Anthony II (c. 1850-1924) and briefly Hosea II (USA)(1852-1926). Easy really.

The Waterers had what has been termed a ‘collective anonymity’ (F Street) and while there may have been some differences of approach – PD Williams, for example, noted that ‘the elder Anthony relied principally on hybridization, while the younger usually preferred to breed by selection’ (*R. Soc. Notes* Vol. II No. V, 1924), they shared the basic aim of the hardy hybridist, ‘to raise plants that were
hardy, sturdy and shapely in growth, so that when not in flower they were good-looking shrubs, whilst the flower-heads, to satisfy the requirements of the time, were to be large and full, the flowers holding themselves up, of good substance, the colours pleasing, and, most important of all, they were not to expand before June’ (Watson). Hardiness was the pre-eminent desideratum for the Waterers, a belief reinforced, I think I read somewhere, when an entire crop of *araucarias* was lost to frost in the 1850s.

The first flower of note I shall mention is not in fact late-flowering: ‘Nobleanum’ (*caucasicum × arboresum*) was raised by Michael Waterer II by about 1832; it is almost certainly *not* named after Charles Noble of Standish & Noble as Standish was born only 15 years earlier and Standish & Noble commenced trading only 15 years later (cf. Bean and Willson). This and another *R. caucasicum* hybrid, ‘Christmas Cheer’, are still widely planted for early colour, as is ‘Lee’s Scarlet’. His brother John I of Bagshot produced ‘Lady Eleanor Cathcart’ (*maximum × arboresum* [or *x* ‘Altacleronase’ type hybrid, cf. Bean]) in the late 1830s; like his youngest brother Hosea I of Knap Hill, who made some ‘judicious’ crosses with *R. catawbiense*, he believed in using *R. arboresum* as the pollen parent to achieve later, frost-free flowering. Smith of Norbiton also found that F₁ hybrids with *R. arboresum* as seed parent were less beautiful and more sensitive to cold than the reverse crosses (Focke, referred to in Bowers). Of course, as F Street has pointed out with regard to *R. arboresum*, *R. griffithianum* and *R. yakushimanum*, when these plants were initially introduced and were still rare, pollen was available but not plants so they predominated as male parents. These and other nurserymen made hundreds of hybrids, crossing, re-crossing and back-crossing. They made excellent use of what we would regard as limited resources; it should be added that then as now far too many cultivars were named and introduced as fashionable ‘new’ plants each year – but business is business.

Rhododendrons were highly fashionable. I have in front of me some documents from the Rothschild archives. First, there are letters to my great-great-grandfather, N M Rothschild (NM) from Conrad Loddiges & Sons of Hackney and Lee & Kennedy of Hammersmith from as early as 1814 onwards: most of them concern NM sending plants to his brother Amschel in Frankfurt; though rhododendrons are not mentioned specifically, both firms were active in that field (RAL). It is also amusing to note similarities in any business: NM’s father Mayer Amschel wrote to his son, ‘They say the lack of order would make a beggar out of a millionaire’ (RAL 1805); J C Loudon wrote in reproof of Michael Waterer II, ‘We never knew a nursery or market garden, where any money was made that was not kept orderly’ (*The Gardener’s Magazine* 1829, quoted in Willson). Then there are
two lists; because the names in both are quoted directly from documents from a period when there was considerable confusion and variability, I have not attempted to regularize the spelling and typography to modern standards of nomenclature – all names are *sic*. The first is of Camellias, Rhododendrons and Azaleas at Ferrières in 1850 (whether they are being imported or exported is not absolutely clear), owned by NM’s brother Baron James de Rothschild; he was credited as having ‘encouraged the introduction of these hybrids into France, and large consignments of these splendid standard Rhododendrons were exported there, and this example was imitated by many others’ (Henry Knight, *The Gardeners’ Chronicle* 25.8.1881). This pre-dates his use of Paxton to remodel the château, so ‘the taste English’ was already evident. The list includes some 31 rhododendrons, among which are ‘Aureum de Smith’, ‘Altaclarenses’ ‘Campanulata’, ‘Cinamomeum’ and ‘Nobleanum’. The second is an invoice to NM’s son Baron Lionel de Rothschild (that is Lionel of Exbury’s grandfather) from Waterer and Godfrey, Knap Hill Nursery, dated 11.12.1856, for Kalmias, Azaleas and Rhododendrons totalling £37 7s 6d, including 19 different rhododendrons, among which are ‘Cunningham’s White’, ‘Pictum’, ‘Multi Maculatum’ (still admired by Gertrude Jekyll many years later), ‘odoratum’, ‘Catawbiense’, ‘Jackmanii’ (pre-dates Methven entry in Register), ‘Rusellianum’, ‘Lucidum’ and ‘Isabel’. The most expensive are ‘Standards’, 6 for £9 9s 0d. There is also ‘Victoria Van Houtii’, so trade went both ways. The bill from Waterer for the five years 1856-61 totalled £89 7s 0d. (RAL)

I have gone into some detail in order to show how thriving the businesses were in a relatively short time. In 1849, however, another transformation took place: seed started arriving from Joseph Hooker’s expedition to the Sikkim-Himalaya and publication commenced of his beautiful drawings. In all he introduced some 45 new species (Macqueen Cowan, RYB ’49), including *R. campylocarpum*, *R. ciliatum*, *cinnabaratum*, *R. dalhousiae*, *R. edgeworthii*, *R. falconeri*, *R. grande*, *R. griffithianum*, *R. maddenii* and *R. thomsonii*. Much of the seed was distributed by Kew to private gardens, which now become of increasing importance (see chapter 5).

Six years later the first Chinese rhododendron arrived, *R. fortunei*, discovered by Robert Fortune on an expedition to find new varieties of tea. This coincided with debate about the virtues of *R. arboreum* and it is interesting to note the reaction of the nurserymen of the day. The firm of Standish & Noble was one of the great rivals to Waterers. Standish had already done some hybridization at Bagshot Park under Andrew Toward before the partnership commenced in 1847; it was dissolved in 1856 – ‘two suns could not stand in the same horizon’, said Standish. Standish retained an older site at Bagshot Bridge and then created a new nursery at Ascot; Noble remained but started work that
winter on a new site (the present Sunningdale Nurseries) near the railway station (cf. *The Gardeners’ Chronicle* 4.11.1882).

In 1850 they contributed a chapter on hybrids to *The Journal of the Horticultural Society* (reproduced in Watson) in which they detail their back-crossing, ‘By crossing the American species again with the first hybrids, such as Altaclarense (sic), &c., we have still retained the rich tints of the Indian kinds, with all the hardiness of the American;’ they also claimed these new hybrids bloomed young and late in the season. The terms ‘American’ and ‘Himalayan’, incidentally, came to be used quite loosely as well as polemically; even quite late in the period, owners talked of creating an ‘American garden’ when referring to an area set aside for rhododendrons (cf. *Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener* 31.8.1871 and *The Gardeners’ Chronicle* 2.2.1904 with regard to the ‘American garden’ at Combe Royal – of which more later and see chapter 4 – which contained both ‘American’ and ‘Sikkim’ rhododendrons). They then comment that ‘the wider the cross the more healthy the progeny, and that breeding “in and in” produces weak . . . constitutions’. Here they cite an F₁ cross of *caucasicum album* (*ponticum album x caucasicum*) called ‘Bride’ (wrongly described in Register but correctly described under ‘The Bride’, with which it appears to be in synonymy); further selfing of it was a failure. They then list their second generation crosses (i.e. the third generation), showing they were aiming at distinct ‘sections’ of hybrids, though few I think now survive with the exception of ‘Bride’; ‘Standishii’ (*ponticum x maximum* x ‘Altaclarense’, according to this document, *pace* Register) was used for some hybridizing, chiefly by Sir Edmund Loder (‘Dame Nellie Melba’, ‘Leonardslee Giles’). This is not the same as the white *griffithianum* hybrid ‘Standish’ (Register with one ‘i’; erroneously in Bean Note with two ‘i’s); it is registered under Veitch but whether it is theirs named in his honour or one of his later crosses introduced by them, I cannot tell. In 1855 there was again discussion on *arboreum* crosses in *The Gardeners’ Chronicle*; they reproduced their remarks in their catalogue (extracts in Russell, RYB 1947 and in *R. Soc. Notes* Vol. III No. II, 1926), ‘Now it is well known that seedlings from, or even once removed from *arboreum* are not suited for general culture’, again on grounds of blooming too early in the season and only after 20 years, and they go on to say, ‘In the Sikkim Rhododendrons we have the material for giving new features to succeeding crosses.’ The merit of back-crossing with the other parent or of having *R. arboreum* only as grandparent is almost exactly reproduced 120 years later in the criticism of the first *R. yakushi-manum* crosses.

One new cross was ‘Ascot Brilliant’, put out by Standish in 1861 after his move to Ascot; it is probably the first *R. thomsonii* hybrid (S&G have ‘Blandyanum’ as the seed parent) and it is reported that this
species first flowered in (the old) Standish & Noble’s greenhouse in 1857, probably grafted onto old standards to ‘speed things up’. While their expertise with species was considerable, handling Fortune’s ‘sendings’ and offering 24 different Sikkim rhododendrons in The Gardener’s Chronicle in 1853 only three years after their introduction, it is less likely that their other most famous cross was similarly speeded up: ‘Cynthia’ was put out under that name by Standish and under ‘Lord Palmerston’ by Noble, both in 1860, and was therefore probably made a few years prior, say before 1856 (dissolution), before the first flowering of R. griffithianum in 1858 in Wandsworth (griffithianum was first offered for sale by Noble in 1858 too and won an FCC for Standish in 1866). It is generally regarded, therefore, as a R. catawbiense hybrid and the R. griffithianum parentage can be discounted; it was once second only to ‘Pink Pearl’ in general popularity.

It is at this point that something of a divergence occurs between the nurserymen and the amateurs. Tenderness continued to be the chief concern of the nurserymen: they made some use of R. griffithianum but were only really satisfied at several generations removed, when they had built on and developed their existing lines of hardy hybrids; they also made use of the Madde- nia subsection for avowedly tender plants (as well as Vireyas, which are dealt with separately in this volume, see chapter 7).

To both these we shall return. Frank Kingdon-Ward (On the Roof of the World. From the late 1940s he hyphenated his name; for simplicity I have done so throughout.) later wrote of griffithianum, ‘There is an ethereal quality about the enormous bell flowers – their vital milk-whiteness, their careless rapture of form, their exquisite effortless grace as they hang clustered from the leafy shoots, their subtle fragrance – which defies description.’ (He had a good go!) James Mangles of Valewood (1832-84) was quick to grasp the importance of griffithianum. He was as much influential for his writings as for his breeding: Millais called him ‘the High Priest of the Rhododendron cult’, as well he might when one remembers Mangles’ explanation of an exasperating failure, ‘[there are] certain atmospheric moments for the union of vegetable species . . . Never try such things when an east wind is blowing.’ This is not to say he only enjoyed the rôle of vates, for he was keenly scientific too: ‘It is indeed a problem for Rhododendron growers to solve to throw colour into the white Sikkim, and especially the scented species. Mr. Darwin alludes to “the singular fact that white varieties generally transmit their colour much more truly than other varieties”’. (The Gardeners’ Chronicle 7.6.1879). And again, ‘As we advance, Nature is always presenting fresh problems for solution. So much the better, provided we arm ourselves with intelligent and industrious research, and German concentration, to meet the emergency.’ (ibid 19.7.1879).
His influence carried on a generation later: J C Williams, for example, wrote that ‘a constant reading of all I could get together of what Mr. Mangles had said and written pressed me into crossing species rather than hybrids . . . seeing . . . that apparently the more he crossed species and the less he admitted mixed blood, the more even was the quality of the flower, drew me more to the policy which he followed’. (R. Soc. Notes Vol. III No. II, 1926). In the period of what J C Williams called ‘almost limitless species’, pedigree was to become all-important.

In practical terms, too, Mangles’ contribution, especially with *R. griffithianum* crosses, was important. There is considerable confusion in the literature on some of the parentage – as this writer has found all too often – so I have not shown all the guesses. It also seems likely that a couple of the crosses attributed in the past to James were made by James’ brother Henry Mangles (d. 1908), another rhododendron enthusiast; it was to Littleworth Cross, owned by Henry and his sister Clara (d. 1931) that some of James’ collection moved after his untimely death. James won the first award for a *R. griffithianum* cross with ‘Alice Mangles’ (*x* ponticum, FCC 1882); his ‘Isabella Mangles’ (*x* unknown) was much admired by Millais and his ‘Beauty of Littleworth’ (*x* campylocarpum?), raised by Clara to win an FCC in 1904, looks especially splendid on the main path of the Home Wood at Exbury (see figure 12). There is also an enormous group of ‘Loder’s White’ (see figure 13) in the Winter Garden at Exbury: this famous plant came to Sir Edmund Loder via F D Godman of South Lodge, though J Mangles’ original consignment also included some of Luscombe’s hybrid seedlings, so authorship is uncertain. Parentage is even less certain: the Register entry (*arboream* subsp. *cinnamomeum* var. *album* *x* *griffithianum*) has been widely discounted but the latest suggestion of (*Album Elegans* *x* *griffithianum*) *x* ‘White Pearl’ (Cox, Hillier Manual and S&G) seems unlikely given that ‘White Pearl’ (syn. ‘Halopeanum’, *griffithianum* *x* [*arboreum* *x* *maximum]*) was only introduced into commerce in 1897 (cf. Bean). Better of itself than as a parent, its best offspring is probably ‘C.I.S.’ (*x* ‘Fabia’). Finally there is ‘Mrs Randall Davidson’ (*x* campylocarpum), which though superseded by ‘Penjerrick’ is still a lovely plant (cf. Lady Adam Gordon RYB 1976); a sister seedling, *‘Mrs Kingsmill’,* won an AM when exhibited by Clara in 1911, when described as creamy white, now in commerce as pale yellow.

Henry Mangles was almost certainly responsible for that fore-runner of ‘Royal Flush’, ‘Rose Mangles’ (*cinnabarimum* *x* *maddenii*); several others were named, including the hardy yellow ‘Primrose Queen’, renamed ‘Hethersett’ in 1962 by Lady Adam Gordon, who has restored some of his garden) and for one of the most enduringly beautiful and striking though reputedly demanding azaleodendrons, ‘Glory of Littleworth’; indeed it is
probably still one of the best known azaleodendrons, though I hope the lovely 'Martha Isaacson' (Ostbo, pre-1956) gains in popularity.

Moving further west, John Luscombe of Combe Royal was another gentleman hybridist: he was particularly famous for his citrus collection, winning the Banksian medal for an exhibition of them in 1827 and presenting a 'magnificent basket' of fruit to the Queen in 1850. He was a friend of James Mangles, who wrote of him 'there has been no more enthusiastic Rhododendron grower' (The Gardeners' Chronicle 19.3.1881) and he was one of the first to use R. fortunei, which first flowered in his garden (1866), to produce 'Luscombei' (x thomsonii, exh. 1880), 'the fame of which' wrote Mangles appropriately, 'has reached German science' (ibid). It is still a lovely flower (see figure 14) and a cross repeated and 'improved by Sir Edmund Loder in 'Pride of Leonardslee' (using the same fortunei as for 'Loderi') and by my grandfather in 'General Sir John du Cane' (using subsp. discolor). He was probably also responsible for the griffithianum hybrid 'Coome Royal' (for some unknown reason spelt with two 'o's in all reference books) which in turn was the seed parent for the ever popular 'Mrs G. W. Leak' as well as 'Mrs Charles E. Pearson'.

Moving yet further west, we come to what was soon to be the epicentre of the rhododendron world, Cornwall. No other county can grow such tender plants with impunity nor can boast of so many fine rhododendron gardens. Captain Tremayne of Heligan crossed blood-red R. arboreum with R. griffithianum to produce 'John Tremayne' and 'Mrs Babington'; my grandfather made reference to both parents being good forms and used both on occasions at Exbury. He wrote of the R. griffithianum that it was 'a very fine form indeed which has been sent out by Smith, of Guernsey, and which I believe was Mangles's original variety and was used by Sir Edmund Loder in his famous 'Loderi' strain' (RYB 1953). He also commented that 'the form known as "roseum superburn" largely used by Lowinsky, a form which he obtained from Gill, produces very tender offspring and ... the form used by Mr. George Johnstone is also much too tender for northern gardens.' (ibid). The cross was made several times elsewhere (Tregrehan: 'Carlyon's Hybrid' or 'Carlyon's Cross'; Scorrier: 'Scorrier Pink') but most notably by Richard Gill (1849-1927), who was gardener at Tremough and then set up his own nursery business on land leased from the Shilson family. This much decorated grex – one FCC and five AMs at a recent count (W Magor RYB 1982-83) – includes 'Beauty of Tremough' (FCC 1902), 'Gill's Triumph' (AM 1906), 'Gill's Goliath' (AM 1914), 'Glory of Penjerrick' (AM 1904) and 'Glory of Leonardslee'. He used the good form of R. griffithianum, which he called R. aucklandii roseum superburn (mentioned by Lionel, above), which Mrs
Shilson had been sent by a friend from a plant in the Italian Lakes, and did so extensively, especially as a seed parent. He also made ‘Shilsonii’ (thomsonii x barbatum; Loder made the reverse cross in ‘Nestor’) and raised many R. arboreum and R. barbatum seedlings and crosses between the two. Finally, he crossed ‘Kewense’ with R. thomsonii: because of its similarity to ‘Pride of Leonardsee’, Lord Aberconway (as H D McLaren, R. Soc. Notes Vol. III No. III, 1927) suggested Gill might have used R. fortunei as seed parent (‘Richard Gill’ is registered as such), but also noted the latter hybrid’s slightly smaller flowers and deeper edges to the petal. Be that as it may, a fine plant was named ‘Aurora’ by Lionel in 1922, won an AM and was seed parent to two of the more famous of his early crosses, ‘Naomi’ (LR108, x fortunei, named after his younger daughter) and ‘Yvonne’ (LR112, x griffithianum, named after his sister-in-law).

At Penjerrick, under the supervision of Robert Fox and his son Barclay Fox (1873-1930), Samuel Smith as head gardener from 1889-1935 made only 11 crosses but with an extremely high success rate – an object lesson perhaps to indiscriminate hybridizers. Lord Aberconway wrote that this record is all the more remarkable when one considers that he had ‘no knowledge of the science of heredity and... but rare opportunities of visiting other gardens, of discussing his work with other hybridisers or of obtaining pollen from far afield. Close observation of the qualities of a flower, and fine judgment in selecting the parents, have evidently been the mainspring of this success.’ (As H D McLaren, R. Soc. Notes Vol. III No. IV, 1928.) He was one of the first to make second generation Himalayan crosses, putting the pollen of Gill’s ‘Shilsonii’ onto blood-red R. arboreum to make ‘Cornubia’ (so named by Gill; Smith subsequently named the best of this cross ‘Liliani’ cf. W Magor RBV 1981-82), and that of ‘Glory of Penjerrick’ onto R. thomsonii to make ‘Barclayi’. ‘Cornish Cross’ (thomsonii x griffithianum) has always been popular and was remade by my grandfather using a different form of R. griffithianum (‘Exbury Cornish Cross’); ‘Wreci’, after Robert Were Fox (arboreum album x barbatum cf. W Magor) was much admired by Millais. However, his most famous cross was ‘Penjerrick’ (griffithianum x campylocarpum var. elatum): both Smith himself, emphatically (quoted in W Magor’s article) and Lord Aberconway (op. cit.) were in no doubt that R. griffithianum was the seed parent, so I am puzzled why the Register and later reference books show the reverse. I am less sure that because var. elatum is not specified, it was therefore Hooker’s dwarf form, as Magor infers (the same as ‘Mrs Randall Davidson’ et. al.); my grandfather (RYB 1933) was in no doubt that it was var. elatum, and its different colour forms would fit with his observation (RYB 1953) that var. elatum throws yellows, pinks and whites whereas Hooker’s gives ‘constant
pale yellow.’ Of course, this is an horticultural rather than a scientific distinction; P Cox (Larger Species) notes there are many grades between the two.

What is in no doubt is that it was an influential and beautiful hybrid: Aberconway considered it ‘that most lovely of all rhododendrons’ (RYB 1947) and planted a whole grove at Bodnant. He thought one reason for ‘the effectiveness of the planting’ at Penjerrick was that two-thirds of the rhododendrons were of but five kinds (arboreum, ‘Barclayi’, ‘Penjerrick’, ‘Cornish Cross’ and ‘Liliani’/‘Cornubia’); this clearly points the way to the mass plantings of the same rhododendron so beloved by many of the next generation of gardeners, including my grandfather and taken to its most spectacular conclusion by the serried ranks at Mount Congreve. Aberconway also compared the ‘well-filled conical truss’ of the Bagshot catalogue, which ‘has it’ on the show bench, to ‘the shower of drooping bells’ of ‘Cornish Cross’, ‘Barclayi’ or ‘Penjerrick’, ‘where one truss seems to melt into the other [and] has a beauty . . . unobtainable with the other type of flower.’ (R. Soc. Notes op. cit.). This again is a clear pointer to trends in taste and to some disparity of approach between the great gardeners and the great nurserymen. The importance of the best form as parent, with so much greater choice now becoming available, was to become paramount; but before leaving Cornwall – to which we shall return – for the blue blood lines of ‘Loderi’, it is as well to remember that Nature can produce the occasional fine hybrid too and that Carclew boasts one of the finest in ‘Sir Charles Lemon’, which my grandfather (RYB 1934) thought was probably a hybrid between campanulatum and arboreum subsp. cinnamomeum. It delights me every year.

Human as opposed to natural selection was taken a step further by Sir Edmund Loder. I have already mentioned ‘Pride of Leonardslee’ and ‘Nestor’; the former cross was also repeated in ‘Betty’ and ‘Hullabaloo’. Millais wrote that his ‘greatest successes were those obtained by mating species or hybrids that were near one another in specific character and habit . . . success was more or less certain in the case where a “dominant” species, such as R. griffithianum, R. thomsonii, R. fortunei, R. barbatum or R. caucasicum, was used in conjunction with another species closely allied . . . or with a vigorous hybrid that did not contain a strain of an undesirable species’. (R. Soc. Notes Vol. III No. II, 1926).

He also noted that certain ‘apparently good’ hybrids ‘often had a tendency in the second or third generation to throw up some bad strain which in the plant itself was hidden, and which only appeared as the result of hybridisation’ (ibid): an example of this hybrid-induced variability might be his ‘Sussex Bonfire’ (haematodes x ‘Cornish Cross’). Certainly Sir Edmund used the best possible forms of species available for his most famous cross, ‘Loderi’: the seed parent was a good form
of *R. fortunei* in his own collection; the pollen came from the good *R. griffithianum*, already mentioned above, in his neighbour F D Godman’s greenhouse at South Lodge. The cross had been made before, at Kew (‘Kewense’) in 1874 but the parent plants were poorer and the results less spectacular; now in 1901 (both dates from *R. Soc. Notes* Hybrid Register of 1926; Bean differs) Loder made systematic use of his material in three batches, twice with *R. griffithianum* as male parent giving 60-70 per cent success rate and once in reverse with only 12 per cent success. They first flowered in 1907 and continued after his death in 1920: many have been named, of which some of the finest are ‘King George’, the later flowering ‘Venus’ (the original plant came to Exbury) and ‘Pink Diamond’. At a recent count ‘Loderi’ had won two FCCs, three AGMs and five AMs and to my mind, while I concede there may be too many named clones (I realise I am using the word ‘clone’ with historical accuracy but botanical inaccuracy; perhaps the word ‘sibling’ should be used more widely), it richly deserves the accolade of most decorated hybrid (W Magor RYB 1982-83) and represents something of an apogee in 19th century hybridization and indeed hybridization to date – and it has fragrance!

‘Loderi’ has been much used for further hybridization. Within the grex there is ‘Princess Marina’ (‘King George’ x ‘Sir Edmund’), and ‘Olga’ (‘Pink Diamond’ x ‘King George’; not to be confused with Slocock’s ‘Olga’), and the F₁ cross made at Townhill, ‘Julie’, the nearest to a yellow Loderi. ‘Pink Diamond’ produced ‘Sunkist’ (x *griffithianum*), ‘White Lady’ (‘Halopeanum’ x), ‘Ruthelma’ and ‘H. Whitner’ (x ‘Cornish Cross’), the latter named after the gardener. In other crosses the exact clone is unspecified: one of the finest whites is ‘Snow Queen’ (‘Halopeanum’ x ‘Loderi’), a plant of which I am particularly fond; ‘Halopeanum’ was also used (x *thomsonii*) for ‘Gem’ and ‘Leonardslee Brilliant’. Other members of the family have also raised or registered some Loderi crosses, notably ‘Seagull’ (x *sutchuenense*, Lady Loder), ‘Mrs C. Whitner’ (‘Snow Queen’ x ‘Sir Edmund’, Sir Giles), ‘Cretonne’ (Barclayi’ x ‘Loderi’, Sir Giles) and ‘Sarita Loder’ (*griersonianum* x ‘Loderi’, Col G H Loder). Finally, it is certainly no accident that one of the finest yak crosses, ‘Seven Stars’, is with ‘Loderi’ (‘Sir Joseph Hooker’ x *yakushimanum*, Crown Estate).

Now we must return to the nurserymen but first not to the hardy hybrids but rather the opposite extreme, the tender rhododendrons. This was the era of the glasshouse, or stovewhouse as it was sometimes called, when plentiful labour tended vast quantities of bedding plants to be planted out each year in complicated patterns. They also tended a dazzling array of hothouse and indoor plants and the Vireyas and tender rhododendrons were extremely popular. The better known of
these include 'Princess Alice' (edgeworthii × ciliatum, Veitch FCC 1862), 'Countess of Haddington' (ciliatum × dalhousiae, Parker FCC 1862), 'Countess of Sefton' (edgeworthii × 'Multiflorum', I Davies 1877), 'Lady Alice Fitzwilliam' (possibly edgeworthii × ciliatum or, less likely, formosum, Fisher FCC 1881) and 'Fragrantissimum' (edgeworthii × formosum, Rolli son FCC 1868). We shall return to tender hybrids in the 20th century and, of course, one man's tender is another man's hardy but by and large these are conservatory plants or at best plants for sheltered positions. What is notable about this list, I think, is the high proportion of FCCs, in part reflecting the premium put on scent in a largely unscented genus; it is also notable that every one has a different raiser or exhibitor – in this field, unlike Vireyas (Veitch) or hardy hybrids (Waterer) no one name dominated.

This is not to say that others did not try. Standish and Noble have already been discussed in detail and I think it fair to say that neither flourished in the same way after separating, and Noble’s ‘Prometheus’, one of the better reds of the period (‘Michael Waterer’ × ‘Monitor’, the latter named after the ‘ironclad’ Union battleship), was propagated only in Harry White’s day and was used as a parent (x ‘Doncaster’ of ‘Madame de Bruin’. G Paul raised a whole series of R. forte nei hybrids, highly regarded by William Watson, but he is better known for the parent he used, ‘Sir Charles Butler’ (syn. ‘Mrs Butler’, widely thought to be a form of fortunei though J Street imputes hardy hybrid blood). This has often been used as a parent: for example, x ‘Halopeanum’ by Van Nes to produce the delightful ‘Mrs A.T. de la Mare’, the even better ‘Admiral Piet Hein’ and finally ‘Van Nes Sensation’, which in turn produced the spectacular Australian hybrid, ‘Colehurst’ (registered fortunei subsp. discolor Houlstonii Group x; though pollen parent might be ‘Admiral Piet Hein’ or unknown [cf. Cox]). Paul is also remembered for ‘Essex Scarlet’, which having good colour and being late flowering has also been a useful parent, notably for the ‘Elisabeth Hobbie’ grex (x forrestii Repens Group).

Isaac Davies has already been mentioned in connection with ‘Praecox’; he is probably also responsible for ‘Stanley Davies’ (1890), best known as the pollen parent of ‘Britannia’ (Van Nes). Ivery is remembered for ‘Ivery’s Scarlet’ (incl. arboreum and ponticum, 1850), which we have at the top of the Home Wood. At the same date Cunningham of Edinburgh introduced another old stand-by, ‘Cunningham’s White’ (caucasicum × ponticum var. album), a rhododendron of such versatility and hardiness, it tolerates cold, pollution and even some alkalinity; it is much used as rootstock for grafting in Germany, in preference to R. ponticum. Methven is another Scottish name that should not go unmentioned (for example the aptly named ‘Leopardi’, one of the earlier introductions to the USA). Another old
rhododendron which is still popular for its unusual colour is 'Lord Roberts' (*catawbiense* x, Fromow 1900 [Bean] or Mason [Register]; the former took over part of the latter's nursery in 1894).

European hybridizers were also influential. Work on the continent spanned the same range from tender ('Suave', 'Sesterianum', 'Victorianum') to hardy and some of the latter are still common: I have already mentioned the lovely 'Boddartianum' and 'Halopeanum' (a good parent); 'Fastuosum Flore Pleno' (*catawbiense* x *ponicum*, Francoisi pre-1846) is a versatile semi-double bluish mauve and 'Helene Schiffner' (*arboreum* x, Seidel FCC 1893) is one of my favourites, strikingly pure white. Two which are often linked are 'Prince Camille de Rohan' (*caucasicum* x, possibly incl. *maximum* and/or *arboreum*, raised Van Houtte [F Street] or Waelbrouck [Bean] int. Verschaffelt 1855 [Bean] or 1865 [Register]) and the darker 'Chevalier Felix de Sauvage' (*caucasicum* x, Sauvage c.1870); the latter was the pollen parent of 'Mrs G.W. Leak' (Koster, 1916 [Register] or later [Cox]) which, while definitely not my favourite, is much admired by visitors. We shall see more of these heavily blotched pinks in the next century. Finally, a few of Otto Schulz's crosses were named and put into commerce by Van Nes of Boskoop, notably 'Mrs A.M. Williams' and 'Queen Wilhelmina' (both *griffithianum* x, int. 1896); the latter was the seed parent (x 'Stanley Davies') of a number of Van Nes' stable, of which the finest is 'Britannia', in turn parent of 'Kluis Sensation' and 'Leo'. I do not think there are obvious generalizations to be made on the continental hybridizers though it is said they used *R. maximum* more for hardiness – the British liking the quicker turnover of generations available with *R. ponticum* and *R. catawbiense* – and they made much less use of *R. ponticum* as rootstock.

The number of generations, which were sometimes accelerated into as little as four years by grafting the seedling tops onto *R. ponticum*, as Standish & Noble did, meant the nurserymen could make maximum use of the proliferating characteristics of multiple crosses from a limited number of parents. Bean argues that they did not really achieve their aim of putting the glowing red of the best *R. arboreum* onto a late-flowering, hardy plant because the 'blue basis to the flower' was never entirely absent. Purity of colour became more important: Gertrude Jekyll, for example, prized 'Bianchi' (named after an Italian motor car) for its pure pink; my grandfather and others of his generation eschewed magenta, that bluish tinge in red from *R. ponticum* and *R. catawbiense*.

I think finer reds came later with *R. griersonianum*: the greater 19th century achievement, and particularly that of the Waterers, lies in the deep red to purple range or those that have exploited the other characteristics, the flares, the blotches, the speckles; *R. arboreum* played little or no part in many of these. Where
specific attribution has been made it is noted; otherwise the ‘composite personality’ to which G Donald Waterer refers (Bean Note) must suffice; the dates give some indication. At the lilac end of the spectrum is ‘Lady Grey Egerton’ (catawbiense x [or perhaps maximum x, Cox] A Waterer pre-1888), a colour apparently shown to good effect under canvas; it was used by Slocock as pollen parent for the beautiful ‘Lavender Girl’ (fortunae x). At the other extreme are ‘Old Port’ (catawbiense x, A Waterer before 1865; S&G indicates another in commerce in the USA, possibly R. ponticum x, deeper purple without blotch) and ‘Cetewayo’ (perhaps ponticum x, A Waterer before 1883); of the latter, J Russell wrote that ‘a large bush has all the melancholy dignity of a superb prune mousse.’ The most popular and striking purple is ‘Purple Splendour’ (ponticum x, incl. catawbiense and maximum, A Waterer II before 1900): with its sumpuous colouring, it really is the standard for these dark purples, as well as being the parent of that fine and unusual Reuthe hybrid, ‘Sonata’ (x dicroanthon). Another favourite of mine is ‘Frank Galsworthy’ (ponticum x, A Waterer), with its bold yellow flare, named after the flower painter brother of the novelist. One of the so-called ‘ironclads’ is ‘Caractacus’ (catawbiense x, A Waterer FCC 1865); Hosea II emigrated to Philadelphia and his father shipped 1,500 hybrids to exhibit in the 1876 Centennial Exhibition, doing much to popularize rhododendrons in general and ‘ironclads’ in particular in the USA. The Waterer links with the USA had started in about 1850 when Knap Hill sent plants for the Capitol House grounds (cf. Willson). One of their few obviously red arboreum crosses is ‘Doncaster’, a good compact red, popular in itself and as a parent, including four of the (yakushimanum x) Seven Dwarfs.

Moving away from the darker colours, ‘Lady Clementine Mitford’ (maximum x, A Waterer 1870) is a pale peach-pink, darker at the edges, and in ‘Picotee’ (probably ponticum x, A Waterer; not to be confused with Veitch’s ‘Picotee Roseum’ FCC 1863), as the name suggests, the pink edging is more pronounced. Anthony I admired the blotched or spotted upper petal (mainly from maximum), which he thought gave form and substance: this type of orchidaceous-looking hybrid continued in the next century but the finest in this century and perhaps of them all, and certainly the most famous 19th century Knap Hill hybrid, is ‘Sappho’ (possibly maximum x [S&G] or ‘Smithii Album’ x [Cox], before 1867 though the name was used earlier for a rosy crimson hybrid).

Moving to the Bagshot branch, again there was a fine range of hardy hybrids along much the same lines. ‘Chionoides’ (ponticum x, possibly incl. maximum, J Waterer pre-1886 [Register] or 1865 [Bean]) is a reliable late white – F Streeter’s favourite white in fact – and ‘Mum’ (maximum x, 1897, very near to ‘Maximum Album’) is another, though less common
now. ‘Joseph Whitworth’ (ponticum x, J Waterer pre-1864 [Bean]) has been described as ‘purple lake’ or ‘deep maroon’, a colour more fashionable then than later though the trend now, with so many new hybrids, must be towards greater catholicity; plummy colours and plummy accents may finally converge! Two of the first really late-flowering R. arboreum hybrids, ‘John Waterer’ and ‘Mrs John Waterer’ (probably incl. R. ponticum and R. catawbiense) were introduced by them in 1855 (Bean, who gives this early date and possible parentage, calls the Register entry ‘certainly erroneous’ but he is mis-reading for ‘John Walter’ on the line above!); they may be siblings. One of the few occasions when floral fiction did follow genealogical fact was with ‘Donald Waterer’, which is ‘Alice’ x ‘Gomer Waterer’ – all three good rhododendrons. The latter, made by John II before 1900, is a catawbiense x, according to J Street including ‘Madame Carvalho’ (catawbiense x, like a white form of catawbiense, J Waterer 1866) and griffithianum; the former, a griffithianum x, might be a seedling of ‘Pink Pearl’.

This brings us to the most famous
hardy hybrid of them all, 'Pink Pearl' itself, raised by John II and first exhibited by Gomer at the Temple Show in 1896, winning an AM on its introduction the next year and an FCC in 1900. Its parentage is generally now described as 'George Hardy' x 'Broughtonii', following the note in Gomer's papers, but 'Cynthia' has also been posited as the putative seed parent, the two having some similarities. The compact habit would support the former as father but against that, 'Broughtonii' does flower rather early compared to 'Pink Pearl': we may never know (but see below). In any event, it has been extremely popular, as well as commercially named and represents something of a summit in hardy hybrids in general and R. griffithianum crosses in particular. The one notable characteristic of R. griffithianum which eludes it, scent, is present in its sport 'Mother of Pearl' (int. 1925): this plant – named for its colour rather than its relationship! – has not proved quite as popular as its famous parent, though it apparently looks good under electric light and my grandfather, for one, while noting that 'comparisons are odious', preferred the latter and thought it would replace the former (JRHS LXV, 1940).

To this writer it has sometimes seemed that the Waterers did dominate the hardy hybrids of the latter part of the 19th century; certainly Millais, in Volume I of Rhododendrons (1917), listed 484 hardy hybrids raised in Europe and at that time obtainable of which 292 came from the two Waterer firms. It is arbitrary to make a divide at the end of the century, for hybridization continued, but I think it true to say that there was a change. Nurserymen, particularly in Holland, built on 'Pink Pearl' or looked to other lines – the Hooker introduction campylacarpum for yellow, for example. The great garden owners used mainly the old Himalayan rhododendrons and continued to do so but, while there was some new collecting in the latter part of the century, particularly by French missionaries or officials (augustinii, for example, introduced in 1900 and providing a whole new range of blue), it was in the early part of this century that they were to be faced by an unprecedented flood of new species. 'Loderi' and 'Pink Pearl' do represent ends and new beginnings.

The problem for the writer also changes. This has been an exercise in gathering facts: who crossed what with what to produce what and when. On any given plant I have found at least one of the secondary source books, or compendia (Bean, Cox, S&G, Register) differs on at least one of the variables! I have generally taken a majority vote or, in the case of dates, I have tended to go for the earliest. I am well aware that the reason was often due to lack of records or deliberate secrecy, though some apparent contradictions are less easily explicable – Luscombe, for example, is called John in one part of Bean (p.824), Thomas in another (p.872) and 'G.' in the Register! I do not feel I have
always yielded Ockham’s Razor to such a Gordian knot particularly effectively, thus the preponderance of ‘p-words’ – perhaps, probably, possibly, putative. We were recently visited by an eminent scientist from Kunming, Xiao Tiaojiang, who has been working on genotyping camellia species. From this he can ascertain parentage, including whether the role is male or female: while this is still in its relative infancy, I hope that by the next Jubilee Edition some of the genealogies will be more accessible to cytology than they were to my research. In the end, of course, some secrets may never be yielded up and, besides, the flower’s the thing.

Looking towards the 20th century
In the 20th century the records are better though not perfect but the main problem is the sheer number of plays and players – dozens of hybridists facing hundreds of species and making thousands of plants in ever increasing dizzy complexity. And it is that which I shall deal with next time.

Towards the end of the 19th century it seemed to some as if not much remained to be discovered; at the beginning of the 20th it seemed as if the supply of new species would never stop. Sir Joseph Hooker, introducer of the first wave, correctly forecast the second when he prophesied in 1890, ‘the genus will probably exceed all previous estimates the Chinese empire may contain more species than all the rest of the world beside’ (quoted in B L Urquhart): in the second decade of the century, 312 new species were added, more than the total number described until 1900. To stem this flood Sir Isaac Bayley Balfour hurriedly erected his taxonomic dam: this was meant to be flexible and temporary but proved so popular with gardeners that it soon became codified – some would say ossified – into a system. We have now had the great revision of 1980 and another is in process: to ‘lumpers’ and ‘splitters’ alike I can do no better than quote one of Sir Joseph Hooker’s first biographers, Leonard Huxley, on the subject, ‘Man had not found what Nature indeed had denied, a common standard for differentiation between species, varieties and transitional forms; nor an independent basis for that abstraction, the specific type, so useful as a label, so dangerous as a determinant.’

Because the flow of plants has opened out into a flood-plain, it is hard to follow a single line, though several key species were used again and again. To *R. fortunei* and *R. griffithianum* were now added *R. discolor* and *R. decorum*, the former much used by my grandfather because of its late flowering; *R. calophytum* produced some fine early flowering hybrids. *R. thomsonii* remained popular for red and *R. campylocarpum* became so for yellow, as did the new arrivals *R. wardii* and *R. lacteum; R. williamsonianum* was much used for smaller hybrids – ‘none more lovely than it, but some making better plants for the average garden’ (Bean; most of this section is drawn from Bean, by the way; a source far
too under-used in the literature). *R. neriiflorum*, *R. haematodes*, *R. forrestii* Repens Group and *R. sanguineum* subsp *didymum* produced most of the smaller reds and *R. dicroanthum* introduced orange (and passed on its double calyx). *R. elliottii* and *R. facetum* (*eriogynum*) were used for later-flowering reds but it is *R. griesonianum* which was king of its day – 155 hybrids and 48 awards in the 1969 *Handbook* Pt II, a record probably still only surpassed by *R. yakushimanum*, which came into its own after the Second World War. *R. auriculatum* was used for lateness.

The stream – to continue this over-used metaphor – had now divided into two clearly defined parts, lepidotes and elepidotes, with far more crosses, even proportionately, among the latter; Bean notes that lepidotes ‘are less indulgent to the hybridiser . . . and seemingly unpredictable,’ which he ascribed to their ‘greater botanical diversity, and the prevalence of polyploidy’ (cf. E K Janaki Ammal’s article and chart in RYB 1950 ). Across the great divide, then, *R. augustinii* was much used for blue. *R. moupinense* produced some good smaller hybrids, as did the more tender Ciliicalyx-Alliance (*ciliatum*, *burmanicum*, *valetianum*); *R. fletcherianum* has had more use for dwarf yellows in recent years (I note *R. fletcherianum*, *R. thayerianum* and *R. websterianum* have all had their ‘is restored after an impassioned plea by Professor W Stearn at the Berlin conference – the ‘is had it, as it were!’), as have other smaller species such as *R. ludlowii* and *R. hanceanum* and *R. keiskei* (of the last two, especially Nanum Group and ‘Yaku Fairy’ respectively; I am told some believe Nanum may be a hybrid). Finally my favourites – *R. cinnabarinum* was crossed with *R. maddenii* and then back-crossed with *R. cinnabarinum* or Concateners Group once or even twice; *R. cinnabarinum* (and Concateners) was also crossed with *R. yunnense*. ‘Loderi’ was of course the most popular hybrid used.

So there you have it, the main lineaments of inter-war crosses and indeed not only were surprisingly few species used surprisingly often but the older Himalayan introductions were of enduring importance – ‘Naomi’, ‘Carita’, ‘Yvonne’, ‘Lady Chamberlain’, ‘Lady Rosebery’ and ‘Lady Berry’ are all from Hooker introductions and *R. fortunei*.

It was to the Cornish gardens that many of these seeds first came; they and other great gardens helped fund the expeditions and to both patrons and explorers of all periods we owe a debt of gratitude . Two of the loveliest of all commemorate sad and horrible ends: Lady Dalhousie of *R. dalhousiae*, whose husband as Governor-General of India had been so helpful to Hooker, died of seasickness on the way home; Père Soulié, who first discovered *R. souliei*, was tortured to death in the Tibetan uprising of 1905. On a more cheerful note, in Lionel’s case it is rather nice to think that where his great-grandfather had made a fortune from the
transmission of specie, he spent one on the collection of species.

The main thing was and still is that it should be fun. J C Williams, the grand old man of his generation, advised Collingwood Ingram (considering his longevity perhaps the grand old man of his), 'Start hybridizing rhododendrons. It's the greatest fun. You get ten, fifteen, perhaps even twenty years of pleasurable anticipation, and only one day of disappointment – the day your seedlings open their first flowers!' (in Collingwood Ingram, RYB 1967).

And the same thing, though with rather more emphasis on a serious, scientific line of approach, was written by F C Puddle, 'I am personally convinced that indiscriminate matings are of little value, and it is only by a close study of pedigree and a scientific application of that knowledge that we can make real progress step by step towards our ideal. Even then we are speculating on possibilities, for hybridisation does not necessarily result in an equal mixture of the two parents, but rather a re-grouping of the characters derived from them. We rarely obtain our desires in one mating, so we go on from generation to generation ever seeking that elusive ideal, 'Perfection.' (RYB 1933).

Or as Browning wrote,

'Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
Or what's a heaven for?'

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Edmund and grandson of the older Lionel.
He has grown up at Exbury and all the
plants he writes about have been familiar to
him from his earliest childhood. As well as
writing on gardens he is a keen garden
photographer.
Figure 12 (top): R. ‘Beauty of Littleworth’ in the Home Wood at Exbury, one of James Mangles’ best hybrids.
Figure 13 (above left): R. ‘Loder’s White’, a beautiful hybrid whose authorship is uncertain. Figure 14 (above right): R. ‘Luscombe’ bred by and named after John Luscombe of Combe Royal in Devon (see Chapter 10)
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