



## CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Andy Simons - Chairman

Regardless of my hopes for an early spring, central Bedfordshire remains gripped by winter. For the first time in many years the Snowdrops have not had the company of at least a few Camellia blooms and the Rhododendron buds seem to be getting tighter and tighter rather than getting ready to flower. I hope my situation is not echoed around your gardens.

With the ongoing cold weather it is wise to remember that even very hardy plants can succumb to spring frosts and even wind chill when they are small or young specimens. If you have general new plantings or replacements following the recent hard winters, I would advise that a small investment in protection now will negate the need to dig that planting hole yet again. Polypropylene garden fleece is a wonder product for protecting small plants and even blooms from spring frost, I use yards and yards of the stuff, sometimes at this time year the garden looks like a snow-field with all of the white fleece covering everything up. Whilst I accept it may appear unsightly I would rather put up with that than dead or, at best, defoliated plants.

---

With the ongoing cold weather it is wise to  
remember that even very hardy plants can succumb  
to spring frosts and even wind chill

---

So, if we are protecting our plants and blooms, why not get involved in one of the group or RHS flower shows, our genera remain well catered for with respect to shows and to some extent if we do not use them - we may well lose them. The RHS operate early and main shows for both Camellia and Rhododendron and have now added a later show for Rhododendrons at Harlow Carr. It does not matter if you have 2 plants or 200 acres, attending or even entering one of these shows will be educational and even the minor competitive edge that a show brings will improve your plant care. Details of these shows and the schedules are available from the RHS shows department at Vincent Square, or see our events page for dates and locations in this Bulletin.

Turning away from plants for a moment; we continue to progress the Group's relationship with the RHS. This work is difficult, time consuming and not particularly appealing to plant focussed people; a clearer situation or set of options will be available for discussion at the AGM. – see page 10.

Finally, I must report the sad passing of the Dr. David Ives. David was a staunch supporter of the group and led the Peak District branch for many years; I will miss his considered and sensible approach to group business.



The photographic Competition winner in the Camellia Section.  
*C. japonica* 'Bokuhan' entered by George Hargreaves.  
Full details and results – see page 10

## An important date for your diary! Sandling Park

is one of the legendary gardens located on the greensand in Kent. It is famed for its historic woodland gardens with significant plantings of trees and shrubs in natural settings and an important collection of rhododendrons.



Once again the garden will be open to the public  
for *one day* only

**Sunday May 12th 2013**

All proceeds will go to *Pilgrims Hospices* – a specialist palliative care charity. For details visit:

[www.pilgrimshospices.org/events/sandling-park-open-garden/](http://www.pilgrimshospices.org/events/sandling-park-open-garden/)

**Do take the opportunity to visit Sandling Park  
if you are able – you will not regret it !**

SANDLING PARK, SANDLING, HYTHE, KENT CT21 4HN

## Rhododendron seingkuense



R. seingkuense – Early flowering and rare in cultivation. Collected and grown by Philip Evans

My picture is of a plant of *Rhododendron seingkuense* (PE97058) flowering in our garden room here in Devon, in the first week of January this year. The species is one of three within subsection Edgeworthia, the other two being *edgeworthii* itself and *pendulum*. The leaves are somewhat like a miniature version of *edgeworthii* – invariably ovate, the upper surface very bullate and the underside with a dense chocolate woolly indumentum. The flowers are close to *pendulum* ie rotate-campanulate but a good strong yellow, rather than pale pink. First collected by Kingdon Ward in 1926 under KW6793 it is named for the Seingku valley of Upper Burma. My plants have been grown from seed I collected in October 1997 in western Yunnan. From the town of Gongshan on the R Salween (Chinese ‘Nu-Jiang’) we trekked north-west into the Nujiang Forest Reserve towards a peak, called in the local language Dulongla ha, on the divide that overlooks the R Dulong (Burmese ‘Taron’) valley - one of the headwaters of the Irrawaddy. Plants of *R. seingkuense* were growing virtually prostrate on a bank beside the trail at just under 2000m not far above our campsite at a small settlement delighting in the name of ‘Qiqi’.

Incidentally, within this reserve we also saw several immense and ancient specimens of *Taiwania flousiana*, the Chinese ‘Coffin’ tree. We were told by a local official, but whether this is true I do not know, that it can take fifty years for a seedling to reach five centimetres. These trees are now strongly protected in China.

Returning to *seingkuense*, Kingdon Ward described it in *Plant Hunting on the Edge of the World* as a “... scraggy untidy plant growing on exposed ridges as an epiphyte on moss on derelict Fir trees, but that when occasionally met under forest-protection it is much neater...”. Davidian described the species as “...rare in cultivation, too tender for outdoors and suitable only for a cool greenhouse”. Whilst I have plants here that have thrived under glass in winter and flowering regularly by February, I also have two plants growing out of doors in our N Cornwall valley garden that have survived five winters without difficulty so far – including the really severe winter of 2010-11, when even by the sea in Cornwall the temperature went below -5C. I have had outdoor flowering just once so far. The habit seems to be slow growing, part prostrate but with a good upright leader, and I suspect they may reach 3ft in time. I have them growing near plants of a form of *edgeworthii* (my PE97015) with a particularly

thick brown leaf indumentum, collected much further south on that trip. In fact, to date, the *edgeworthii* seems more tender than the *seingkuense*, with dieback in that bad winter.

Philip Evans

## MAGNOLIAS

Maurice Foster

### Magnolias - A Promising Trio

**M**agnolia wilsonii ‘Sandling Park’  
*Magnolia wilsonii*, introduced from the Washan in W Sichuan in 1908 by Ernest Wilson and by George Forrest from the Cangshan above Dali in W Yunnan as *M. taliensis*, produces copious seed which germinates easily. It will flower in 5 years which probably explains why it is the most widespread in gardens of the Oyama section. It is known to be variable from seed and instead of the usual 9 tepals, semi-double forms with 12-16 tepals are sometimes seen, with variation in flower size and in the depth of colour of the central boss of stamens.



*Magnolia wilsonii* ‘Sandling Park’

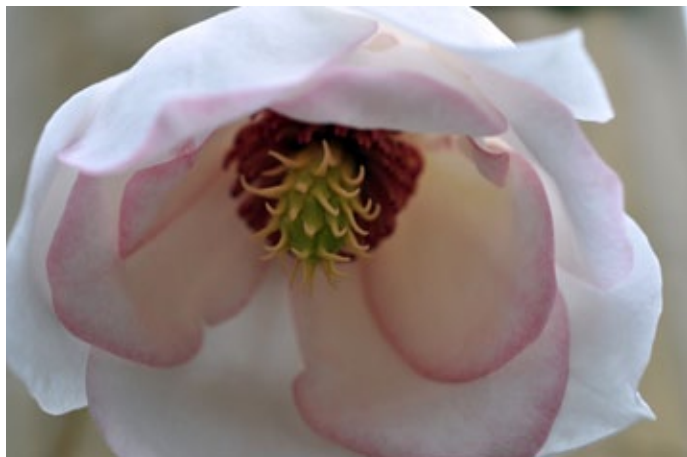
One such form with extra tepals and much larger flowers than the type, is in the great garden at Sandling Park near Folkestone, on what appears to be a very old tree, a true veteran with a girth of 125cm at the base and about 6m tall. It is now going back and probably in terminal decline. It is planted on a bank so that the pendent flowers are seen to maximum effect. The illustration shows the crowded tepals of differing sizes, one lightly stained with pink and the whole flower brought to vivid life by the intense dark crimson red stamens. It is an outstanding form and though the vegetative characters clearly indicate *M. wilsonii*, there is always the possibility of hybridity, perhaps involving *M. sinensis*. Its age is difficult to determine and curator Michael Warren can find no reference in the archive and its origins are unknown. Though Oyamas are not noted for longevity, it may originate from between the wars, when magnolia seed from the Wilson collections was freely exchanged between the great estate gardens.

Michael has raised seedlings from it which offer an intriguing prospect and the original tree has been grafted and is thus preserved for posterity and further increase and distribution. Hopefully there will be a few flowers to see when the SE Group visits in May this year. Even in this collection of so many notable plants, it easily holds its own as an outstanding small tree.

### *Magnolia x globosa* ‘Pink Petticoats’

Some years ago Peter Chappell kindly sent me some seed of *M.*

*globosa*. I was delighted to be able to raise seedlings as it is still a rare plant in gardens and something of a collector's item. It turned out that the seed originated from the former garden of John Phillips in Wiltshire who had a large plant in his magnolia collection. Of the two seedlings I planted out, one died but the remaining plant thrived, in an open position, wind sheltered, and perhaps more Kent sunshine than desirable.



*Magnolia 'Pink Petticoats'*

When it flowered the external tepals were creamy white, but the interior was a convincing pink, with a thin picotee edge to the tepals. Although to date it is not very free flowering and makes little landscape impact, at close quarters the pendent flowers are delightful, nodding to reveal their pretty pink petticoats. It is being grafted both here and in Europe.

The flower is much more open than typical egg shaped *globosa* and clearly a hybrid, I assumed with *M. wilsonii*. However, John told me that his nearest *M. wilsonii* was almost in the next parish, but his *M. globosa* virtually held hands with *M. sieboldii*, so the inevitable conclusion was that the latter was the source of the pollen. Two similar plants, possibly even pinker, have appeared, both in gardens in the west, and when John explained that he had sent quantities of seed to the Duchy nursery in Cornwall it seems reasonable to assume that this was the source of these other two plants.

There remains no clear explanation for the origin of the pink but hand pollinating these plants might just concentrate and fix the colour and lead to a genuine pink Oyama magnolia.

Having said that, it seems unlikely that it could ever match the extraordinary photograph on the cover of the Magnolia Society journal and in the 2012 Year book of the unnamed Dennis Ledvina cross in the US between *M. sieboldii* 'Colossus' and a red form of (*Manglietia*) *insignis* which had the *M. sieboldii* stamens at the centre of a flower of a uniform bright pink loosely in the Oyama style. A pink Oyama is very much in prospect one way or another.

### **Magnolia 'Premier Cru'**

*M sargentiana* var. *robusta* 'Blood Moon' is the darkest form of the species, named not for its colour, but with reference to an obscure Japanese opera of that name. The reason that it is always worthwhile sowing open pollinated seed from a good form like 'Blood Moon' is that the chances of producing a seedling of worthwhile quality are quite high. On a rough count of about 100 magnolias given an RHS award over the years, only something less than a quarter I estimate were for deliberately hand pollinated crosses, while the vast majority were just open pollinated beetle and bug products.



*Magnolia sargentiana* seedling 'Premier Cru'

'Blood Moon' has yielded a plant of some promise to which I have given the 'kennel name' of 'Premier Cru'. I have called it this as I think it is probably – only an informed guess – a hybrid with an adjacent tree of *M. sprengeri* 'Claret Cup'. The flower has the relative informality of a sprengeri type, though still retaining a good shape. It is slightly smaller than 'Blood Moon' and of a nice bright but deep pink with a contrasting paler centre. The strong colour carries well in the landscape. It is also very early, perhaps too early for its own good, and in full flower, like a glass of premier cru, it induces a happy and well disposed frame of mind.

It flowered in year nine from seed, giving the lie to the old canard that you plant these things only for your grandchildren. I also flowered the Caerhays *M. sargentiana* var. *robusta* 'dark form' in year nine. This is not an unconscionably long wait – a further reason for trying magnolias from seed.

I have grafted a couple of plants, to trial it elsewhere to see if it is worth registering.. A sibling with greater vigour, flowering for the first time this year (year twelve!) might become a 'Grand Cru' – I am impatient for the spring.

*Photos by Maurice Foster*

## Denny Pratt Azaleas

Steve Lyus and Tim Baxter at Ness Botanic Gardens

Late flowering and scented azaleas are in increasing demand. Work carried out by Denny Pratt in the 1960's to 80's looked at both extending the flowering season and increasing the flower size, whilst retaining the scent, by selectively crossing known good plants from both groups. Ness Botanic Gardens has a number of the Pratt plants, and in 1998, twenty two of the best were selected and named by the former Curator - Peter Cunnington (q.v. his excellent article on these plants in the 2006 Yearbook).

Plants were selected on late flowering time, large prominent flowers, good scent and autumn colour.

Due to personnel changes, little work was done on the Ness plants after registration, leaving them in varying degrees of health. During the last two years great effort has been made to identify which named cultivars are still present, and to rejuvenate and propagate more. It was evident they were scattered around the gardens, with a great many having lost their labels, and often not planted in the best location to thrive. Luckily only two of the Ness Holt azaleas appear to have been lost to cultivation at Ness ('Heswall' and 'Irby').

To improve this situation, eighty were moved to a central single bed, to both showcase the plants and provide much needed care through feeding and pruning. Almost all have grown well in 2012, in part due to unexpectedly high rainfall! Another issue is the impact of the plant's environment on flower colour. For example, 'Denny Pratt' under complete shade and on heavy clay soil in 2011 was excellent, but when moved to full sun and loamy soil in 2012 was poor.

The greatest problem remaining is the identification of obviously distinct clones. The main characteristics of identification are the size, colour and shape of the corollas; although leaf and bud characteristics are also useful (e.g. 'Raby' has distinctive dark green glossy leaves). Unfortunately, the variation of shape and colour in a single plant and between the plants in different conditions, have made it impossible to identify, with any certainty, any plant that did not have a label. We have however decided we can place the Ness plants into five loose groups:

- Dark Pink with yellow or orange flash
- Pale Pink with yellow flash
- White with yellow flash
- Yellow
- Mid Pink

We have now chosen our best representatives of each group, see table below.

Plant	Group	Flower time	Notes
Denny Pratt	Dark pink	Mid to late June	One of most floriferous with brilliant pink flowers. Upright habit
Thurstaston 2	Dark pink	July – August	Plant of uncertain identity. Name not registered. Last to flower
Ness	Pale pink	Mid-June	Highly floriferous diffuse pink-yellow flowers. Compact habit.
Raby	Pale pink	Mid-June	The most vigorous selection with dark green glossy leaves.
Neston	Mid pink	Early to mid June	Superb purple-bronze foliage and good autumn colour.
Moreton	White	Mid to late June	Upright habit. Best late white.
Spital	White	Early to mid June	Beautiful pink buds. Earlier than some and probably related to 'Stopham Lad'

We have attempted to propagate plants by cuttings and air layering. Ground layering and micro-propagation will commence in 2013.

We will be interested in providing some of these clones to people who might have more favourable growing conditions. Please contact us if you are interested in helping us trial these fantastic plants.

Contact Details

Email: [che1ef@liv.ac.uk](mailto:che1ef@liv.ac.uk)

University of Liverpool

Ness Botanic Garden

Ness

Cheshire

CH64 4AY

### Appendix: photos



#### Thursaston 2

Unregistered and unknown plant. Superb bright pink and latest of selection.



**Denny Pratt**

One of most floriferous with brilliant pink flowers. Upright habit Photographed in 2011 on left in deep shade, and on the right in 2012 in full sun. Note changes to flower colouration.



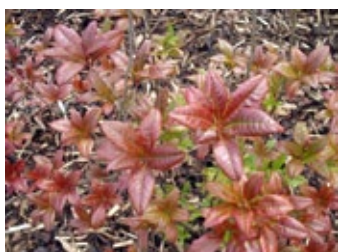
**Ness**

Highly floriferous diffuse pink-yellow flowers. Compact habit.



**Raby**

The most vigorous selection with dark green glossy leaves.



**Neston**

Superb purple-bronze foliage and good autumn colour.



**Moreton**

Upright habit. Best late white.



**Spital**

Beautiful pink buds. Earlier than some and probably related to 'Stopham Lad'

**BOOK REVIEW**

John Sanders

**Volume 15 of a series of Illustrated Practical Handbooks about Landscape Plants entitled 'Featured 98 Ornamental Magnolias (Mulans)' - available via China Scientific Book Services @ approx £20.00 + p/p**

Recent reference to the International Magnolia Society website showed that "Magnoliaceae expert and researcher, Professor Zeng Qing-Wen of South China Botanical Garden (SCBG) in Guangzhou, tragically lost his life when he accidentally fell from a 40 meter high research platform which had been erected in 2011 in order to reach into the canopy of the famous *Magnolia sinica* tree in a remote area of Xichou County near Fadou Town in Southeast Yunnan, China.

He has authored several books including Volume 15 of a series of Illustrated Practical Handbooks about Landscape Plants entitled *Featured 98 Ornamental Magnolias (Mulans)* and he was also an Associate Editor of the very popular and well known *Magnolias of China*. In addition he has authored over 25 papers – mostly on Magnoliaceae – in various scientific journals, and was author or co-author for 6 Magnoliaceae species".

As a committed botanical bibliophile it was the reference to 'Volume 15 ...' that attracted my attention. This was not a title that I had previously encountered. However just a few moments on the computer found details and confirmed that I could purchase a copy for approx £27.00 direct from China to include airmail to UK. The on-line details indicated the complete text was in Chinese but was accompanied by colour photographs on almost every page. With no more knowledge than this and an assumption that the illustrations would likely carry their species identification I was tempted to order a copy unseen!

After just a few days the carefully packed book arrived: it is a small hard-backed edition measuring approximately 8.5" (215mm) x 6" (155mm). Initial inspection indicated that most of the 112 pages are devoted to individual *Magnolia/Manglietia/Michelia* species to include several high quality colour photographs for each one as (i) habitat (ii) foliage + flower (iii) seed pod/s. Eleven of the pages are also devoted to *Alcimandra, Liriodendron, Parakmeria, Paramichelia, Talauma, Tsoongiodendron and Woonyoungia*.

Inquisitiveness immediately prompted me to make comparison with the photographs of some of the magnolia species with those in my copy of 'Magnolias of China' - I selected half-a-dozen or so species that came to mind and to confirm that a large proportion of them are either new or different. It makes no attempt to provide an exhaustive list of species such as depicted in *Magnolias of China* nor does it emulate the superb coloured botanical illustrations and line drawings but where it does score however is as a small and relatively cheap pictorial addition to the magnoliophile's bookshelves.

For those of you who were either unable to obtain a copy of *Magnolias of China* (\*) or have yet to see this comparatively expensive tome, I have no hesitation in recommending this new title. Whilst it makes no attempt to match the extent and coverage of the former, its small size ensures that it can be fitted into the pocket as a field reference whilst it also gives the magnolia enthusiast a comparatively cheap collection of high quality colour illustrations to whet the appetite.

Just a pity that I am not able to decipher the Chinese text! May be there is an English translation lurking?

\*For info - I think that I am correct in saying that 'Magnolias of China' is now available as an E-book @ approx £24.00

## STODY LODGE GARDENS

Set only a few miles inland from the coast of North Norfolk, and only three miles from the popular market town of Holt, even the experts in the field have been amazed to find the Gardens at Stody Lodge.

There are certainly some well known rhododendron gardens dotted around Norfolk for the right soil type only occurs in a few, well spread out, locations such as Sandringham, or Blickling Hall owned by The National Trust (many of their rhododendron originally came from Stody Lodge) or How Hill on the Broads, which has a wonderful display of azaleas. However, none of these begin to rival the displays that can be found in the Gardens at Stody Lodge. An extraordinarily intense blend of shape and colour is achieved from over 200 different varieties of azalea and rhododendron, complemented by a fine collection of trees and other spring flowering shrubs and carpets of spring bulbs. Stody Estate was bought in 1932 by Lord Rothermere. Following a fire which all but destroyed the original Lodge, he decided to build a new house on the southern edge of the surrounding woodland and, in 1933, he engaged the London architect, Walter Sarel, to design a new house and grounds.



Photo from Adel MacNicol

The Gardens are divided into two distinct parts: firstly the Main Garden. The basic layout of this is much the same to-day as it was on Mr. Sarel's original plan; and secondly the Water Gardens, which form part of the grounds of the original Lodge.

As the Gardens move through the five week open period in May, the characteristics change considerably. First there is the fresh, and probably most delicate stage, when the early azaleas (*R. 'Blue Diamond'* etc) are in bloom and the later varieties are giving a tantalising taste of what is to come showing a hint of colour as their buds await their moment to fully open.

This is the time to appreciate the magnolias, whose numbers have recently been increased by the addition in 2004 of *M. 'Heaven Scent'*, *M. xsoulangiana*, *M. liliiflora 'Nigra'* among others; the wonderful show of late daffodils which have been grown commercially on the Estate; and camellias, including a 15 ft bush which was double grafted and produces both pink and white flowers at the same time.

Next comes the stage when most of the azaleas and a number of rhododendrons are in full bloom and the daffodils have given way to carpets of bluebells. The colours are an extraordinary mix where pink and yellow and purple and orange sit happily side

by side – the sunken garden to the right of the main lawn being particularly spectacular.

The senses are assaulted by the sheer intensity of colour and scent, and this is added to by the clumps of late tulips planted in the terrace beds and the large wisteria, planted in 1982, growing up the walls of the house. *Rhododendron 'Cynthia'* provides tall banks of colour along both drives giving structure to some of the more utilitarian parts of the Gardens and many more varieties are out or well on their way. Some of the more recently added are *R. 'Peter Koster'* and *R. 'Madame Carvalho'*.

In the final stage, it is the rhododendrons that take the limelight. Although some azaleas are still coming out, particularly the heavily scented flamboyant 'Knaphill' varieties of 'Cannon's Double', 'Klondyke' and 'Silver Slipper', the atmosphere becomes more stately and my favourite part of the Garden are the paths on the outer margins where the rhododendrons have the space to impress and the eye is led from the creams and pinks of rhododendrons such as *R. 'Albert Schweitzer'* to the more vibrant pinks and purples and reds.

Over the years many trees had been added to the original design, and by the 1990s there came a point when the azaleas were being adversely affected by the amount of moisture and goodness that these trees were taking from the ground. The overwhelming feeling in the Gardens at that time was of being closed in by solid walls of conifers and there were many blank areas where nothing would or could be grown underneath. It was certainly very dramatic but the trees were taking over as the main feature prohibiting any perspective and making it impossible to enjoy the often startling and kaleidoscopic views which are such a feature of the Gardens to-day.

There was only one course of action and we embarked on a phased programme that has seen the removal of over fifty large trees, most of which were large mature conifers. This was no small task. Skilled tree surgery was needed to avoid damaging the rhododendrons and azaleas below but the biggest problem was removing the often very large stumps – clearly this did not happen when the garden was first laid out – resulting in an on-going problem caused by honey fungus. The benefits have far outweighed the problems. Now you can appreciate the shape of the better specimen trees; we have begun to create individual areas or 'rooms', for example, the wild garden to the left of the Azalea Walk; new paths have been constructed through the woodland area with its carpets of late daffodils and leading around to the now exposed well; the tall *Acer palmatum 'Heptalobum Rubrum'* which is such a feature of the main lawn, is beginning to grow back into a normal shape and suddenly azaleas that were beginning to fail have responded with tremendous vigour.

We have also constructed a new horseshoe-shaped garden and as this can be seen clearly from the house, we particularly chose some azaleas that would also have striking autumn foliage such as *R. 'Orange Beauty'* or *R. vaseyi 'Pink'*. We broke them up with *Pieris 'Variegata'* and some more magnolias and have also added in some summer flowering shrubs such as *Weigela florida 'Variegata'* and *Potentilla* and *Cistus* and also a few shrub roses.

### The Water Gardens

The Water Gardens, and original Old Lodge, are approached by a long drive leading up through the woods, which is lined on both sides by the distinctive dark pink *Rhododendron 'Cynthia'*. These were allowed to grow to a great height, which looked



Photo from Adel MacNicol

magnificent, but inevitably there came a time when the growth on the lower part of the plants became very sparse, the woodland behind caused the plants to grow out into the drive and which made them vulnerable to being knocked off by passing traffic, and gradually most of the flowers were either only very high up or out of sight on the top. Clearly drastic action was called for and in 1992, somewhat tentatively, the present owner took the decision to cut back half of one of the sides to approximately two to three feet. This proved a success. The extra light allowed the plants on the other side of the drive to produce new growth lower down the stems and over the next couple of years the same exercise was repeated on both sides all the way up the drive.

Only 18 years later we found ourselves in the same situation again. This time we decided to do both sides at the same time, accepting that for one year there would not be many flowers, but wishing to achieve a more balanced 'look' than the previous method. But this time we also extensively thinned, or high pruned, the trees behind in order to increase the light and allow the rhododendrons to grow back straight and in a more uniform manner. Already there is plenty of growth although we have to be vigilant as one or two will revert, at the base, to the original common *R. ponticum* from which they were grafted and it is very important that all such growth is removed before it becomes too vigorous and completely takes over, as *R. ponticum* is prone to do.

Strong winds in the 1980s and 1990s, and more recently the very heavy and lasting snows of 2009 and 2010, have brought over some of the older rhododendrons. Their shallow rooting nature makes these plants particularly vulnerable to these conditions and the fact that they were old and so magnificently tall, only made matters worse. However, in almost every case they are growing back from their original trunk and beginning to rise again. We have taken the woodland behind further back, as we did with the drive, in order to promote good regeneration and straight new growth.

At the turn of the twentieth century, the Old Lodge was occupied by a Mr Ernest Horsfall. He was a keen gardener and decided that he should extend the existing garden by clearing the large "dark and boggy" area in the woodland. Set in a natural bowl, the water comes entirely from the natural drainage of the surrounding area, there are no springs. Tucked down in the middle of the wood this is a wonderful peaceful spot. Finding that azaleas and rhododendrons not only thrived, but seemed to be less attractive to rabbits than many other types of shrubs, Mr Horsfall set about forming the lake, which had to be lined with

a thin layer of blue clay in order to hold water, and digging out a network of channels and small islands.

The whole area was filled with thousands of Mollis azaleas and surrounded by a bank of rhododendrons, some destined to grow to over sixty feet in height. At some point a very few later flowering or scented azaleas were added, but, apart from these, all of the azaleas in the Water Gardens are the distinctive orange and yellow Mollis variety and these Gardens have, reputedly, the largest single planting of Mollis azaleas in the country.

In 1998, we decided to remove a large belt of ponticum from the east bank of the lake. Taking great care not to penetrate the clay lining, we dredged the lake and burnt all of the ponticum in the mud. At the same time we cleared around the cedar tree, planting a line of rhododendrons (*R. 'Mrs A T de la Mare'*, *R. 'Faggetter's Favourite'* and *'Earl of Donoughmore'*) around the back of the newly grassed area. We also substantially increased the numbers of azaleas around the lake. An interesting feature is the bank upon which that row of ponticums once grew. We left the roots to rot down and it has become the most wonderful nursery bed on which hundreds of azaleas and a few less welcome seedlings, have established themselves naturally and then been used in other parts of the garden.

It is a constant challenge to remove the self-seeded conifers and ponticums that seem to grow right in the middle of the azalea plants. Once the azaleas have finished flowering, it is an important job to prevent the very fast growing weeds and bracken from swamping the azalea plants and preventing any natural regeneration or new growth on the lower part of the shrub.

There are only a few trees within the Water Gardens but each can claim importance in its own right. The magnificent Cedar on the far side of the lake adds a touch of grandeur, the tall *Metasequoia glyptostroboides* and the odd swamp cypress provide height without being overbearing; my favourite, the stunning pale green acer that has slowly returned to shape since the Ponticum were removed, and, at the entrance to the rhododendron drive, the two very large *Sequoiadendron giganteum* – the Wellingtonia.

The Gardens at Stody Lodge are well worth a visit. Normally open every Sunday afternoon in May, individual groups are welcomed during the week, by prior appointment. Whether an expert or just in search of a good day out, The Stody Gardens experience is one that we hope will remain with you for many years.

Adel MacNicol

## EDITOR'S NOTES

John Rawling

## NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

I need your letters, reports from branches, articles, future events etc, to keep the members up to date!  
So, please send me your letters and copy for the next issue

**BY 16TH JUNE 2013**

**for the July 2013 Bulletin**

Please send to: John Rawling, Hon. Bulletin Editor,  
The Spinney, Station Road, Woldingham, Surrey, CR3 7DD.  
E-mail: jr.eye@virgin.net or telephone 01883 653341

Dear Editor,

I am aware that Christmas will be long past when the next issue of the Bulletin is due but just wondered if this note might be of interest to include in the next issue of the Bulletin?

John Sanders

### Rhododendron argentaeflora - a unique and recent rhododendron discovery:

It is not often that one is fortunate to witness the only plant of a particular species in existence - but even more so when it is very conveniently displayed on the show bench - without even the need to travel to its original remote and undisclosed location!

Many members will know Barry Starling as a very successful plantsman and regular competitor at RCMG Shows alongside his gargantuan plant knowledge and expertise together with his literary talents which are frequently witnessed in numerous botanical and horticultural publications. What many of you may not know is also his skill and dry wit to wring some humour out of our favourite genera. For several years Barry has applied this talent to bring amusing and clever plant descriptions together with 'erudite' botanical notes to the attention of others!

To elaborate further - at many of the Exeter Group of the Alpine Garden Society December meetings - Barry has regularly brought an interesting plant - usually something with a topical and ericaceous twist - to whet our appetites. It occurs to me that the wider membership of the RCMG might also be interested in some of his rarer plant introductions - hence I include a photograph of the most recent, together with a copy of the supporting botanical notes which detail the recently discovered *R. argentaeflora*. To further support his case he had also managed to self-pollinate his plant which had subsequently produced copious quantities of seed for distribution. To this end he produced several packets of seed at the same Group meeting which were generously available to our members. The 'seed' took the form of small silver ball bearing-like edible beads - best described as the sort of thing that are used to decorate an iced Christmas cake!! I do wonder if any more gullible colleagues may have already sown their share of the seed harvest. If so - it will be interesting to see if it breeds true?



Herewith Barry's botanical notes that accompanied the above photograph: "*Rhododendron argentaeflora* : species nova

Collected and introduced from an area north of the North Pole by S. Claus, Lapland University Botanic Garden Expedition, December 2009. The aims of the expedition were made quite clear from its name - 'Polar Bear' (Polar Botanical Expedition for

Arctic Rhododendrons). This species was discovered growing amongst dense colonies of *Leucojum*. It is possible that, on closer examination, it may prove to be closely related to species *R. pseudoargentaeflora*.

### Cultural requirements

The species is hardy throughout Great Britain but during hot spells in Summer may benefit from iron as a trace element in the soil, *R. argentaeflora* requires a certain percentage of silver to thrive.

### Botanical details

The expedition leader Dr S. Claus is head of the Botany Department at Lapland University during the Summer months. However during the dormant winter season he is employed at a department store, while over the Christmas period he has a job delivering toys.

Dr Claus has asked me to pass on his best wishes for the Christmas season to members of the Exeter Group of the Alpine Garden Society" (and likewise members of the RCMG ex JS).

### MEMBERSHIP

Rupert Eley

We are delighted to welcome a group of New Members. We hope that they will enjoy their membership and make full use of the facilities and activities available.

The Editor



## The Rhododendron Camellia and Magnolia Group Annual General Meeting

At the kind invitation of The Marquis of Lansdowne, the AGM will be held at 2.30pm in the Kerry Suite, which adjoins the Bowood Hotel, Calne SN11 9PQ. Tel. 01249847695.

An Agenda for the meeting will be available by email and on the Group's web site nearer the time of the meeting.

In the morning, prior to the AGM, Lord Lansdowne will lead a tour of the celebrated Bowood Hybrid Rhododendron collection, which is situated quite close to the Hotel on Derry Hill.

Members can meet either at (a) the Kerry Suite at the Bowood Hotel at 10.00 – 10.15 am for coffee, or (b) inside the Lodge Gates leading into the collection from the Rhododendron Car Park (which is a mile from the Hotel off the A3102 and sign posted between Derry Hill and Sandy Lane), at 11.00 am for the start of the tour.

A light buffet lunch will be available for members in the Kerry Suite on return from the tour at a cost of £12.00 (pay on the day)

Bowood House is clearly marked with distinctive brown signs all the way from Junction 17 off the M4 around Chippenham via the A350 and A4. About three quarters of a mile before Bowood House on the A4 Calne road, the A342 Devises road forks right up Derry Hill, and about half a mile up this road there is, first, the entrance to the Bowood Hotel and, further on, the Rhododendron Collection car park, both on the left. Further information about Bowood is available on [www.bowood.org](http://www.bowood.org).

This will be an interesting and enjoyable day and members are warmly encouraged to come and take part.

Please notify the Honorary Secretary, Barry Haseltine, [barry.haseltine@which.net](mailto:barry.haseltine@which.net) or 01342 713132, by 22nd May, if you plan to attend, stating if you will visit the gardens, if you will want lunch, or will come to the AGM only.

## The Group Finances – A Report from the Treasurer

Members will have seen various reports of our thoughts on membership subscriptions in previous Bulletins. The Group is in a perfectly stable financial position, resulting from careful financial management over many years. We have worked to keep costs to a minimum, and have been helped by the substantial contributions to our income from book sales and our successful seed list.

However, like everyone, we are faced with increasing costs and after very many years of stable membership fees we must now face up to an increase in November 2013. We will keep the increase to a minimum, aiming to ensure that membership fee income covers the Groups basic operating costs. This change creates a good deal of work for our voluntary team of officers. Later this year we will send out membership renewal information and we are going to introduce payment by Direct Debit for those with a UK bank account --- it will help us greatly to reduce the administration task of the Group if as many members as possible will choose this method of payment.

The new membership subscriptions will be:

UK members - By direct debit	£20.00
- Other payment methods	£22.00
<b>Europe</b>	£25.00
With e-mailed Bulletins	£22.50
<b>Rest of the World</b>	£27.50
With e-mailed Bulletins	£22.50
Discount available for three years payment in advance	For Europe or R.O.W only

In the case of overseas members we offer a discount for those who are happy to receive the three annual Bulletins by e-mail as this reduces our postage costs and we urge as many as possible to take this option.

*Alastair Stevenson Group Treasurer*  
[alastairstevenson@mpaconulting.co.uk](mailto:alastairstevenson@mpaconulting.co.uk)

## GROUP WEBSITE

Steve Lyus & Graham Mills

[www.rhodogroup-rhs.org](http://www.rhodogroup-rhs.org)

### From our webmaster

#### Seed list

The seed list 2013 has been available for some time on our web site and indeed will have its first update soon as some seeds sell out. First come, first served.

#### Garden visits

Our favourite season is about to arrive, so please look at the large number of wonderful gardens that we have compiled on our website (under Services and then Links). Each name is a link to that garden's own website, so that you can easily find out opening times and directions. Hopefully you will be reminded of ones you have enjoyed before, as well as ones that you always meant to visit.

If there are additional features that you would like to see added to the site or you have any other comments then please contact [webmaster@rhodogroup-rhs.org](mailto:webmaster@rhodogroup-rhs.org)

Graham Mills

## Members' Photograph Competition

There was a steady trickle of photos throughout 2012, with many more Camellias (15) than we have had for several years. However there was massive reduction in Rhododendron pictures from 117 to just 23 (12 species, 11 hybrids). John McQuire, our judge, commented that there were "... very few new photos of a good quality". He "... hopes it improves next year..." , so that's challenge for you all. The number of Magnolia photographs was also down from 30 to 13.

Judging by the buds on my plants of all 3 genera, 2013 should be a good year for blooms, as long as we have a reasonable Spring! So I am hoping that you will send many new photos of plants that are not in our dictionaries. Please be aware that there are now rather too many pictures of some plants (e.g. *M. yunnanensis*), so please check before you send in your photos, that they will be of interest to our members. Details of the 2013 competition and how to send in your photographs are given on the web site.

See next page for the winners' photographs.

Steve Lyus

## Rhododendrons



Class 1: Rhododendron species:  
*R. mallotum* entered by John Archer



Class 2: Rhododendron hybrids:  
*R. 'Loderi Sir Edmund'* entered by Chris Callard



Class 3: Vireya species:  
*R. jasminiflorum* entered by George Hargreaves



Class 4: Vireya hybrids:  
*R. 'Bold Janus'* entered by George Hargreaves

## Magnolias



*M. 'Pink Surprise'* entered by Alain Gorlin

## Camellias



*C. 'Bokuhan'* entered by George Hargreaves.

# The Himalayan

## Garden & Sculpture Park



### Mail order plants and nursery



We supply a wide variety of high quality ericaceous plants to gardeners throughout the UK. We are able to supply the rarer and more unusual varieties of Species and Hybrid Rhododendrons as well as Azaleas, Magnolias, Cornus and other Himalayan plants.

- The majority of our Rhododendron's and Azalea's are either sourced by seed from the Himalayan area or bought in as seedlings and grown in our nursery.
- Hardy, good quality plants at competitive prices.
- Mail order available throughout the year.
- Phone for our product list or see our website for more details.

Our plants come in a variety of sizes from small to specimen plants for immediate impact. Our product range is expanding all the time and it's worth keeping an eye on our website as new varieties are added regularly.

Visit our website for more details [www.himalayangarden.com](http://www.himalayangarden.com)

The Hutts | Grewelthorpe | Ripon | HG4 3DA  
P: 01765 658009 | E: [info@himalayangarden.com](mailto:info@himalayangarden.com)

# www.LODER-PLANTS.COM

## AZALEAS & RHODODENDRONS



## HYDRANGEAS



## CAMELLIAS



# 01403 891 412

MARKET GARDEN, LOWER BEEDING, HORSHAM, RH13 6PP

We have an encyclopaedic website, which contains a wealth of information. We have something here for both connoisseur and absolute beginner.

**OPEN: MONDAY. - SATURDAY 10 - 4**

## MARVELLOUS MAGNOLIAS & CAMELLIAS

# EISENHUT

VIVAIO

BAUMSCHULE



We offer over 450 species of grafted Magnolias. Among these are some of the latest hybrid Magnolias and selected clones of Magnolia species.

Our full list of Magnolias, Camellias and Wisterias is available on request.

Plants are despatched as one- or two-year grafts and in accordance with import regulations.

EISENHUT NURSERIES – SPECIALISTS IN MAGNOLIAS  
CH6575 San Nazzaro/Ticino SWITZERLAND  
Tel: +41 91 795 18 67 Fax: +41 91 795 30 29  
Email: [infoeisenhut@bluewin.ch](mailto:infoeisenhut@bluewin.ch)  
Internet: [www.eisenhut.ch](http://www.eisenhut.ch) – now reworked with many more photos of our listed plants

## Advertise here and engage directly with Rhododendron, Magnolia & Camellia enthusiasts both here in the UK and overseas

Contact John Rawling on 01883 653341 or email at [jr.ey@virgin.net](mailto:jr.ey@virgin.net)



# the Rhododendron, Camellia & Magnolia group forthcoming events



FEBRUARY / 2013

16

**North West Branch**  
Ness Gardens

Talk by Steve Lyus on  
"The 2012 Camellia  
Congress in Yunnan"

Ted Brabin  
0151 353 1193



MARCH / 2013

16/17

**SW Branch**  
Rosemoor Garden

**Early Camellia  
Competition** plus  
SW Branch  
Rhododendron and  
Magnolia competitions

Pam Hayward  
01822 852122 or  
Colin Brown  
01674 277268



APRIL / 2013

9/10

**S E Branch**  
Wisley

**SE Branch Competition  
in association with  
RHS Main Camellia  
Competition and RHS  
Early Rhododendron  
Competition**

Barry Haseltine  
01342 713132

13

**S E Branch**  
Farnham

Visit to John McQuire's  
garden (advance  
booking essential)

Barry Haseltine 01342  
713132

13/14

**N W Branch**  
Ness Gardens

**Branch Show**

Ted Brabin  
0151 353 1193

14-19

**Group**  
Cornwall

**Spring Tour**

Judith Hallett  
01981 570401

17

**New Forest Branch**  
Exbury

Tour lead by Head  
Gardener John  
Anderson

Martin Gates  
023 8025 2843



20/21

**SW Branch**  
Rosemoor

**SW Branch Camellia  
and Magnolia  
Competitions in  
association with RHS  
Main Rhododendron  
Competition**

Pam Hayward  
01822 852122 or  
Colin Brown  
01674 277268

22-26

**NW Branch**  
South East England

**Branch Tour**

Ted Brabin  
0151 353 1193

20/21

**SW Branch**  
Par and Lostwithiel,  
Cornwall

Private garden visits to  
'Fontana' at Trenyhton  
Manor and Ethy House,  
Lerryn

Colin Brown  
01674 277268

MAY / 2013

4

**New Forest Branch**  
Chandlers Ford

Visit to three private  
gardens

Martin Gates  
023 8025 2843

4/5

**NW Branch /RHS**  
Harlow Carr Garden

Rhododendron Show

John Harsant  
0151 342 3664

5

**Wessex Branch**  
Storrington

Private garden visits

Miranda Gunn  
01428 644422

10

**New Forest Branch**  
Hillier Arboretum

Rhododendron display

Martin Gates  
023 8025 2843

11

**SE Branch**  
Hythe, Kent

Private visit to Sandling  
Park

Barry Haseltine  
01342 713132



11/12

**North West Branch**  
Ness Gardens

Branch Show

Ted Brabin  
0151 353 1193

19

**Wessex Branch**  
Ramster

Branch Show

Miranda Gunn  
01428 644422

22

**North West Branch**

Visit to Sue Kenwell's  
garden at Rowen  
and Aberconwy  
Nursery

Ted Brabin  
0151 353 1193

JUNE / 2013

8/9

**N W Branch**  
Exbury

Rhododendron display

Martin Gates  
023 8025 2843

OCTOBER / 2013

20/21

**SW Branch**  
Rosemoor

Autumn Meeting,  
Branch Plant Sale and  
Lecture by Thomas  
Clarke, Head Gardener  
at NT Trelissick on  
his trips to Arunachal  
Pradesh

Colin Brown  
01674 277268