As somebody who spends most of his time in London, I was disturbed to see a recent BBC report on a threat to Plane trees (Platanus) including the London Plane and its parents P. orientalis and P. occidentalis. Reading through the relevant Forestry Research Pathology Advisory Note, I realised that this was not a new story but rather a re-hash of a long-acknowledged set of complex concerns surrounding fungal diseases impacting on a number of the Plane family members. I took a crumb of comfort from these reports that at least a way of blaming rhododendrons for spreading these diseases had not been found!

However, the issue did get me thinking further on the subject of Plant Conservation and Protection, with the impact of Phytophthora ramorum and P. kernoviae still being felt across the country in terms of garden access, plant movements and actual plant losses. What should or can the RCM group do to help? The two questions are: should the RCM group be more focused on the conservation of species and cultivars across the three genera and if so what steps should we take? As many of you will recall we have already had some experience with support for the micropropagation of some less well known rhododendron varieties and it could be argued that this type of work should be expanded across the three genera in order that plants of the rare, unusual, hard to propagate, unfashionable or non-commercial type could be made available to established plant collections as some form of insurance policy against extinction. The problem with this course of action is that inevitably the number of plants produced will be in excess of those necessary to fulfil the ‘insurance policy’ and consequently these additional plants will need to be fed and watered by someone and then appropriately disposed of. The surplus plants could of course be made available as an adjunct to the existing Surplus Plant List although this would still leave the issue of looking after the plants pending their distribution. Furthermore it does not take much imagination to see that the Group would be drifting towards the actions of a commercial nursery; this is an area that I do not believe we wish to venture into as it hardly sits well with the aims of the RHS itself.

Turning to the subject of plant competitions, it seems likely that, with the assistance of the RHS Shows Department, we will be holding a Late-Flowering Rhododendron Competition. This will permit the more modern hybrids to be displayed, something the traditional show timings have not allowed. Please keep an eye out for more details on this, especially those of you in the northern counties.
At his centenary lunch celebration, he quoted what he described as an old proverb: ‘To be happy for an hour, have a glass of wine. To be happy for a day, read a book. To be happy for a week, take a wife. To be happy for ever, make a garden.’

He was appointed CBE in 1965. In 1987 he was awarded a Veitch Memorial Medal by the Royal Horticultural Society, and in 2001 a Gold Medal (for a Great Garden of the World) by the Botanic Gardens in Boston, Massachusetts.

Ambrose Congreve was in London for the Chelsea Flower Show in May 2011 where he died on the Tuesday night. His wife died in 1995, and there were no children of the marriage. He is survived by his companion of many years, his former secretary, Geraldine Critchley.

(With acknowledgement to the Daily Telegraph)

Obituary - Nigel Holman

It is with sadness that I have to report the death in October of Nigel Holman of Chyerton gardens, Cornwall. Nigel spent his life at Chyerton and was described as a passionate magnoliaphile and planted much of ‘one of the finest magnolia collections in the country’. Members will, no doubt have read his article in the 2011 Yearbook.
Spring Tour, March 2012
Itinerary

Day one – Tuesday March 20th
AM Flight to Milan. Arrive 1035 and transfer to Hotel Pallanzo in Verbania.
Afternoon: visit to Villa Taranto. Created by Captain Neil McEachern from 1931 and now one of Italy's most visited gardens. Dinner in local restaurant.

Wednesday March 21st
Morning: visit to Villa Anelli, the garden of Andrea Corneo (President of the Italian Camellia Society) followed by lunch (at own expense).
Afternoon: visit to the Rusconi Clerici family's villas – Villa L'Eremittaggio and Villa Rusconi Clerici with extensive collections of Camellia.
Free evening.

Thursday March 22nd
Morning: dedicated to nursery production (Fiori Tipici del Lago Maggiore) with a propagation nursery (Tecnoverde) and a wholesale nursery (Comagnia del Lago).
Lunch in Pallanza (at own expense).
Afternoon: Visit to Villa San Remigio in Pallanza and Villa Giuseppina (Monte Rosso – Verbania).
Free evening.

Friday March 23rd
Morning: Private visit to the home of Countessa Mirella Motta, her husband is a Camellia and Rhododendron specialist, their house is right on Lake Orta and has a terrace with breathtaking views.
Lunch at own expense.
Afternoon: Giardino Botanico Alpina which, at 800m above sea level, enjoys superb views across the lake (weather permitting).
Dinner in local restaurant.

Saturday March 24th
Morning: en route with luggage for Hotel Riposa, Ascona. We will visit Isola Di Brisago, an island purchased by the Ticino Canton in 1949 and developed as a botanic garden for the canton.
Lunch in Ascona at own expense.
Afternoon: Visit to Otto Eisenhut's Nursery, with hundreds of cultivars of Magnolia, Camellia and Rhododendron, and the nearby Parco Gambarogno, developed by Eisenhut since 1955.
Free evening.

Sunday March 25th
Visit to the garden of the late Sir Peter Smithers above Lake Lugano with talk by Amelia Smithers, his daughter.
Lunch at Montagnola (at own expense).
Afternoon: visit to Rolf Stockmann's garden, Director of the Swiss International Camellia Society.
Private visit to Alfred Schnyder's garden.
Dinner at a local restaurant.

Monday March 26th
Early morning visit to Isola Madre, the lake's original garden, founded in C16 by the Borromea family. We will be shown around by the head gardener, we will then take a water taxi to Isola Bella, where there will be an opportunity to have lunch (at own expense) and visit the palace and astonishing baroque terraced gardens.
Evening flight from Milan to arrive London at 8pm.
The cost of the tour is £1390 per person: to include accommodation in a twin room, return flights, breakfast, three dinners, all coach and ferry costs, administration, visits and gratuities, local guides and tour manager throughout. (With own flights £1210 per person) Not included: Travel insurance, single room supplement (£275 per person) remaining dinners and lunches.
Further information from Ace Cultural Tours.
Tel. 01223 835055 or email: ace@aceculturaltours.co.uk
Other queries to Judy Hallett, 01981 570401 or email: judy.hallett@googlemail.com

Preservation of rhododendrons

The gardens of this country have collected and bred rhododendrons for the past two centuries or more and between them have many specimens of interest, a number of which are unique. Many of those gardens which are fortunate to have such plants, and which are becoming rare, old or threatened by disease, are taking steps to preserve them and are propagating them for the benefit of future generations. This is different from the propagation on a commercial scale which, important as it is, is far from the same thing; the quantities are smaller and the varieties are so numerous as to make it commercially unviable.

The simplest method is to attempt to root cuttings which may or not be successful, particularly when the plants are old and struggling; the very time when preservation becomes a major issue. Recently the onset of Phytophthora has added urgency. Micropropagation (MP) has been found to succeed where other methods have failed and is the only way to propagate clean plants from those which are diseased. I have been fortunate to receive help in this from the MP unit of Duchy College located in Camborne, Cornwall which is approved for the propagation from diseased plants. This is a teaching facility of the College which is also available for the assistance of gardens in need; it is in the hands of Ros Smith, the micropropagation manager. I am most grateful to the College and to Ros for the help given.

A number of gardens have plants under propagation with her, thus preserving our heritage but it appears to me that these gardens are doing much the same thing without any coordination. In these circumstances knowledge of the efforts being made by each must be of value. This could be resolved simply by each garden publishing a list of the plants it is preserving and then leaving it to them to rationalise the situation to their mutual advantage.

Readers of previous editions of this Bulletin will have read of the work I have been involved with, in conjunction with Bodnant Garden, and I list now the plants involved from the garden...

John Harsant john@harsant.uk.com

Rhododendron species: R. albrechtii and R. bracteatum.
Rhododendron hybrids: most raised and grown at Bodnant:

Members Notes
Dear Mr Rawling,

In the current Bulletin (106), July 2011, our Chairman, Andy Simons asks ‘Why are we losing membership?’

Part of the answer must be that our genera seem to have gone ‘out of fashion’. I remember going to Chelsea in the 60s and the show gardens were full of deciduous azaleas. The stands in the pavilion were equally colourful with rhododendrons and azaleas.

I admit I haven’t been to Chelsea for many years but, judging by the television reports, rhododendrons don’t exist – not a sight of David Millais’s stand.

Likewise the Gardening Press doesn’t seem to pay much attention to rhododendrons etc. For example, (and I keep an index of these things), I can find only 37 articles on rhododendrons, including 8 on azaleas, in The Garden, The English Garden and Gardens Illustrated between 1983 and 2009.

Much the same happened with Alan Bloom’s island beds and Adrian Bloom’s heathers and conifers. I was a great fan of both, and still am, but they went right out of fashion.

The current rage is, of course, grasses, very largely due to the example and writing of Piet Oudolf. In the magazines quoted above there are 41 articles on grasses between 1991 and 2010. They will run out of steam in a decade or so!

Maybe rhododendrons are regarded as elitist. I certainly remember an outcry against ‘those great blobs of pink’. I have some sympathy with that view but contrast it with Michael Haworth-Booth’s (1970) description of the deciduous (especially the Ghent) azaleas – ‘hardiness, vigour, beauty of form, fragrance, freedom from pests and diseases, purity of colour, perfect “drawing” and finish.

We have a problem of course in that the genera are, by and large, ericaceous. The demise of peat has added to the difficulty of growing them in adverse soil conditions. There is a school of thought which says that we should accept our soil as it is and grow only the plants suitable to that soil and situation. Whilst I fully understand that view, I have no problem in improving my soil structure and drainage, adding sulphur and ericaceous compost. After all, vegetable growers feed their tomatoes – don’t they – so why shouldn’t I feed my azaleas? There is a company in Cumbria who have succeeded in producing an ericaceous compost using bracken as the basic ingredient – maybe they should be better known.

These then are, I believe, some of the reasons for a declining membership. The answers are not easy.

I have been gardening now for the best part of half a century, have been a member of the RHS and the RNRS since 1970 and have grown evergreen and deciduous azaleas and some small rhododendrons for most of that time. Why then have I only recently joined the RCM Group? I am not sure that I know the answer to that question – maybe I just didn’t know of its existence!

Somehow we need to attract the ‘man in the street’ or should I say ‘the man in the weekend garden’! Or, to put it another way, we need to reach a wider gardening audience. By all means continue with the rhododendron species in their series etc. After all we are a specialist group, but maybe a little more attention should be paid to the smaller hybrids. The acquisition of folding display panels is good news. Perhaps we need to tackle the TV gardeners and educate them in the finer things of the horticultural world!

I think the garden centres need to be persuaded to stock more evergreen and deciduous azaleas, camellias and the smaller rhododendrons. I live near one of the largest garden centres in the country which was until recently privately owned. They used to stock a large selection of azaleas etc. But since it was taken over by one of the largest chains there is hardly a rhododendron to be seen. They may argue that they can’t stock plants that people don’t want to buy. So we have a chicken and egg situation.

These then are the thoughts of an amateur gardener which I hope may be of some help to those more knowledgeable and better placed than I am to move things forwards.

I am sure others will have written along similar lines and I look forward to hearing the committee’s thoughts.

Dr. John M. Parry, Waterside Cottage, Tyrley Wharf, Market Drayton, Shropshire, TF9 2AH

Arising from other letters received on the subject of the falling Group membership there is a point that the Group wish to emphasise, which is that under its new Constitution within the RHS, it is not mandatory for members of the Rhododendron, Camellia & Magnolia Group to be subscribing members of the Royal Horticultural Society itself. This should therefore not discourage students, or new members from areas further away from the Society’s gardens and activities, from joining the Group or taking part in its activities.

The Editor.

The Winter of 2010/11

The letter below is from a regular and active member of the Group. His location is where one would anticipate that he benefits, to some small extent, from the Gulf Stream. However, the last winter shows that there were few places in the UK that were unaffected by the extended and very cold spell, last winter.

Dear Editor,

Now, in August 2011, I am evaluating the garden after the devastating weather of December 2010. The low thermometer inside my cold greenhouse recorded –12C of frost over several nights, but I have no records of the outside temperatures.

My garden is situated just over a mile from the coast – as the crow flies – with an annual rainfall of 35 inches. In garden A, high at the east and sloping down at the west end, garden B, high at the south, sloping down at the north. Both sites have a ph. of about 7 (neutral), soil medium loam overlying marl then clay. Garden B has slightly more small stones (pebbles) in the soil.

I list some of the plants killed outright by the frost which include the following:

- Tree fern Dicksonia antarctica – bought ten years ago as a five foot trunk, with label attached ‘Otway Hills, Victoria’. The top of the fern was well insulated and covered up, but still died.
- Acacia praevissima from Wisley about six years ago.
- Fremontodendron ‘California Glory’, a large shrub, about twenty years old.
- Corus capitata – several plants, grown from seed about six years ago. All small plants of Crinodendron hookeriainum (Lantern Tree). One large-leaved rhododendron, about twenty years old.
- Gunnera manicata, was covered but still died.
- Other plants partially damaged by the frost:
  - Several rhododendrons – badly damaged losing exposed leaves.

The Editor.
Just imagine my surprise, prompted by a street name and a hotel in the town, when I discovered it was:

Rhododendron ferrugineum!

Yours, ‘Embarrassed of Ross-on-Wye’.

(AKA Group Treasurer, Alastair Stevenson.)

BRANCH REPORTS

South West Branch – Spring Visits 2011
16th March 2011 Porthpean House and Tregrehan Gardens near St Austell.

To avoid the worst of the early season weather, we usually programme our garden visits to begin in April. This works well but is rather hard on our camellia enthusiasts because high season for camellias is usually well past by April. So this year we decided to make amends and to brave the weather.

Thus it was that, on 16th March, we gathered on the cliff tops at Porthpean House, just east of St. Austell. Needless to say the weather was perfect; the sun shone, a limpid sea splashed on the rocks far below and red admiral, peacock and comma butterflies glided sleepily around us.

Charlotte Petherick, our hostess, well known for her prowess with camellias both in her garden and on the show bench, led us around her collection, demonstrating as she went the depth of her knowledge and experience of the genus *Camellia*. It was an education in every sense of the word and our notebooks were soon full.

There were plenty of rhododendrons and magnolias too but my abiding memory will be of a great, spreading, white magnolia that dominated one end of the garden. Mrs. Petherick was unsure of its identity so our experts convened and soon declared, nem con, that it was a particularly good form of *M. cylindrica*. A superb plant!

and flower buds (the worst affected being *R. macabeanum* with all the flower buds and the leaves from the top – it was the middle of June before new leaves began to appear.

*R. maddenii* ssp. *crassum*, home grown from Group seed list about ten or twelve years ago, lost all flower buds and about a quarter of the leaves.

*Nerium oleander* overwintering in a large pot in a cold house, but again badly damaged, did not ‘wake up’ until July.

*Sophora microphylla*, new leaves did not appear until July.

*Nerine bowdenii* – 95% of stock dead.

A large Collection of *Zantedeschia aethiopica* ‘Crowborough’ originally started with one plant bought at Logan Gardens twenty years ago, now only 5% remain left.

All large plants of *Crinodendron hookerianum* survived, but badly damaged, only a few ‘red lanterns’ produced.

The only magnolia affected, *M. grandiflora* ‘Exmouth’, purchased at Ness about twenty years ago, all the top-half damaged, no leaves, some new leaves low down but as yet no flower buds. Also a small plant of *M. grandiflora* ‘Gallisonnière’ was slightly damaged.

*Euphorbia mellifera*, cut down to ground level, has started to regrow.

Plants of *Rhododendron yunnanense* show some dieback, about half the normal number of flowers.

*R. liliflorum* Guiz163, all flower buds dead.

All the camellias survived the winter weather but some were badly damaged, C. ‘China Clay’ lost all its flower buds and most of its top leaves. C. ‘Kramer’s Supreme’ lost most of its flower buds.

*Ceanothus* ‘Concha’, three large shrubs survived, lots of die-back and not many flowers.

*Eucryphia* x ‘Nymansay’, another plant about twenty years old, lost leaves off the top growth but has recovered and is flowering OK.

(This year’s very dry spring affected vegetables, early potatoes (Arran Pilot) were small with a light crop. This also made it difficult to get climbing beans and sweet corn started. Growth picked up later in the season and the early plums (Rivers Early Prolific) were picked in July giving an excellent crop (makes a good crumble!) The early peas and broad beans did OK.)

Derek Faulkner, Blackpool.

Dear Editor,

I can recommend Chamonix as a summer holiday destination if you enjoy walking in the mountains. This summer was exceptional --- for the rain!

Strolling along high mountain paths I was highly impressed by the acres of a low growing, pink flowered shrub that I could not identify.
Our second visit was to Tregrehan Gardens, only a few miles away, which allowed plenty of time for picnics on the Porthpean cliffs.

There are so many important gardens in Cornwall that it may sound invidious to single out Tregrehan as one of the most important but it has many claims to this distinction. It is large, beautifully situated on a sheltered hillside, and has flourished there for more than 200 years. There is an amazing collection of giant conifers including many ‘champions’ and woody plants from all over the world. In particular the garden has always been associated with the hybridising of camellias, and many older hybrids may be found there – hence our visit.

Tregrehan came into the ownership of botanist, plant collector and woody plant expert of international renown, Tom Hudson, relatively recently and we were very fortunate to have him as our guide. His impact on the gardens has been truly astonishing. The 19th C. hard landscaping has been extensively restored as has the parkland and the range of Victorian glasshouses but it is in the arboreta that his work is now concentrated and where space has been made for more woody plants from all over the world – not least many of his own introductions.

And my own particular memories? I will never forget the Tregrehan specimen of Rhododendron ‘Cornish Red’. It was at least 15m high and covered a tennis-court sized area – a true giant in the land of these giants. And altogether less obtrusive but very beautiful: Illicium anisatum covered in its soft yellow flowers.

One word of caution – beware the siren song emanating from the Tregrehan plant sales area or you will leave with a car-full and worry all the way home where you are going to plant them!

30th April 2011 Heddon Hall and Greencombe near Porlock.

For a change we ventured to the far reaches of Exmoor in the north-east corner of our region on yet another lovely spring day. Heddon Hall is on the edge of the village of Parracombe and is a fine Regency parsonage surrounded by a true gardener's garden with an eclectic collection of rhododendrons, magnolias, herbaceous plants and ferns (a pteridologist was laid on to lighten our darkness). Of particular interest to us was that much of the collection had been planted by our member, Jane Keatley, who has the distinction of having made two expeditions to bring back seeds for the garden. She was there to show us round.

M. 'Gold Star' at Heddon Hall Photo: Sally Hayward

Of particular interest to us was the fact that much of the collection had been planted by Jane Keatley who has the distinction of having made two expeditions to China and the Far-East to bring back seeds for the garden. She was there to show us round.

The old parsonage gardens, including the walled garden and the shrubberies, had been cleverly and beautifully restored using more modern plants, many collected by Jane herself. The botanists and taxonomists in our ranks were frequently uncertain about what they were seeing and it was amusing to hear Jane patiently explaining that the plants in question had been collected by her and not yet reliably identified. A truly fascinating garden. Our congratulations to Jane and our thanks for her patience!

In the afternoon we travelled eastwards along the coast with its massive and spectacular cliffs until we arrived at Porlock. Here on the edge of the village is Greencombe, the garden developed and supervised by the remarkable Joan Loraine for more than forty years.

We visited the garden in January 2011 to carry out our usual reconnaissance. That was our first meeting with Miss Lorraine who immediately dispensed with any conventional small-talk and demanded to know whether we had seen “the protistum in
the garden". Not being at all sure what a protistum was and failing to impress her with our rather vague reply, we were peremptorily packed off into the garden to find out.

A minute or two later we were standing in front of quite the most magnificent rhododendron that I have ever seen – *Rhododendron protistum* in all its glory; probably 15m high and half as much wide, clad to the ground with large, healthy, glossy leaves and weighed down by huge trusses of cherry red flowers. All the authorities I have been able to consult deem it to be tender but there it was, apparently unaffected by one of the coldest winters on record!

Sadly our group visit was not until the end of April but we were still able to admire *Rhododendron protistum* looking as healthy as ever. Indeed the whole garden is breathtaking for the range of rare woody plants growing there and for the woodland plants flourishing beneath them. There was an fine collection of rhododendrons but forms and hybrids of *R. fortunei* were particularly noticeable on the day of our visit.

The garden is situated on the north slope of a wooded escarpment about a mile inland from the shores of the Bristol Channel. It is noticeable that the greater part of the garden has overhead cover and is wholly or partially shaded all day. Also very apparent was the extensive use made by Miss Loraine and her gardener of homemade leaf mould/compost – I counted 4 different stations throughout the gardens where it was made and stored.

I have never seen a better planted and cultivated garden than Greencombe or a more inspirational one.
Firstly, microclimate has a major influence on the outcome, good or bad. How else can one explain the Greencombe *R. protistum* surviving unscathed on a coast that experienced some of the winter’s lowest temperatures? Yet little seems to be understood about the constituents of a microclimate and their relative influence on the extent of low temperature damage.

Secondly, the date of the severe cold seems, often, to play a key role. In my own garden on the edge of Dartmoor, a large and mature thicket of mimosa (*Acacia dealbata*) survived the 2009/2010 winter unscathed, flowering magnificently in due season. And yet it was killed to the ground in 2010/2011 by a slightly warmer minimum temperature. The difference was that, in the first winter, the lowest temperatures occurred in January and in the second in December. The extra month to harden off seems to be decisive. I remember many normally hardy rhododendron species and hybrids being severely damaged in my North Wales garden by a December frost.

It will be interesting to hear of other growers’ experiences and conclusions.

*Colin Brown*

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**BOOK REVIEWS**

*In the Footsteps of Augustine Henry*
Seamus O’Brien
104pp 170mm x 240mm
£7.95 (plus post)
Garden Art Press, 2011
300 x 237mm, 376pp,
£40 Hardback

Available from the Group – see Publications Advert

In his foreword, Roy Lancaster states that this book tells ‘not one but two stories, detailing, on the one hand, the travels and discoveries of Augustine Henry and his Chinese plant collectors between 1885 and 1900, and on the other, the author and his colleagues’ experiences in revisiting those hallowed places and reliving the excitement of plant hunting more than a century ago.’ Although this is certainly true, it is not quite the whole truth, since, in my opinion, it also tells the much bigger story of the golden age of plant discovery, at the centre of which was Augustine Henry.

Until this book was published, the life and works of Augustine Henry had been scarcely written about and I would guess that if one were to ask most rhododendron growers what they knew about him they might not even make the connection with that most lovely of species, *Rhododendron augustinii*. If they were to learn how many other rhododendrons he is associated with they would be even more surprised. The really staggering statistic is that Augustine Henry was responsible for 1,726 new plant discoveries in China of which 1,338 were new species. In just five years this amazing Irishman made collections of almost 20 per cent of the entire flora of China – 6000 distinct species.

If it weren’t for a chance event this book might never have been written, and we would be the poorer for it. The Irish Garden Plant Society floated the idea of staging an exhibit at the 2000 Chelsea Flower Show based around the plant collections of their countryman, Augustine Henry. Seamus O’Brien, the author, was chosen to research and plan for the display. The rest, as they say...

What resulted was the kindling of a passionate interest in Augustine Henry, his life and his achievements which produced an irresistible urge to retrace his steps, and to be honest, having read the book, I can quite see why!

O’Brien’s meticulous research, photographic archive and elegant writing style blend together perfectly to produce what, for me at least, is one of the most enjoyable and informative books of its type to be published. He achieves a real and vibrant sense of time and place, both when relating Augustine Henry’s experiences in the past and his own a century later. He also manages to convey the sheer energy, drive and determination of Henry and the pivotal effect this would have on the future of plant hunting in China. What came as a particular surprise to me was the career Henry pursued after he came back from China and just how influential he was in the world of forestry.

Not all plant hunting books are written by plantsman but the reader is fortunate in this case since the author is curator of Kilmacurragh Arboretum, part of the National Botanic Garden of Ireland, and a leading authority on the temperate flora of China. Plants are expertly woven into the text: initial discovery, subsequent introduction, plants in cultivation recalled and described with authority, providing real interest and relevance.

Like all titles emanating from the Garden Art Press, this is a beautiful publication, well designed and lavishly illustrated. As to criticisms, well, no book is absolutely perfect and apart from the usual beef about a few poorly reproduced images and the odd typo, and the occasions when there wasn’t absolute clarity about which plant collector was responsible for discovery and which for introduction (but that could be the result of my own deficiency!), my main criticism would be reserved for the lack of a list of *all* the Henry introductions rather than simply producing a list of plants named for him. This is a very large book – 376 pages – and I really do think it would have been possible to include all 1,726 particularly as I would have liked to see all his rhododendrons, camellias and magnolias in print!

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*Caerhays Castle*
An introduction to its history, owners and gardeners
Charles Williams, Peter Herring, Jaimie Parsons, Courtenay Smale & Stephen Tyrrell
Pasticcio, 2011
270 x 210mm, 260pp, £30 Hardback

Available from: Caerhays Estate Office
Tel: 01872 500025 or Email: estateoffice@caerhays.co.uk

Last year I contributed to the *Bulletin* a book review which included the recently published *Caerhays Castle Garden Guide*. Charles Williams has gone further in 2011 and produced a comprehensive history of the entire estate.

Presented in discrete sections covering the Landscape, Buildings, Families and Gardens of Caerhays, and, using specialist authors to contribute chapters relevant to their expertise, the result is an authoritative and fascinating read. Worth reading alone is the chapter devoted to speculation about the derivation of the word ‘Caerhays’!

Concentrating on what matters most to readers of the *Bulletin*, there is an excellent chapter on the plant hunting trips sponsored by the Williams family followed by the main event – an entire section devoted to the gardens, their history and development, all beautifully illustrated. Once again it is the sense of excitement
for the future which shines through; Caerhays should be held up as an example to all the major gardens to emulate.

Much of the garden and plant information is common to both the earlier publication and to this one and if it is this aspect that is of singular importance, there is no need to invest again. However, there is so much more of interest in this book which throws light on Caerhays’ enduring success in the face of all manner of challenges and I would certainly recommend it as a bookshelf title.

Pam Hayward

We heartily welcome our New Members. We hope they will enjoy the benefits of belonging to the Rhododendron, Camellia & Magnolia Group within the RHS.

Annual General Meeting 2012

The 2012 Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday 2nd June 2012 at RHS Gardens Wisley, at 12.15p.m. in the Lecture Hall.

There will be a Late Flowering Rhododendron Show and Workshop in the morning concluding with the AGM before lunch. The afternoon will then be free to go out into the gardens or to help show our rhododendrons off to the public, who for the first time will be invited to share and enjoy our display, making it a day well worth attending.

More details in the next Bulletin.

We had a record number of members present for the 2011 AGM. The Workshop was lively and interesting, with many plants and blooms – both rhododendrons and azaleas – submitted for discussion.

Please make a note of this date and do come to this AGM.

GROUP NOTICES
Pat Bucknell, Hon Secretary

Subscriptions Renewals 2011

The Group’s membership year runs from 1 November to 31 October. Subscriptions are due for payment on 1 November. If your subscription has not already been renewed and you have an active email address you will have received a renewal form by email on 1st November. If you do not have an active email address and have not renewed, you will have received a form with this mailing.

The Group is very fortunate to have a Membership Secretary with a small team who are prepared to devote a great deal of time and energy to administrating the subscription renewal process, and it is easy to forget that this service is given voluntarily. To save time and unnecessary additional costs, please act on this reminder now. Payment can be made easily online via the Group website www.rhodogroup-rhs.org – you do not need a PayPal account to use this facility. Alternatively, use the form provided and send it back to the Membership Secretary as detailed.

Pam Hayward

Information available from our web site

The RCMG web site has had content added to it over many years and should now be seen as a valuable source of information on many aspects of our three genera. For those of you that have not visited it recently I would urge you to have another look. The address is: www.rhodogroup-rhs.org

You will find under Plant Information:

- Cultivation details
- Dictionaries of plant details and photos under various types of appropriate groupings
- Listings of AGM plants
- Information on our Group collections

Group Information is the place to go for online renewal of your membership and Branch and Committee details.

The Services section comprises a variety of topics including:

- The Seed list
- Surplus plants
- Forthcoming Events and Meetings
- Publications available for purchase

A comprehensive list of Web Links to other sites for Gardens, Nurseries and Societies that cover our genera, both in the UK and around the world

If you view the Members’ photos page you will see there are only a small number so far this year. If the number of photographs does not increase substantially before the end of the year then this will probably be the last year of the competition. I am sure that there are large numbers of interesting photographs taken by you members during the good weather we experienced this spring. Not only would you be adding to the web site but you could also win a prize. Further details of the competition and how to send photographs are given on the web site.

The final section gives you access to the new photos that members have submitted during the course of the current year, which for 2011 is rather bare.

If anyone can think of additional information that we should add into the site, please send your ideas to Graham Mills or to Stephen Lyus.
Seed Distribution 2012

The delights of growing plants from the Group Seed List.

R. dalhousiae var. rhabdotum.

As you know, Margaret Miles has become the Group’s new Seed Convenor, and together we are devising the best way of developing the seed distribution process to better reflect the needs of members.

Traditionally, the Seed List has been sent out with the yearbook, principally because it saved a considerable amount in postage charges. The printed list was usually not published until the same time as the yearbook, in any event, and it therefore made sense to combine the mailing in that respect as well. The result of course is that seeds could not be ordered until well into February.

In recent years I have been able to produce the list much earlier, and that, coupled with the fact that we now have a majority of members with electronic means of communication, opens the way to send the list out by email the moment it is ready. The costs saved in reducing the number of printed copies required will enable us to post copies out to members who do not yet have email or access to the internet.

For the 2012 Seed Distribution, therefore, I propose to post a printed copy of the list to non-email members three working days before I send the list by email and simultaneously ask our webmaster to launch the list on the Group website.

I anticipate we will gain at least a month by making this change, hopefully more if our seed collectors get their lists to us in good time.

If any member with an active email address particularly requires a printed copy to be posted to them instead, please send me an email to that effect as soon as possible. However, it would be greatly appreciated if members could make use of the emailed version instead.

Conversely, if any member has not been receiving Group communications by email but has an active email address, could they email me so I can send them the list electronically when the time comes.

More developments are planned, so watch this space and your inbox!

Pam Hayward  email: pam@woodtown.net

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In the Footsteps of AUGUSTINE HENRY
Seamus O’Brien
376pp Garden Art Press
Full Price: £40 Member’s Price: £27.95
Postage: UK £5 Europe £6
Rest of World £10

The Lost Gardens of Heligan CAMELLIAS and RHODODENDRONS
Bee Robson
96pp Barman 2010
Full Price: £9.95 Member’s Price: £8.50
Postage: UK £1.50 Europe £3 Rest of World £5

Pocket Guide to RHODODENDRON SPECIES
John McQuire & Mike Robinson
704pp RBG Kew 2009
Full Price: £59 Member’s Price: £42
Postage: UK £5.50 Europe £8.50 Rest of World £15.50

Please make cheques (Sterling) payable to: The Rhododendron, Camellia and Magnolia Group. Payment may also be made by Mastercard or Visa or via PayPal to rcmgpaypal@woodtown.net

Contact: Pam Hayward, Woodtown, Sampford Spiney, Yelverton, Devon PL20 6LJ  Tel/Fax: +44 (0)1822 852122
Email: rcmgpublications@woodtown.net

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The following publications are offered to Group Members exclusively and sold in support of the Group.
Back issues of the yearbook from 1946 and previously advertised titles not featured here may still be available – please enquire.

PLANT HUNTING TITLES
SPECIAL OFFER EXTENDED!
Flowers of the Amazon Forest – Margaret Mee £16.95 (RRP £25)
John Lindley – William T. Stearn £13.95 (RRP £19.95)
Riddle of the Tsangpo Gorges – Kenneth Cox et al £24.50 (RRP £35)
Seeds of Adventure – Peter Cox & Peter Hutchison £24.50 (RRP £35)
Plantsman’s Paradise – Roy Lancaster £27.95 (RRP £39.95)
Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker – Roy Desmond £19.95 (RRP £29.50)
See leaflet enclosed with March Bulletin or email for details.
Price as quoted for each title plus
£5 postage per UK order (up to 5 books)
£6 per title for orders from Europe and £10 per title for orders from outside Europe. Please enquire about postage costs if you are outside the UK and wish to order more than one title.

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THE RED LIST OF RHODODENDRONS
Botanic Gardens Conservation International has recently launched a new report assessing the conservation status of Rhododendron. A quarter of the 1157 currently known species are under threat of extinction.

Download the 131 page report free at:
www.bgci.org/ourwork/rhododendron-red-list/
If you would like to contribute, please send your digital photos (as jpg files) to Stephen Lyus at his email address of: 

emailslyus@yahoo.co.uk

Further details of the competition and how to send photographs are given on the web site.

If there are additional features that you would like to see added to the site then please contact me at webmaster@rhodogroup-rhs.org

Graham Mills

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The following publications are available to Group Members and are sold in support of the Group:

PLANTSMAN'S PARADISE Travels in China – Roy Lancaster

Full Price: £39.95

Member's Price: £29

Postage: UK £4, Europe £6, Rest of World £10

Frank Kingdon Ward's RIDDLE of the TSANGPO GORGES

(Second Edition) – Kenneth Cox

Full Price: £35

Member's Price: £26

Postage: UK £4, Europe £6, Rest of World £10

CAMELLIAS: The Gardener's Encyclopedia – Jennifer Trehane

2007

428pp, illust.

Full price: £35

Member's Price: £23.50

Postage: UK £5.50, Europe £10, Rest of World £19

RHODODENDRONS OF SABAH – George Argent, Anthony Lamb and Anthea Phillipps

2007

New edition. Full Price in UK: £55

Member's Price: £30

Postage: UK £5, Europe £8, Rest of World £15 (Air)

RHODODENDRONS OF SUBGENUS VIREYA – George Argent

2006

Full Price: £55

Member's Price: £39

Postage: UK £5, Europe £8, Rest of World £15 (Air)

RHODODENDRONS & AZALEAS – Kenneth Cox

Full Price: £29.95

Member's Price: £24.50

Postage: UK £5, Europe £8, Rest of World £15 (Air)

International RHODODENDRON REGISTER and CHECKLIST 2004

Full Price: £90

Member's Price: £75

Postage: please enquire.

THE RHODODENDRON HANDBOOK 1998

352pp, illust.

NOW £19 post free. Airmail: +£5

YEARBOOK Back Numbers: please enquire.

Please make cheques (Sterling) payable to: The Rhododendron, Camellia and Magnolia Group. Payment may also be made by Mastercard or Visa (please include expiry date & security number) or via PayPal to rcmgpaypal@woodtown.net

Contact:
Pam Hayward, Woodtown, Sampford Spiney, YELVERTON PL20 6LJ, UK. Tel/Fax: +44 (0)1822 852122

Email: RCMGPublications@woodtown.net

Further to my note in the Bulletin 106 of July this year, I have been able to supply a small number of binders for issues of the Bulletin to members. These binders hold up to eight years of Bulletins (25 issues) and cost £12.50 each, plus postage. I now append photographs of the binders. Please let me know if you are interested in obtaining a binder, to my address. The Editor

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Plant hunting in Bhutan
Alan Oatway
Judith Johnson
01229 889 678

**JANUARY / 2012**

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North West Branch Ness Gardens
Tim Lever 'In search of the pink poppywort in the steps of Ludlow & Sheriff above the treeline in central Bhutan'
Ted Brabin
0151 353 1193

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Judith Johnson
01229 889 678

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Crawley. SE Show
Barry Haseltine
01342 713132

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Wessex Branch Ramster
Annual Show
Miranda Gunn
01428 644422

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North West Branch Ness Gardens
Tim Baxter 'Why it would be so much easier if it were labelled – recording Rhododendrons, Camellias & Magnolias'
Ted Brabin
0151 353 1193

**20-26**
Group Spring Tour to Lake Maggiore
Judith Hallett
01981 570401

**23**
South East Branch Crosswater Farm, Farnham
Visit to Millais Nurseries to see their collection of Denny Pratt and other late flowering azaleas
Barry Haseltine
01342 713132

**JUNE / 2012**

**14/15**
North West Branch Ness Gardens
Branch Show
Ted Brabin
0151 353 1193

**21/22**
RHS Main Rhododendron Competition plus SW Branch Camellia and Magnolia Show Rosemoor
Pat Bucknell
01503 220215

**GROUP SPRING TOUR TO LAKES MAGGIORE**

**23-27**
North West Branch Tour of Cornwall
Ted Brabin
0151 353 1193

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South East Branch Borde Hill
Garden Visit to Gores Wood, Borde Hill, led by Andy Stevens, Head Gardener
Barry Haseltine
01342 713132

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