



the Rhododendron, Camellia & Magnolia group

Bulletin 123 / March 2017 / www.rhodogroup-rhs.org



CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

During the winter, a surprising amount of activity has been taking place 'behind the scenes' within the Group. Committee members have been planning events, and developing ideas that will bear fruit for members over the coming season and beyond. It's great to welcome two new Branch Chairs, with Jennifer Trehane taking over the New Forest branch and Ross Underwood taking over the West Midlands branch. Do please try to support your branch events this spring, to get to know other local members and share knowledge and interest amongst yourselves

Our new Events Co-ordinator Christopher Legrand has planned a great trip to Yorkshire for May, and I'm really looking forward to visiting some superb gardens that I have not visited before. The tour will start with a visit to the Rhododendron Show at Harlow Carr on 13th May, before exploring the gardens. There are a few spare places, but accommodation is in short supply, so do please contact him as soon as possible if you are interested in joining the fun.

On a much more mundane level, but completely indispensable, our new Treasurer Jenny Fly has got to grips with the Group's book-keeping and has transformed us from manual ledgers into modern Sage accounts. This has been no mean feat, as she has entered payments from all 700 members into the programme and has pinpointed every penny spent and received for the past year with far greater accuracy than was possible with the old system.

Thankfully most members kindly pay their subscriptions by Direct Debit, and Jenny has also upgraded the system with Easy Collect who collect subscriptions on our behalf. All your details are completely confidential, but the upgrade does add another layer of security for your protection. The accounts for the first year of the new CIO are now just about ready for filing with the Charity Commission, and I know this has been a particularly trying time for both Jenny and our new Independent Examiner Russell Beeson.

It has not been easy to understand the requirements of the Charity Commission, with contradictory information within the guides on their website. I am really grateful to them both for their perseverance, and hopefully we now have a satisfactory format which can be used in future years. On a positive note, Jenny has been able to recover more than £2000 in Gift Aid from the HMRC thanks to everyone who has signed up. If you are a UK taxpayer and have not signed up to Gift Aid, please do so, as your donations really do go so much further!



Rhododendron excellens

Photo: Robert Hatcher (see page 5)

So it's great to welcome these new office holders who are volunteering tirelessly on your behalf. We also thank those who have stepped down after their time in office. I feel it is important that office holders who wish to retire are supported, and that new members come forward to take their place. (I hope this happens with my position in a few years' time!) Of course the key position that we need is a new Yearbook Editor to replace Pam Hayward.

She is currently working on her tenth and final edition which will be ready this spring, but she will not stay on any longer. Ten years as Editor is long enough

for anyone, and we should all be very grateful for the dedication she has shown over this time. We would love one person to offer to be our new Editor, but we would also welcome offers to join an Editorial team. Unfortunately Pam's sister Sally Hayward, who did so much to make our Centenary such a success at Chelsea, and instigated the Top 100 Rhododendron survey, is also resigning as Secretary at this point. Sally's admin skills will be much missed. Steve Harding needs more time for his young family and the large garden he is developing for his employer, so is resigning from his role as Conservation Officer. He has done some superb work to get our Conservation programme off the ground, but it's now time to hand over to someone else. These are three key positions which must to be filled as soon as possible to enable the Group to function, and we would really appreciate hearing from you if you could consider volunteering to join the

Continued overleaf

Committee. We are a friendly lot really, and I have no doubt that you would gain lots of interest and many new friends.

The Centenary Fund which supports our charitable work with conservation, is continuing to grow, and has now topped the £7000 mark with Gift Aid recovered. I am delighted to announce that we have made a £1000 donation to enable Ros Smith to continue her amazing micropropagation work at Duchy College, and that the first of the most endangered rhododendrons that have previously received AM or FCC awards, have been sent to her for specialised propagation. We have also just started to obtain rare plants so that we can place them in secure garden trusts. The first donations have been additional big leaved rhododendron species which have been sent to Abbotsbury Gardens in Dorset where Stephen Griffith, the Curator is planting them out near those donated in the past (see Bulletin 122 pp4-5). The mild climate and idyllic sheltered valley running down to the ocean is an ideal place for these giants. It is hoped that the New Forest branch will 'adopt' these plants and check up on them from time to time. I hope this formula can be replicated with other branches looking after their local collections around the country.

Those of you on email will know that as well as the printed bulletin that you received in November, we also emailed a digital version and invited comments about this method of delivery. The overwhelming view was positive, and a digital version offers huge cost savings compared to print and postage, as well as being convenient for those able to read the Bulletin on tablets while on the move. However there are still some members not on email and some who would just prefer a paper version (including one who said he would prefer to read it at breakfast rather than talking to his wife!). For many years, John and Ros Rawling stuffed bulletins into envelopes and stamps and address labels onto envelopes. I had not realised quite what a task this was for 700 copies until I was involved with the last edition, and we really do owe them a really big thank you for all their 'stuffing' over the years. We have now found a mailing company who have quoted a competitive price with reduced postage rates that we will be trying for this issue. The Committee will continue to review the Bulletin, and if you did not respond to Pam, I would be pleased to hear any other views from members. I would like to re-assure everyone that we will continue to make a paper version available for those that would like one, but we also want to explore a more frequent digital newsletter, and we would be delighted to hear from anyone who feels they could help us establish this for the benefit of our members.

For those that have computer access, do please make use of our website for up to date information about shows and events, contacts, and plant information. Graham Mills frequently updates the site, and it is great to see the number of people visiting is growing steadily month on month. I would also like to remind members that there are two RCMG Facebook sites, the 'official' RCMG site where we post up to date information about the Group, and the RCMG 'forum' site where you can add items yourself. Visitors to our Facebook pages are also growing rapidly, and I have found it really uplifting to see all the colour pictures that were submitted by those in the Southern hemisphere during our winter, including New Zealand Magnolias and Australian Camellias and Vireyas in particular! With our spring on its way, now it's our time to post pictures of plants and flowers onto the Facebook pages for our friends to see, and to repay the

compliments of the Southern hemisphere enthusiasts during their winter! Got some surplus plants? - Why not offer them to others who might appreciate them? Don't know the name of a plant? - Post a picture and description, and the chances are that someone will know it and give you a name.

There are two larger events this spring I would like to draw your attention to. Firstly we have linked this year's AGM with the Rosemoor Show on 22-23 April, so that you can make a bit more of a weekend of it if you like. Every year I am amazed by the quality of the exhibits at Rosemoor, and there are always new varieties exhibited that I have not seen before. Our Show this year will be the first event in the new garden room which is replacing the marquee, and we have been promised it will be finished in time. On Saturday morning, it is always busy with exhibitors, judges, presentations and viewings, but the afternoon is an ideal time to enjoy Rosemoor itself, which as Jim Gardiner says, has the highest standard of horticulture of any RHS garden. Alternatively, Marwood Hill Gardens which exhibits at the Show, is but a short drive away and will have plenty of excellent camellias, magnolias and other specialist plants in flower. On Sunday morning, Dr John Marston, Branch Chairman of the Southwest branch has agreed to open his own 4 acre garden at Barnstaple for a Group visit to see his magnolias and a wide range of interesting and more tender plants. For further details, please see his listing on the NGS website for Gorwell House. You can then return to Rosemoor, who they do a good Sunday lunch, in time for our AGM at 2.30pm in the Learning Centre. I then hope that as many members as possible will stay behind to help empty the flower vases and break down the show. It is a tiring and thankless task for the organisers at the end of a busy weekend, but many hands make light work! If you are looking for accommodation, there is not a lot in Torrington, but if you would like to meet some of the judges and committee, we are likely to eat in the 'Black Horse' on Friday night. If you are an exhibitor, buying a judge a drink will not guarantee first prize!

The second big event is the Rhododendron, Camellia and Magnolia Show to be held on 13-14th May on the lawn outside the restaurant at Wisley. As reported previously, Wisley was so pleased with the Centenary Show that was held last year, that they have offered to build a marquee for our show at a peak time for hybrid rhododendrons and azaleas which have never really had a show of their own. Exhibitors can compete for the best in show 'Centenary Cup' which was won by Savill Gardens for their lovely *R. schlippenbachii* last year. This year the theme will be Wilson's 50 evergreen azaleas which he selected in Japan, and we are hoping for some good exhibits from those with collections such as the Isabella Plantation, and Windsor Park. Yvette Harvey, Keeper of the Herbarium at Wisley will help to create some interesting poster displays. There are 8,000-10,000 visitors expected through Wisley that weekend, so it is a great place to showcase our plants and try to encourage new members. Volunteers to help would be most appreciated.

Do please contact me if you are able to help fill our committee vacancies or can offer help elsewhere.

David Millais
david@rhododendrons.co.uk

Furnace Wood and Meadow, Bodnant Garden

In spring 2017 gardeners will be taking down the ropes to reveal a new area of Bodnant National Trust near Conwy in North Wales - Furnace Wood and Meadow. An Open Day on April 11 will unveil twenty acres, home to a wood of native and exotic trees, and a wildflower-rich meadow, which have never before been seen by the public.



The planting of *Rhododendron* 'Penjerrick' in Furnace Wood

Photo: Fran Llewellyn

It will be a new lease of life for a beautiful and historic area of the garden, which has been at the heart of a 21st century battle against plant disease and decay. Years of renovation by gardeners has included the restoration of a lost avenue of rare rhododendrons, The Penjerrick Walk, and has rejuvenated the whole area for future generations of visitors.



Artist's impression of the Penjerrick Walk in 2036 Clive McWilliam

Furnace Hill lies alongside the west bank of the River Hiraethlyn in the valley of The Dell. Water and wood fuelled early life on Bodnant Estate; a leat alongside the river, believed to be Tudor in origin, served a blast furnace nearby – giving its name to this area. The leat, river and a dam upstream powered the Georgian mill which served as a flour mill and sawmill.

What began life as a hillside dotted with native trees was transformed from the 1870s under owner Henry Pochin and his daughter Laura McLaren after him, who planted Douglas and Corsican Firs, Larch and numerous Californian pines; also banks of *Rhododendron ponticum* as a windbreak. Laura's son Henry went on to add many Asian rhododendrons and magnolias from the early 1900s.



Looking from the Dell to the old Mill at the foot of Furnace Hill

Photo: Fran Llewellyn

Lying on the fringes of the estate, Furnace remained a private area for many decades, beloved by the McLaren donor family who cherished its tranquillity and its panoramic views east across the garden towards the Italianate terraces, and westwards over the Conwy Valley. Lord Aberconway famously said that if he could have a five minute walk anywhere at Bodnant Garden in May, he would choose the Penjerrick Walk.

However, in the 21st century this area fell victim to the disease *Phytophthora ramorum* which began affecting shrubs and trees. Following a three-year programme supervised by DEFRA to remove *Rhododendron ponticum* and other host species such as larch, in 2015 the garden was granted a clean bill of health. While some old characters in the landscape have been lost, the spaces left behind have allowed gardeners to plant anew – including the restoration of the Penjerrick Walk.



The Mill in the 1800s

This avenue of creamy-white hybrid *Rhododendron* 'Penjerrick' (raised at the garden in Cornwall of that name) was planted by Henry McLaren, 2nd Lord Aberconway. The plants died out over the years but with help from the Rhododendron, Camellia and Magnolia Group, Bodnant Garden has been able to micro-propagate the last remaining at Duchy College in Cornwall. Young plants were planted out in Furnace Wood in 2015 and it is hoped that they will mature into a spring floral display to rival the famous Laburnum Arch. We hope that the plants, wildlife, views and seclusion of Furnace Hill will delight lovers of horticulture and wildlife for years to come.

Fran Llewellyn

To bee or not to bee

With the ill-advised Nagoya Protocol preventing the collection of seed from the wild we must increasingly look to our cultivated plants of rhododendron species to enable this means of propagation. We are urged to hand pollinate the flowers on our plants to ensure that their seed produces plants true to that species but I would question whether this is necessary. Since the early 1960s I have been raising rhododendrons from seed, often open pollinated, and have had very few little strangers.

One of the first batches was from seed of the dwarf form of *R. keiskei*. This was not the prostrate *R. keiskei* var. *ozowae* which had yet to be introduced but was a shrub up to 1m in height rather than the type form which can attain 3m. All but one of the seedlings proved to be true to the seed parent while the odd one out was more robust, with larger, broader leaves. When it flowered it seemed fairly obvious that this was a hybrid with *R. ciliatum* or *R. 'Cilpinense'*. It was, nonetheless, an attractive shrub with an abundance of creamy white flowers lightly flushed with pink in early Spring. I called it 'Silky' and still have it today.

A batch of open pollinated seedlings of *R. racemosum* F19404 produced among them two plants which appear to have *R. lutescens* blood but apart from that and the foregoing I cannot remember any others that did not come true to type.

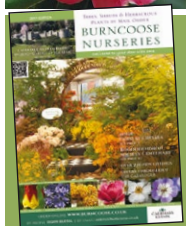
Curiously, while seeking variation in the F2 generation of some hybrids these too have produced look alike seedlings. Seed of *R. 'Carmen'* produced identical clones to the parent and I remember that Dutch nurserymen raised Azalea 'Homebush' from seed with very little variation in the progeny

We must remember that even seed of a particularly good specimen of a species in the wild will not necessarily give us the qualities of its parent. The parent plant will be growing in a colony containing less spectacular forms with one of these being the pollen parent.

During the busy spring season in the garden it is sometimes difficult to find time to hand pollinate to any great extent and open pollinated seed should not be dismissed as unworthy. It would be interesting to hear the views of other members on open pollinated seed.

Barry N. Starling

Please make a point of hand pollinating any interesting plants in your garden this spring, and to collect seed in the autumn for donation to the Group so that we can continue to offer a good seed list next year. Chairman.



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Magnolia lotungensis - a beautiful and hardy evergreen magnolia

For those of us gardening away from the south of Devon and Cornwall and other favoured areas with a mild climate, we thought we could only look at and admire the glossy lustrous foliage of *Magnolia nitida*, its waxy red new growth and scented white flowers beautifully set off by the dark green of the leaves; I have fond memories of the tree at Caerhays in full flower and glorious foliage. I have tried to grow *M. nitida* twice in my relatively mild garden in North Devon, but only succeeded for a few years before each of my plants died.

All was not lost, however, as to my delight, I discovered that there was another *Magnolia* that had a very close resemblance to *M. nitida*, but was hardy over most of the British Isles, namely *Magnolia (Parakmeria) lotungensis* and, indeed, this belongs to the same small Gynopodium Section of Magnolias as *M. nitida*, but is its only reliably hardy member. It used to go under the name *M. nitida* var. *lotungensis* which shows how closely these two magnolias are related. *M. lotungensis* is hexaploid and so is very variable in form in the wild and some forms are very close to *Magnolia yunnanensis* and could be forms of the same species. Whereas *M. nitida* has a USDA hardiness rating of Zone 9-10, *M. lotungensis* has been put in Zone 8b. It grows well with shelter in either sun or partial shade.



Magnolia lotungensis

Photo: Richard Figlar



Magnolia lotungensis

Photo: Richard Figlar

As an aside, with regard to *Magnolia yunnanensis* (syn. *Parakmeria yunnanensis*); this is a different plant from and not to be confused with *Michelia yunnanensis* which, now that all Michelias etc have been sunk into *Magnolia*, is called *Magnolia laevifolia* (and formerly and briefly *Magnolia dianica*). In spite of

the confusion surrounding its name, *M. laevifolia* is a deservedly popular and beautiful hardy bush or small tree.

M. lotungensis was discovered growing with *M. denudata* in the mountains of Central and Eastern China and is therefore of the same hardiness. If you can grow *Magnolia denudata*, then you should be able to grow *M. lotungensis*. It can form a large tree in time, and like seed raised deciduous magnolias, can take up to 20 years to flower, so get planting! I know of only one source of *M. lotungensis* in this country - Larch Cottage in Cumbria - from where I obtained my plant a few years back. This form has pale new growth rather than the red new growth of *M. nitida* but does have the same lustrous foliage and is growing fast. It is now about ten feet tall after ten years and heading north at an increasingly rapid rate. I believe there is also a form with red new growth and smaller leaves which I have seen only in a photograph, and which would be worth seeking out.

John Marston

I would like to acknowledge the help of *Magnolia* expert Dr Richard Figlar (pers. comm.) and his kind permission to use his photographs of *Magnolia lotungensis*

Mount Lofty Botanic Garden, South Australia

Mount Lofty Botanic Garden is situated on the Eastern slope of Mount Lofty, part of the Piccadilly Valley in the Adelaide Hills. The Garden is now over 100Ha in size. Most of the garden would be regarded as Woodland in style. It has been in existence under the Botanic Gardens of South Australia, formerly Botanic Gardens of Adelaide management since the first purchase by the Board in 1952 of 45Ha but only open to the visiting public since 1977.

I describe the garden as being rather like a giant's hand, the palm of that hand has the main lake in it with gullies like fingers radiating uphill from that lake. These gullies house the more intense plantings of the garden.

The garden has several focus collections. One of these happens to be Rhododendrons and another Magnoliaceae. There is also a substantial Camellia collection. Many of the original plants, and these were in the main camellias and rhododendrons, came to the garden as rescues from large private gardens that were carved up by the construction of the South Eastern Freeway out of Adelaide in the early 1960's.



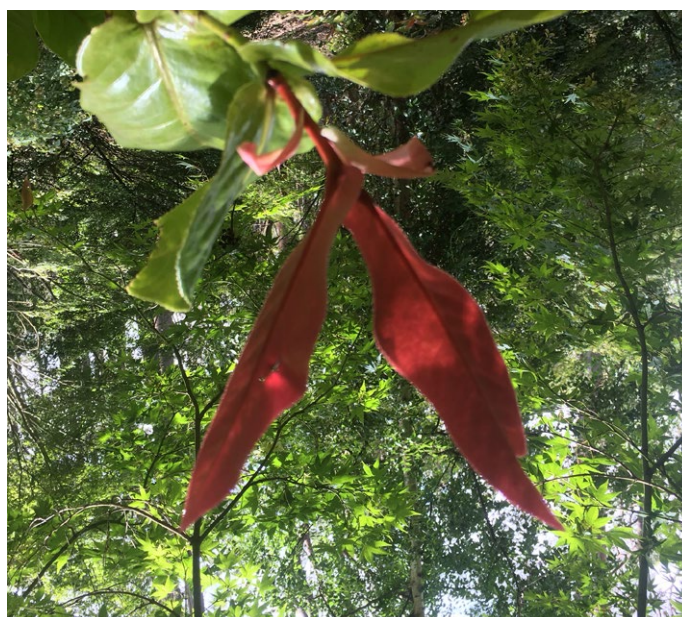
View in the Mount Lofty Botanic Garden. *Eucalyptus obliqua* in the foreground
Photo: Robert Hatcher

In 1983 the Ash Wednesday Bushfire went through Mt Lofty Botanic Garden burning approximately two thirds of it. Many

of the cultivar Rhododendrons were burnt and, as they were grafted onto *Rhododendron ponticum* there is now a significant purple display in early summer in Rhododendron gully. This event enabled a significant shift from cultivar rhododendrons to a more species focus that has seen a steady rise in number to between 150 and 200 species when you include subspecies and varieties. This period also saw the Magnolia collection grow significantly with a private donor enabling a large number of Magnolia species and cultivars to be purchased.



Rhododendron (Vireya) 'Irian Jaya' Photo: Robert Hatcher



New leaves of *Camellia amplexicaullis* Photo: Robert Hatcher



Rhododendron 'Face Time' Photo: Robert Hatcher

Continued overleaf

Both the Rhododendron and Magnoliaceae collections have their own gully but there are specimens dotted around the garden as well. *Camellia* species are concentrated in one branch of a gully while cultivar camellias are planted throughout the garden.

Apart from these collections there is a Gondwana collection with significant numbers from all the Continents that comprised this land that existed more than 35 million years ago. South America gets a gully as does Australasia and New Zealand and an ostensibly East African collection that currently has a good deal of South African Flora due to the fact it is harder to obtain material from true East Africa, There is also a large representation of *Araucariaceae* mainly from New Caledonia that came about from a collecting trip there in the late 1980s.

The whole Garden houses a large general tree collection from all over the cooler temperate parts of the world and this provides a great show in autumn. This has brought in large numbers of visitors in recent times which have resulted in some interesting challenges with infrastructure not being able to cope.

While much of the garden is still developing there are parts which have reached a degree of maturity well worth a visit if you are in South Australia. Only fifteen minutes' drive from Adelaide in one of the most scenic parts of the Adelaide Hills, Mount Lofty Botanic garden is still the jewel in the crown as far as the Botanic Gardens of South Australia's three gardens are concerned.

Robert Hatcher

Pushing the limits of hardiness in rhododendrons

For many years I managed Clyne Castle Gardens, a woodland garden on the sweep of Swansea Bay in South Wales. The garden contains an important collection of rhododendrons and other plants from around the world. The original plantings there were undertaken by Admiral Walker-Heneage-Vivian, one time Vice President of the Rhododendron Association, who subscribed to many of the collecting expeditions during the early years of the 20th century. Here the maritime influence and the tree cover meant that it was rare to experience more than a degree or two of frost, even in the hardest of winters. If there was snow, it usually melted away by the afternoon but was appreciated, whilst it lay, for the way it briefly and charmingly transformed the landscape.



Rhododendron edgeworthii ITS056 Photo: Ivor Stokes

Consequently, I somewhat took for granted the fact that such tender species as *Rhododendron edgeworthii*, *R. genestierianum* and a wide range of Subsection Maddenia, along with their hybrids, thrived and flowered regularly at Clyne, without any additional protection. It was only after I started to take some

of these fabulous blooms to the competition benches in Vincent Square and come away with many prizes and commendations, that I became aware of how privileged I actually was.

Such was my enthusiasm for these exotic plants that, when I left Clyne to work at the National Botanic Garden of Wales, I thought that they should be included in our own garden some 25 miles inland. My hopes were initially dashed when a large plant of *Rhododendron* 'Fragrantissimum', one of my favourites, was killed outright during its first winter in the ground when temperatures dropped to -6C.

Several young potted plants of *R. edgeworthii* and *R. nuttalli*, which were being grown on in an unheated glasshouse and being fed and watered on a regular basis, suffered some damage when the temperatures dropped, with young foliage dying back and flower buds aborting. However one plant of the former species appeared to have missed out on the watering regime and there was no sign of any damage at all. With this in mind, my maintenance pattern has changed and, apart from generous feeding and watering early in the growing season, from October onwards, I now only give them a little water when the plants are at the point of wilting. During the winter of 2010/11 we experienced -16°C for a couple of days and, to my delight, none of the more tender species suffered any damage at all, not even to the flower buds, and they went on to give a more marvellous display of their scented blooms than they had ever done in previous years.

On reflection, many of the species within the Maddenia Subsection grow as either epiphytes or lithophytes in the wild, frequently in areas with dry winters. In these situations they cannot naturally rely on constant or abundant moisture and have evolved to a degree to cope with this. If the plant's cells are continuously plump and water-filled, they are likely to burst if frozen and the plant may die or suffer serious damage. A modified watering regime may just produce some interesting results - worth a try maybe.

Ivor Stokes

Where to live to grow Rhododendrons – the Sequel

Those of you with good memories will recall I wrote in the March 2008 Bulletin (#96), of my search for a suitable area of the UK that we should focus upon for retirement. This was followed up by one in the March 2010 Bulletin (#102) with the results of our successful purchase on the Wirral peninsula in Merseyside.

Since that time several of you have asked me to write a sequel showing the next stage in the development of the garden.

As always, we are so dependent on what the weather throws at us. What I had not spotted in my research was that the Wirral is quite dry; indeed Ness Botanic Gardens is the driest Botanic Garden in the UK. I have heard the locals say their weather is "not too much of anything".

One of the aspects I had checked was where Wirral's water came from and was pleased to see it was Wales. This made me think that I would not have to endure the hosepipe bans common in the SE in the 2000's. How wrong I was! Our supplier is United Utilities who get their water for Lancashire from the Lake District. In 2010 there was a severe drought in the Lake District and as they didn't want to differentiate between customers who got their water from Wales or the Lake District, they instituted a blanket ban! I now have 5 water butts, which have been sufficient to date.

I had tested my soil before we bought the house and found it

was slightly acidic (pH around 6), which I now gather is created by the red sandstone present in the area. Once I started planting out I found that the depth of this sandy loam varied from 6 to 12 inches, with solid clay below that, so not quite as ideal as I was hoping for. Whilst Camellias and Magnolias seem to be thriving, I have had variable results with the Rhododendrons. Azaleas seem to be quite happy, but triflorums are barely clinging on to life.



Fig 1: The lawn in 2010

As can be seen in the “before” picture I had a large expanse of lawn to play with. I went on the RHS Level 2 horticulture course at Ness Gardens and learnt the rudiments of Garden Design. It was drummed into us that it was very important to create the hard landscaping before planting anything. This was very frustrating, as I was itching to get digging.

Eventually we hit on a plan that featured a central path going to the end of the garden, at a slight angle to the patio by the house and then curved paths radiating from this, such that from Outer space it would look like tree branches. If you have access to a recent Google map (CH62 2AR) you can see this now!



Fig2: Larger seedlings planted out in April 2011

The turves dug out for the paths were turned over and placed on the beds which were then covered in wood chippings, hoping to minimise weed growth. This worked well for two years.

I had realised a while ago that having a garden with only Rhododendron, Camellia and Magnolia plants led to eight months of the year without much of interest to look at! So, I have fully embraced perennials and grasses. I also now enjoy those plants that self-seed and wander around the garden at will.

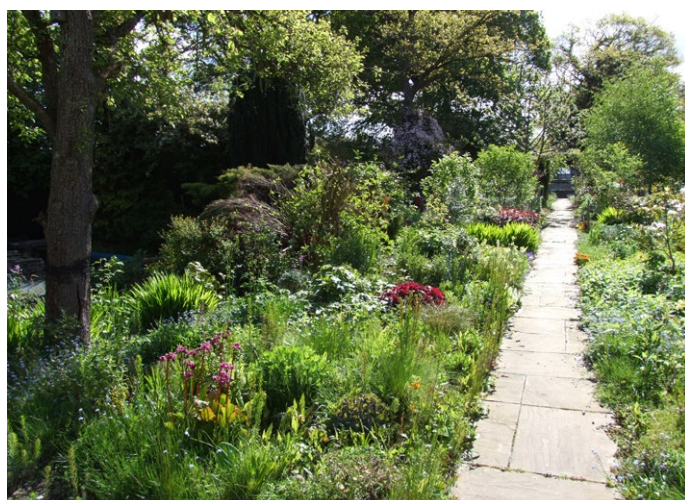


Fig3: Herbaceous borders in May 2014

Originally I had expected to have to wait at least five years for the plantings to start to mature, but was very pleasantly surprised to see substantial growth in three years. My favourites back then were the *Magnolia x soulangeana* ‘Lennei’ and *Paulownia tomentosa*. The former now flowers profusely, with significant seed this year and the latter virtually doubled in height each year from the one metre whip I planted out, to about twelve metres now. It flowered properly in 2015 and set huge numbers of seed pods. Since reading Russell Beeson’s article explaining his planting philosophy, I have decided to plant out seedlings as soon as I felt they were large enough, probably far too close to each other. So there are now 29 Magnolias (9 of which have now flowered), 66 Camellias and more than 100 Rhododendrons in the ground, plus of course lots of other genera that have caught my eye.



Fig 4: Pool from bridge in August 2016

The final element to complete the overall design fell into place in 2015 when we finally found someone willing (at a reasonable price) to convert the 25 foot swimming pool into a garden pool, with waterfall. Planting in water has added a whole new range of interesting plants, which I am slowly learning about. Zingiberaceae is a family I am now exploring, so watch this space.

Stephen Lyus

Conservation officer's report

We have been busy through the winter months selecting endangered Rhododendrons to propagate and have come up with a list of 53 plants (this list can be seen on our website). They include Rhododendron Hybrids, deciduous and evergreen Azalea, all of which appear on the Critical list on our website.

Material from these plants will be sent for micro propagation and instructions on what is required will be sent to the people who have the plants in their gardens and kindly offered to participate in the project.

As soon as plants are grown to a suitable size, we will allocate new homes to them. Interested parties should let me know if they could provide a home to any plants raised and I will add them to the list.

The "Critical list" on the group website is being replaced with a list of plants which had previously been awarded an Award of Merit (AM) by the RHS. These plants must have been good enough at the time the award was made to be thought of as garden worthy and we would like to find as many as possible. Therefore, once again we are asking you to take a look at the list and tell me if you know the whereabouts of any of the plants. Please feel free to contact me with your comments and thoughts as the more information we have the better our decision making will be. If a plant suffered from mildew with you let us know as that plant may not be worth growing.

None of this conservation work would have been possible without your kind support and especially with the money raised to fund the propagation of the plants.. I would like to thank everybody who has contributed in some way and ask everybody to keep working with us to achieve our charitable aims.

Stephen Harding
hebeexpert@gmail.com

EDITOR'S NOTES

Peter Furneaux

I need your letters, reports from branches, articles, future events, etc. to keep the members up to date. Please send your copy for the **August 2017 Bulletin by Friday 7th July**.

Images made on a digital camera, iPad or mobile phone, as well as transparencies, are acceptable and should be taken as 'large' files, so that they are of the high quality required for printing. Please ask for specifications if you require more detail. Looking through your old picture folders might well encourage you to pen a note for the Bulletin.

Please send your contributions to:
 Email: peterfurneaux@gmail.com
 Peter Furneaux, Lucton Court, Lucton, Leominster HR6 9PQ

MEMBERSHIP

Rupert Eley

We welcome the following new members and hope they will enjoy the benefits offered by the Rhododendron, Camellia and Magnolia Group

TREASURER'S NOTE

Jenny Fly

Dear Members
 If you pay by DD you will probably have received a notification of a new contract by EazyCollect. This is a new set up within your contract to change payments from an ad-hoc payment to rolling each year. This will save considerable time in manually collecting each of your DD's each year to automatic.

If you have any concerns or queries please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Jenny Fly, Group Treasurer
 Pineroft, Bracken Close, Storrington, West Sussex RH20 3HT
 Email: treasurer.for.rcmg@gmail.com Tel: 01903 742350

**Rhododendron Camellia and Magnolia Group,
 Annual General Meeting**

The AGM with the presentation of the first accounts of the CIO will take place in the Learning Centre at **RHS Rosemoor Garden, near Torrington** on **Sunday 23rd April at 2.30pm**

North West England & North Wales Branch

The North West Branch Tour to South East Scotland is now fully subscribed; all we need now is good weather.

Our branch show, at Ness Botanic Gardens, Wirral, is on Sunday 30th April & Monday 1st May and is open to all, free of charge, both to see and enter specimens. We can usually place specimens in the correct category and welcome exhibits from anybody, whether members of the Group or not. Setting up will be from 0930 – 1100 hours, Sunday, 30th April.

As far as our three genera are concerned, the weather this past year has been more favourable than the previous year, when many Camellias dropped their flower buds because of a very dry late summer. Autumn varieties last year flowered very well, in particular *C. sasanqua* “Hugh Evans”, which was almost invasive in its growth and in full flower for over two months. This has been followed by *C. x williamsii* “Bow Bells”, in flower for much of December and now in mid - January is still covered with flowers.

A new development here is that grey squirrels have discovered the nutritive value of *Camellia* seeds. Several *C. saluenensis*, laden with seed pods, were stripped in late September, leaving the ground beneath covered with chewed up seed capsules. This may explain why I have seedlings of this species germinating in all sorts of places, away from the parent plants. The squirrels have buried the seeds and forgotten about them. Thankfully they did not find the one seed capsule on *C. chekiangoleosa*, which though very large, was mostly woody matter but with one large seed – now planted (by me and not the squirrels).

Ted Brabin



The flower buds of *Camellia chekiangoleosa* are not dead!

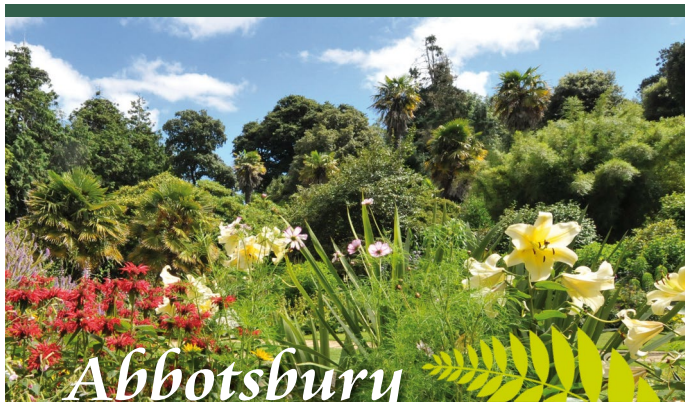


Camellia chekiangoleosa in Ted's garden

Lapageria rosea
'Nash Court'

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Grampound Road, Truro, Cornwall. TR2 4DD www.trewithengardens.co.uk




In aid of
Pilgrims Hospices
Registered Charity Number: 293968

Open Garden - Sandling Park

Sunday 14th May
10am – 5pm
Admission £5 - Children Free

OPEN FOR ONE DAY ONLY

Sandling, Hythe CT21 4HN
Allow 2 hours for the garden tour
Tea, coffee and hand made cakes will be available
Free Car Parking

The garden is situated 1 ½ miles NW of Hythe. Entrance from the A20 only. From M20 J11 turn east (left) onto A20 towards Folkestone. Entrance ¼ mile.
Sorry No dogs allowed
Woodland Garden unsuitable for wheelchair access



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OPEN: MONDAY. - SATURDAY 10 - 4

the Rhododendron, Camellia & Magnolia group forthcoming events



MARCH 2017

11/12

RHS / South West Branch
RHS Rosemoor

RHS Early Camellia Competition and SW Branch Early Rhododendron and Spring Ornamental Competitions

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

Dr John Marston
artavianjohn@gmail.com
01271 323202

8/9

RHS / South East Branch
Savill Gardens, Windsor

(Please note altered venue)

RHS Early Rhododendron, Main Camellia and Spring Ornamental Competitions

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

Sally Hayward
schaywar1@btinternet.com
01227 761369

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AGM of the RCM Group
RHS Rosemoor

The AGM will take place in the Learning Centre RHS Rosemoor at 2.30pm

30/1 MAY

North West Branch
Ness Botanic Gardens

Branch Show

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

13/14

RHS
RHS Harlow Carr

RHS Harlow Carr Rhododendron Competition

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

20

South East Branch
Emmetts

Branch visit (National Trust Members Free entrance)

Barry Haseltine
01342 713132 barry.haseltine@which.net

13-16

RCMG Spring Tour
The Dower House Hotel

The Dower House Hotel Knaresborough Includes RHS Harlow Carr and the RHS Late Rhododendron Competition, Harewood House/Gardens, Conducted tours of Ray Wood at Castle Howard and The Himalayan Garden, and other important gardens in the area.

Christopher Legrand
clegrand@pirltd.org.uk
01202 873344

22-26

North West Branch
Eastern Scotland

Group Tour

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

APRIL 2017

5

South West Branch
Penberth Garden

11am Penberth Garden (Formerly Trewidden) St Buryan, Penzance TR19 6HJ

Optional lunch at own expense at Logan Rock Inn, Treen near Penberth TR19 6LG

2.30 p.m. Visit to Chygurno, Lamorna Cove, Penzance TR19 6XH

Cost £8 per person

Dr John Marston
artavianjohn@gmail.com
01271 323202

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Wessex Branch
Garden Visit

Maurice Foster, White House Farm, High Cross Road, Ivy Hatch, Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 0NN

Andy Fly
pineroftgarden1@btconnect.com
01903 742350

22/23

RHS / South West Branch
RHS Rosemoor

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

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

Dr John Marston
artavianjohn@gmail.com
01271 323202

MAY 2017

11

South West Branch
Wick Farm

11am Wick Farm, Cookbury, Holsworthy EX22 6NU
Optional lunch at own expense at The Bull & Dragon, Meeth EX20 3EP

2.15pm Heanton Satchville, (Clinton Devon Estates), Huish, Merton nr. Torrington EX20 3EH

Cost £8 per person
Dr John Marston
artavianjohn@gmail.com
01271 323202

20

Wessex Branch
Ramster

The Ramster Flower Show

Andy Fly
pineroftgarden1@btconnect.com
01903 742350

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West Midlands Branch
Cherry Tree Arboretum

Cherry Tree Arboretum and Nursery CW3 9SR
Dorothy Clive Garden TF9 4EU, lunch and garden tour.

Ross Underwood
rossiunderwood@aol.com
07974925882

13/14

RCMG
RHS Wisley

RCMG Show with theme of 'Wilson 50' Azaleas and Rhododendron, Camellia & Magnolia Competitions for the Centenary Cup

Sally Hayward
schaywar1@btinternet.com
01227 761369

Event updates to Christopher Legrand please:

24 Riverside Road, West Moors, Dorset BH22 0LQ
clegrand@pirltd.org.uk
Tel: 01202 873344