



# The Rhododendron, Camellia & Magnolia Group

## THE ROYAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

BULLETIN - 94

www.rhodogroup-rhs.org

JULY 2007

### CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Mike Robinson

#### Chairman's Report to the AGM 12<sup>th</sup> June 2007

Group membership continues to grow, with the steady trickle of new members outweighing resignations and deaths. The current membership is 829, 17 more than this time in 2006. The establishment of a Paypal account has enabled members, particularly those from overseas, to pay subscriptions and purchases more conveniently. A splendid new leaflet, designed by Barry's Haseltine's daughter, has been issued to the branches and distributed to gardens, and we hope that this will produce yet more new members.

Group funds are in a very healthy condition, and the reserves continue to grow in spite of the commitment of £2000 per annum to the Edinburgh PhD and the payment of travelling expenses to committee members.

2007 marks the end of Philip Evan's ten year tenure of the editorship of the yearbook. I think everyone will agree that Philip has enhanced both its appearance and standard. Both the yearbook and the bulletin have done much to increase the Group's reputation substantially. I should like to thank him wholeheartedly for both the quantity and quality of the work he has done, while welcoming Pam Hayward as his successor. She has once again exceeded expectations in her job as business manager for the yearbook by reducing costs of printing the 2006 yearbook by some £2000. The cost of the 2007 yearbook will be somewhat greater.

The Bulletin continues to fulfil its vital function of reporting items of immediate interest: there will be a few changes in the coming year, with show and tour reports appearing in the bulletin rather than the yearbook. This will be discussed further today. Our thanks are due to John Rawling for his indefatigable work in maintaining the content of the bulletin at its present high standard.

Sales of publications continue to contribute an increasing part of our income. Pam Hayward's policy of negotiating favourable deals with publishers in advance of publication, and her trawling for second hand publications is reaping good rewards.

*Continued on page 2*



R. 'Lady Alice Fitzwilliam' at Ilnacullin, Ireland Photo: Stephen Lyus  
"You'll just have to imagine the fragrance!" Ed.

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Profits from the sale of seed were down last year, but Gerald Dixon has taken up the challenge of the seed exchange with a vengeance: many of us have benefited from his distribution of free packets of older seed from the Group's collection, as well as from material from recent collections. Next year's seed list will therefore be substantially shorter, and it is especially important that members continue to donate material.

A joint initiative with the ARS to identify seed wanted by members has just been started, and we hope this will prove fruitful in the future.

Judy Hallett is to be thanked for ensuring that the tours continue to be a great success with the recent tour of Ireland attracting 45 participants. Arrangements for the proposed tour of Yunnan to see rhododendrons in flower at the end of May 2008 are being made. The cost is likely to be the order of £3000, and the aim is a tour that will be fairly comfortable and not too strenuous. Numbers, however, are likely to be extremely limited.

Representatives of the Group and RHS Rhododendron and Camellia Committee visited RBG Edinburgh at the beginning of May. The PhD sponsored by members of the group has started, and we received presentations from both the student, Toby Marczewski, and his supervisor, Richard Milne. In their different ways both of these were inspiring, and I can assure members that their contributions are being well spent, with significant progress on the evolution of rhododendron likely to emerge from the research. It is also delightful to be able to report that a recent reorganisation has much enhanced the status of rhododendron studies at RBG Edinburgh, and that the living collections are being restored. The main worry there now appears to be the lack of continuity in studies of subgenus *Vireya*.

The main RHS rhododendron competition was held for the first time at Rosemoor last month. It is a pleasure to report that Rosemoor had 4100 visitors over the 2 days of the show instead of their usual average of 1500, and the considerable number of exhibits from the amateur growers of Devon, Cornwall and Somerset is to be applauded. In contrast to the superb contribution of Exbury (once again), the lack of exhibits from the larger gardens of the region was, however, a considerable disappointment. Steps are being taken to encourage their participation next year. Our thanks are due to Alun Edwards, in particular, and the other supporters from the SW branch for making the show such a spectacle, and to Vaughan Gallavan, Malcolm Pharoah, and Barry Starling for the superb displays of living material.

The Group continues to encourage and strengthen co-operation with like minded organisations. Links this year with the Lakeland Rhododendron Society and the Scottish Rhododendron society are worthy of special mention.

Work is in progress to enhance the operations of the RHS Rhododendron and Camellia committee in such a way that its work and that of the Group become complimentary. I shall be submitting a paper suggesting ways of formalising these links within the next three months.

Finally, as well as thanking all the committee members and those working within the branches, I must thank Maurice Foster, who is retiring from the committee this year to devote

more time to his ever larger garden and arboretum. As we all know, it is Maurice's inspiring contribution, enthusiasm, and his leadership that contributed so greatly to the present health of the Group.

M.L.A. Robinson May 2007

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## EDITOR'S NOTES

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John Rawling

### International Rhododendron Conference

Edinburgh, Scotland May 7-11, 2008

#### *"Rhododendron 2008: 50 Years of Modern Day Exploration, Hybridising & Conservation."*

Jointly Hosted by the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh and the Scottish Rhododendron Society

"An International Rhododendron Conference will be held at the Royal Botanic Garden in the City of Edinburgh, Scotland, in the Spring of 2008 to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of the Scottish Rhododendron Society. If you love rhododendrons and azaleas, are enthralled by interesting speakers and magnificent gardens and enjoy a friendly social atmosphere, then this is an event for you."

Jointly hosted by the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh and the Scottish Rhododendron Society, *'Rhododendron 2008'* will predominantly cover the post-WWII period through a wide ranging programme of lectures, garden tours, the annual Scotland's National Rhododendron Show, exhibitions and social events in the evenings. Many of these activities are being supported by the National Trust for Scotland.

International speakers will entertain you with a schedule of lectures covering contemporary exploration, hybridisation & breeding, cultivation & propagation, history, science & taxonomy and conservation. To cater for all tastes there will be an opportunity to attend an alternative set of lectures during the third and fourth Conference sessions.

Two full days of tours, with a choice of destinations, have been arranged to a selection of mainly private glorious gardens that will complement the theme of the Conference. A high-quality full-day sightseeing tour has been specially organised for those who would wish to have a change from visiting gardens.

A four-day pre-conference Tour, Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> – Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> May, has been finalised that will visit a wide-ranging itinerary of private gardens located in South-west Scotland and the English Lake District. This will be an opportunity to visit some of the more remote West Coast gardens at a very competitive all-in cost.

To obtain a copy of the Conference Programme and Registration Documents, Pre-Conference & Main Conference Tour Programme and Booking Form, and Hotel Accommodation Booking details, which are scheduled to be distributed in late-June, send your name and street address to:

Marjory McFarlane, Conference Registrar,  
14 Loaning Crescent, Peebles, Tweeddale, Scotland EH45 9JR  
e.mail : rhodo08@btinternet.com

Updates will appear regularly in 2007 & 2008 on the Scottish Rhododendron Society website [www.scottishrhodos.co.uk](http://www.scottishrhodos.co.uk)

### Hooker Treasures.

Dr Ray Thornton and Jeremy Peter Hoblyn, of Lamellen, are aiming to produce this Autumn, a limited reprinting of the 30 plates from Joseph Hooker's 'The Rhododendrons of Sikkim Himalaya' of 1849. Details from Dr Thornton, Tudor Lodge, Applemore Hill, Dibden Southampton SO45 5TL. [Dibdenpartners@btinternet.com](mailto:Dibdenpartners@btinternet.com)

#### 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 November Bulletin by 7th October.**

**Please send to: John Rawling, Hon. Bulletin Editor, The Spinney, Station Road, Woldingham, Surrey, CR3 7DD. Tel. (&Fax) 01883 653341 or E-mail: [jr.eye@virgin.net](mailto:jr.eye@virgin.net)**

### TOURS

*Judith Hallett*

#### **The Rhododendron, Camellia & Magnolia Group and ICS Joint Autumn Weekend 2007 in East Sussex 19th to 21st October 2007.**

Contact Pat Short, for full details at:  
41 Galveston Road, London SW15 2RZ. Tel. 020 8870 6884  
E-mail [patricia\\_short@btconnect.com](mailto:patricia_short@btconnect.com)  
Details will become available shortly of this interesting Tour.

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### Group Tour to Yunnan Province, in China

End of May 2008

Come and see rhododendrons growing wild  
in the Himalayas

This is a not too energetic tour covering the  
rhododendron areas of Northern Yunnan, visiting  
Kunming – Dali and the Cangshan mountains – Li  
Jiang and the Jade Dragon Mountains– Zhongdian  
(Shangri La) – and the mountains and lakes of  
Northern Yunnan.

The tour will last just under 3 weeks and will be led  
by the Director of the Kunming Botanical Garden,  
Guan Kalyun

Numbers will be limited – Express your interest now!

Contact Judith Hallett to indicate your interest to –  
Hon. Tours Organiser, The Old Rectory, Thrupton,  
Herefordshire HR2 9AX. Tel. 01981 570401.

Email: [judy.hallett@googlemail.com](mailto:judy.hallett@googlemail.com)

Details will be sent to you, as soon as arrangements  
are finalised.

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## TOUR REPORT - Southern Ireland 2007

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### The Group Tour of Southern Ireland

A coachful of 45 members and guests took part, visiting some 15 gardens over six and a half days of the full tour.

A group of members very kindly agreed to write a report of their views of the gardens – one each. Others visited were to Dereen, at Lauragh and Lakemount near Cork.

The visits were all enjoyed and the gardens differed very widely, both public and private, in size and in content, and we received a warm welcome at every one. It was very noticeable to me that due to the mild and damp climate, every plant seemed to flourish and to grow larger than any in my eastern area of England. I have tried not to edit the reports too much – some of them may be a little long and others a little short - I have squeezed them all in! (Ed.)

### MUCKROSS

Our first visit of the tour was to Muckross House, a great estate developed by the Herbert family and renowned for its great Victorian mix of rhododendron colour. We arrived early in the morning and were able to enjoy the garden in good light and before many other folk had arrived, giving a tranquil atmosphere in the garden. We approached along an amazing tree lined avenue of lime and horse chestnut: what a sight these must be in Autumn!

The framework of Scots Pine (dating to 1845) together with a great Sessile Oak give this garden its very special structure and an excellent backdrop for other trees and shrubs. Here we saw very good examples of *R. arboreum*, and a number of breathtaking *Crinodendron hookerianum* in flower, noted the sweet scent of *Myrtus lechleriana* and admired the deep red colour of *R. 'Lord Roberts'*. As we continued our tour we came to an area that, in recent years, has been established as an arboretum and is home to some tender Rhododendrons, such as the highly scented 'Lady Alice Fitzwilliam'.

Our hour passed all too quickly but Muckross certainly provided a fine introduction to the delights of gardens in South West Ireland

Judy Hallett

### DUNLOE CASTLE GARDENS

The gardens are connected to the romantic ruins of Dunloe Castle and the modern Hotel of the same name. The original castle built in c. 1207 had a chequered and troubled time but survived until it was overcome and ruined by one of Cromwell's generals.

The gardens are relatively modern being planted firstly by Howard Harrington, a wealthy American who like many of his countrymen had bought an estate in Ireland. He obviously had a taste for exotic flora so we can now walk around the world in terms of trees and shrubs, in an hour.

A succession of keen and knowledgeable owners succeeded Harrington. Herr Liebherr, a German industrialist, continues the planting, advised by Harold Hillier and latterly by Roy Lancaster.

We were accompanied round the garden by Willie Carson who had been gardener there for 40 years and pointed out the outstanding trees and shrubs. Amongst those notably shown were *Melianthus*, *Pittosporum*, *Embothrium*,

*Athrotaxis laxifolia*, and also *Pseudopanax arboreus* and *laetus* (both from New Zealand). Your reporter also found *Umbellularia californica* (whose crushed leaves are said to give you a headache), *Podocarpus salignus*, various Myrtles, a large *R. oreodoxa* and an *Acacia baileyana purpurea* which particularly caught the eye.

Of course there were also comprehensive collections of Rhododendrons, Camellias, Acers, Sorbus and conifers etc.

Bill Cook.

### KELLS GARDEN

After our visit to Dunloe Castle Hotel Gardens an unexpected treat came our way: a visit to Kells Garden had been inserted into the programme. The name relates to Kells village, Co. Kerry, not to its namesake of book fame in Co. Meath. This 45 acre estate is 150 years old and has been much neglected in recent years until the present owner, Billy Alexander, started the restoration of the house and garden one year ago.

A phenomenal amount has been achieved in that short space of time considering the work force is only three part-time gardeners. Mark Collins the head gardener, who showed us round said that Roy Lancaster had described the vast plantation of *Dicksonia antarctica* as "primeval forest", a term that might well be applied to the whole garden at this time.

Although windy, the garden is frost free and the growth rate is tremendous. We saw the tallest *Dicksonia antarctica* in Ireland, 20 feet tall and dating from 1860. Also the most massive *Leptospermum* that was probably the biggest any of us had ever seen. It had three thick trunks and was 30 feet tall. Throughout the garden are large Rhododendrons and Camellias in excellent condition, but mainly unnamed.

If the enthusiasm of the head gardener is anything to go by Kells will be a garden to behold in a few years time, and we were privileged to be there so near the beginning.

David Molloy



"Ladies View" on the Ring of Kerry

Photo: The Editor

The Ladies on the tour enjoying the view

### ILNACULLIN Garinish Island.

Ilnacullin ('Island of the holly') is a small island of 17 ha. lying in a sheltered inlet on the north side of Bantry Bay, and reached by a short ferry ride from the mainland. In 1910, Ilnacullin was purchased by Annan Bryce, a Scottish M.P. of Irish descent, noted traveller and member of the Royal Geographical Society, and a keen horticulturalist. He came to live on Ilnacullin with his new wife, and in the years before the First World War set about transforming the island with the help of the garden designer and architect Harold Peto. Shelter belts, mainly of *Pinus radiata*, were planted, rocks were blasted away, topsoil and peat were brought across from

the mainland, and a formal Italianate garden set in a 'wild' Robinsonian landscape of native and foreign trees and shrubs created – 'one of Ireland's gardening jewels'.

Annan Bryce brought in plants from all over the world, but found that Southern Hemisphere plants (and notably from Chile and New Zealand) thrived particularly well – so-called 'tender' plants. We saw, for example, magnificent specimens of the conifers *Agathis australis*, *Dacrydium franklinii* and *Phyllocladus glaucus*; the tree ferns *Cyathea dealbata* and *Dicksonia antarctica*; and, in flower, *Brachyglottis repanda*, *Carpodetus serratus* and *Clianthus puniceus* (from New Zealand), *Beschorneria yuccoides* (from Mexico), and *Brugmansia sanguinea*, and *Crinodendron hookerianum*. Annan Bryce also benefited from the new plants being introduced from China including *Magnolia delavayi*, *Pieris formosa* and *R. macabeanum* reputedly brought back by Ernest Wilson, George Forrest and Frank Kingdon Ward, respectively.

After Annan Bryce's death in 1923, the garden continued to be developed by his widow and his son Rowland Bryce, and by the Scottish gardener Murdo Mackenzie. Special cultivars bred at Ilnacullin include *Griselinia* 'Bantry Bay', *Leptospermum* 'Rowland Bryce' and *Pieris* 'Murdo Mackenzie'. In 1953 Ilnacullin was gifted to the Irish people.

The rhododendron collection is particularly notable for its range of hardy scented species and hybrids of the Maddenia subsection. We saw in flower *Rhododendron burmanicum*, *megacalyx*, *taggianum*, 'Fragrantissimum', 'Lady Alice Fitzwilliam' and 'Princess Alice'. Large-leaved species of rhododendron also thrive: we saw (though not in flower) *R. eximium*, *falconeri*, *giganteum* and *macabeanum*. Other rhododendrons in flower included: *R. augustinii*, *glaucophyllum*, *metternichii*, *tephropeplum*, and *yakushmanum hybrids*

John Tallis.

### BANTRY HOUSE GARDEN

Bantry House and Garden are situated in one of the most beautiful parts of Ireland overlooking Bantry Bay. Unfortunately, the gardens have been neglected for over sixty years and, to some extent, our visit was a reflection on what had been and what may eventuate in the future. We were guided by Clare the very amusing head gardener who was very optimistic about the future but with just one full time assistant plans were rather vague. In effect there are seven terraces, the two to the front of the House have been restored with statuary and fourteen circular beds and so the vista at this level is again very attractive.

To the rear the growth over the hundred steps which lead steeply through the terraces has been cleared but the plans for the actual development have yet to be implemented. There are some interesting features to be seen. At the lowest level, there is what is said to be largest wisteria circle in Ireland (sixteen trees) and also the tallest cordyline.

Clearance of the sunken gardens has revealed some important rose trees including a fine ever flowering *Mutabilis*. Away from the House, the removal of growth from parts of the garden have revealed bamboos and grasses and new planting is now taking place.

In short, these are extensive gardens in a wonderful location and a return visit in two to three years could be very rewarding.

Pat Pearse.

### CARRAIG ABHAINN GARDENS

This is the private garden of Eugene and Hazel Wiseman, which lies behind their hardware store on the main street of Durrus in County Cork. The 2-acre garden has been created from scratch by the Wisemans since 1982 and is a wonderful example to us all of what can be produced through hard work and not a small amount of design flair. They have cleverly diverted some of the river water into their land using the old mill stream and this has resulted in fast running water giving impressive waterfalls between the beech, oak, acer and chestnut trees. There are a number of fascinating Japanese style bridges that allow the visitor to meander amongst the many islands of plantings. Every inch has been used for plants or whimsical objects and many seats have been placed in strategic positions for visitors to enjoy the many vistas. The plantings in the acidic soil are inspiring; unfortunately the 35 Camellias had completed their flowering, but the dazzling azaleas and rhododendrons more than made up for this. Many were *R. yakushmanum* hybrids, including several *R.* 'Percy Wiseman' (no relation!), but we also saw *R.* 'Lady Alice Fitzwilliam', *R.* 'Hachmann's Diadem' and *R.* 'Gold Crown'. There were a few magnolias including *M. stellata* and *M. obovata*; though if their *obovata* grows to the size of the one in the Fota Gardens they could have a problem! Eugene was very proud of many of his plants including *Michelia chapensis*, *Cercis canadensis* and *Paulownia tomentosa*. He had found that propagating *Embothrium coccineum* was very easy from root cuttings. Although Eugene gave us the excellent guided tour, we understand that this fascinating garden has been very much a joint effort, for which they are to be heartily congratulated.

Stephen Lyus.

### FOTA ARBORETUM

On Fota Island ('Fod te' means 'warm soil') the mild climate allows tender plants to flourish – they certainly do! Fota Arboretum is now owned by the State; Duchas, The Heritage Service, tends this excellent 47-hectare garden well, and continues to plant rare and exotic trees from all over the world. It was created by James Hugh Smith Barry in the 1840s; he, and then his son, and later his grand-daughter, who continued the work, spaced the trees well apart so that now they are handsome trees, grown large, as single specimens, all labelled, set in park land.

The plantings were designed to give large vistas from the Regency Manor onto farmland. An exceptional *Phoenix canariensis* (Canary Islands Date Palm) measured in 1984 at 8m. tall and 1.4m. in girth, stands alongside the Orangery, which has been restored.

The collection of conifers boasts 130 species, the 150 year-old trees are huge:- a *Picea smithiana v. Morinda* planted in 1847 measured in 1966 23m tall and 3m in girth; a *Cryptomeria japonica* 34m. tall and 4.5m. in girth in 1984; and *Pinus wallichiana*. The broadleaf trees include *Acers*, *Aesculus*, *Eucalyptus*, *Ilex*, *Magnolia*, *Nothofagus* and *Acacia*. There was a *Davidia involucrata* with a wonderful show of 'handkerchiefs'; *Quercus dentata* 'Carl Ferris Miller' with a leaf about 9 ins. long; a pretty *Q. acutifolia* from Mexico; a *Hoheria populnea* 'Osbornei', a Kew hybrid; *Physocarpus opulifolius* 'Diabolo' with pretty peeling bark; a deciduous *Toona sinensis*, a *T. australis*, and many more.

Rhododendron, Camellia shrubs and Magnolia trees (the *M. campbellii* was over) which interest the RHS Rhododendron Group most, were there too, with some companions, *Pieris*, *Enkianthus*, *Drimys*, *Pittosporum*, *Myrtus* and *Viburnum*.

Of course our time there was too short; we loved what we did see. Joey Warren.

#### SION HILL HOUSE GARDENS

We were welcomed by Mr & Mrs Kavanaugh after climbing the long and steep drive up to the house and garden. Conducting us around the 4 acres garden of park and woodland with its fine views over Waterford, our host pointed out many fine plants including *Cercis siliquastrum*, *R. lindleyi* with fine reddish peeling bark, *R. macabeanum* and *R. falconeri*. Nearby was a variegated *Liriodendron tulipifera aureomarginata* and a fine and large *R. grande*. In the old walled garden, were several tall *Echium pininana* some 14 feet high, a collection of roses and a fine specimen of *Melianthus major*, and *Escallonia macrantha (rubra?)* with rose-crimson flowers and glossy aromatic leaves. In front of the house, the old gravelled driveway fell away steeply over a dry grassy area with a large crescent of naturalised pink *Osteospermum* and areas of shrubs and smaller modern rhododendrons, including an *Abies koreana*, and a *Viburnum opulus roseum*. A most interesting garden, well worth the visit. Derek Faulkner.

#### MOUNT CONGREVE

On a warm and sunny Wednesday afternoon the group made a two-hour visit to Mount Congreve. The estate is on a sea estuary a few miles from Waterford. The house is a substantial bow fronted Georgian building with side extensions. It stands close to the top of a hillside sloping down to the estuary.

Apart from a four acre walled garden, which contains extensive glasshouses, and a few areas of lawn around the house the eighty acre estate is largely woodland. This has been extensively planted with woodland plants including rhododendrons, camellias and magnolias as well as other woodland species such as *embothrium*, *crinodendron* and tree ferns.

The group was shown around the estate by the head gardener, Michael White, who showed us many of the highlights. Although most of the magnolias were over there were many rhododendrons in flower. The planting policy has been to plant *en masse* giving groups of 20 – 30 bushes and more of a given rhododendron in a woodland clearing. This gives the planting considerable impact!!

On our departure the owner of Mount Congreve, Mr Ambrose Congreve now aged 100, saw us off at the end of a highly enjoyable and instructive visit. Roger Dixon

#### ANNES GROVE GARDEN

It is a magical garden of 25 acres which through careful interplanting of native and exotic species, achieves a charming informality.

Its collection of rare rhododendrons is one of its chief attractions for the garden enthusiast. This includes specimens originally raised by Mr Annesley from seed collected by the renowned explorer and collector Frank Kingdon Ward in Tibet and Nepal. These seeds took so well here that they now look as if they are growing in the wild. Planted beside

them are many well known woodland exotics of the period, such as *Embothrium coccineum*, *Crinodendron hookerianum*, New Zealand daisy bushes, North American Dogwoods and *eucryphias*. The Robinson influence is strongly evident here, with a large number of exotics thriving beside native flora.

On our visit we had the good fortune to see the woodland garden at its very best, lit up by a multitude of rhododendrons and a glorious *Magnolia obovata* of most unusual size. During our tour of this garden we were accompanied by the scent of vanilla from the *Azara microphylla 'variegata'*, which hails from S. America.

We had the good fortune and enormous pleasure of being guided on our visit by our charming host Patrick Annesley.

Jane Stanley.

#### DILLONS GARDEN, DUBLIN

It was refreshing to see the town garden of garden writer Helen Dillon. What at first appeared to be a very formal space on closer inspection proved to have some very interesting planting. By the nature of her work Helen Dillon must always be changing her garden and trying new ideas. To this end she was in the process of creating a small vegetable patch.

The formal aspects of the garden are centred around a rectangular pond area using chinese granite and a short rill. Clever use had been made of various size pots and dustbins painted pale blue. There were many box sculptures in all shapes and sizes; balls, pyramids, cubes, a double decker hedge and even a font.

Towards the edges of the garden there were meandering paths containing amongst other things *Vallea stipularis* with cines of cup-shaped rose-red flowers, some *Ariseama consanguineum*, some young Aralias, an interesting New Zealand Lancewood Tree and a *Polylepis australis* looking very similar to *Acer griseum*.

The whole garden was irrigated by a substantial system of pipes and T-pieces such that every area could be watered remotely. A most enjoyable hour. Andy Hallett.

#### MOUNT USHER

This is a unique woodland garden in the sheltered valley of the River Ventry at the foot of the Wicklow Mountains. Extending to about 20 acres, the garden has a reputation for its 'Champions' as well as many rare and tender trees. We came to this Mecca for all tree lovers with great expectations and were not disappointed.

Sean Heffernan, the head gardener, led us on a comprehensive, most expertly delivered and informative tour. Sean seemed to find exciting plants of interest and debate at every turn of our winding route.

The fishtailed *Camellia x williamsii* 'C.F. Coates' in full flower, a rare *Luma apiculata* with beautiful burnished bark, *Telopia truncata* - the 'Tasmanian Waratah', with rich crimson flowers enjoying the company of the near relative *Embothrium coccineum* that just seeded themselves around and prospered in great abundance. There was a *Weinmannia trichosperma* - a slender small evergreen tree covered in racemes of white flowers which contrasted well with the adjacent Fire Bush display - definitely worth a try!

We found *Philesia megallanica*, *Sassafras albidum*, *Drimys winteri* with exceptionally large umbells of flower, *Quercus*

*robur atropurpurea* skillfully planted with *Sorbus aria* behind and *Raphiolepis umbellata* to create a perfect colour contrast. The Azalea walk was at its best, together with enough large rhododendrons for an active and ongoing debate on names.

Magnolias are well represented with large specimens of *M. campbellii* 'Charles Rafill', *M. kobus*, *M. hypoleuca*, *M. virginiana* (over 20 ft high) and *M. wilsonii* in full flower, and many others.

Mount Usher has no less than 29 listed Champion trees, including a whole grove of eight Eucalyptus species and a range of Pines and Firs, but it is the large variety of unusual, rare and tender plants and the way they blend into this perfect setting, that has created a truly magical place.

*Tom Wood.*

## NATIONAL BOTANIC GARDENS, GLASNEVIN.

Glen Anderson of the NBG greeted us and conducted the party on a comprehensive tour of the gardens. They cover some 48 acres and have a relatively mild climate with only occasional frosts or snowfalls. The outdoor planting of rhododendrons and other ericaceous genera are extensive and interesting. Also within the magnificent glasshouses (from the 1840's and 1860's), many vireya species and hybrids are well cared for (mainly from the RBGE since 1996), together with a fine collection of other tender plants including showy vacciniums.

Outdoors, notable plants include "Adam's Laburnum". Both laburnum and purple broom live in symbiotic relationship within this plant with shoots of each springing randomly from the tree. The largest specimen in Ireland of *Zelkova carpinifolia* is also to be seen.

Established in 1795, the NBG is clearly Ireland's premier botanic garden with about 20,000 taxa represented.

*Barry Stagoll.*

The view that we all experienced was that in many gardens we could have spent more time but had to accept that we must return another time to see them in more detail.

Our most sincere thanks go to Judith Hallett for putting it all together and to Jackie Coggan as our indefatigable tour guide.

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## RHODODENDRONS

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Following the article on Winter hardiness in rhododendrons – in the November *Bulletin*, we received a number of letters requesting further information. This response from David Millais arrived just too late for inclusion in the March issue. I am very pleased to publish it now. (Ed.)

### HIGH POTASH FEEDS and the green revolution

My article on winter hardiness in the November 2006 edition of the bulletin created several enquiries for more information about the use of high Potash foliar feeds.

For many years nurserymen have used Sulphate of Potash (49%) sprinkled as a top dressing around the top of the pot or rootball to harden plants up at the end of the summer in preparation for winter. The effects are particularly noticed on evergreen azaleas, where soft green shoots can turn hard and woody relatively quickly.

Recent research has found that when applied as a liquid foliar feed, Potash can give excellent control of Powdery Mildew. The trouble is that foliar applications of Potash are prone to scorching the leaves and can cause more harm than good. The products we have recently tried are designed to avoid scorch. We use a liquid concentration of Potash, and then add a silicon based wetting agent (which also gives aphid control), and over two seasons this combination has proven to be non toxic.

In Southern England, Rhododendron Powdery Mildew does not seem to be as bad as it was 10 -15 years ago, but has recently become more of a problem on deciduous azaleas of *occidentale* parentage, especially from the end of August onwards. Consequently our high potash foliar feeds in August and September both hardens the plants in time for winter, and also give good control of Powdery Mildew without resorting to pesticides.

This is just one of a large range of new products we are now trialling. Over the past few years we have reduced our pesticide usage significantly, and have produced healthier looking plants. Also in our new 'green' armoury are nematodes for vine weevil, Phacelia green manures (wonderful for bees), garlic insect barriers, seaweed feeds, citrus seed oils, soapy surfactants, various soil tonics and several bio-stimulants, and we are looking forward to trialling more this season. Manufacturers have to be very careful how they market these new products so that they do not fall foul of expensive new pesticide regulations, or make false claims about their efficacy. The products often do not make any claims at all, but when we have trialled them, they seem to work and it is safer for all. I hope to report further results at the end of the season. Unfortunately some of these products will not be marketed to retail customers for several years, but the green revolution is happening now!

In the meantime you may like to see the following websites:  
[www.kingsseeds.com](http://www.kingsseeds.com) and [www.sbproducts.co.uk](http://www.sbproducts.co.uk)

*David Millais - March 2007*

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## NOTES on the rhododendron herbarium specimens collected by Alan Clark and Vaughan Gallivan in North Vietnam last autumn

*John McQuire and Mike Robinson*

Following study of the herbarium specimens they brought back, the intention of this note is to give more information of Alan's and Vaughan's collections than was available last December. Some collection numbers are missing as herbarium material was not collected in every case. Naturally flowers and younger foliage, are needed to make identification more definite, and what follows are a few faltering first steps.

### Elepidote rhododendrons

Two big leaved species were collected. These are *R. sinofalconeri* (C&G 5684 & 5687), and the new species described in the 2007 yearbook. This was collected as protistum aff. (C&G 5728). It has a dendroid leaf indumentum with no rosulate hairs.

C&G 5705 is the same species as was collected in the early 1990's as aff. *delavayi*. It is a new species most closely related

to subsection Arborea, but has again has a dendroid leaf indumentum with no rosulate hairs.

C&G 5677 is a member of the subsection Parishia, and, as identified in the wild, is closest to *R. agapetum*.

C&G 5620 is a member of the subsection Fortunea. This was collected in 1992 and flowered in John McQuire's Surrey garden last July. It has a nine lobed corolla, and is something new with affinities to *R. hemsleyanum*. (See photograph on back page –p.12.)

C&G 5686 is a very intriguing find. Superficially it resembles a species in subsection Campanulata, which occurs in Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan region – somewhat remote form Vietnam! Unfortunately the leaves examined had no hairs remaining to enable any determination to be made of even the subsection. Fresher and younger leaves are needed.

#### **Subsection Irrorata and affinities**

C&G 5663, 5667, 5668, 5674, 5678, 5729, 5730, and 5733 show the classic reddish punctate hair or gland bases on the veins of the leaf lower surface. There may be one, two or even three species here, with closest affinities to *R. spanotrichum* and perhaps *R. tanastylum*.

C&G 5664, 5665, and 5680 were thought to be subsection Parishia when collected and the leaves resemble such species closely. The leaf hairs, of which a few remained on the specimens examined, however, are not the diagnostic stellate hairs of that subsection, but are long-rayed. Cowan, though, not Davidian, mentions the presence of 'modified long rayed hairs' on *R. pankimense* (since sunk into *R. kendrickii*) and *R. tanastylum*, and implies the presence of such hairs on *R. kendrickii* and *R. ramsdenianum*. We are indebted to David Chamberlain for drawing our attention to this fact. Once again younger leaves are needed to proceed, but it is more likely than not that these numbers represent members of subsection irrorata.

It is interesting to note that examination of a leaf of *R. tanastylum* var. *pennivenium* from a plant in cultivation revealed the presence of more than one type of hair on the leaf underside: modified long-rayed or ramiform hairs were found as well as a few stellate hairs. This may be why Davidian did not specify the hair type in his publications.

C&G 5731 has an interesting spherical flower bud. The leaves are glabrous, not punctulate, and appear eglandular. It is impossible to determine the subsection for this number from present information, but subsections Irrorata and Fortunea remain possibilities. Note that Tom Hudson collected, and is growing at Tregrehan, a different fortunea species with a much more rounded leaf from this part of Vietnam, and that the flower buds of *R. gongshanense* (subsection Irrorata) are spherical.

#### **Section Tsutsusi**

C&G 5669 is *R. saxicolum*, collected previously and known to be indigenous to Vietnam.

C&G 5670 is a new species within this section. It appears to be monomorphic and has tiny leaves of the size of *R. serpyllifolium*, but the leaf under surface and the petiole are sparsely glandular. Glands are unusual in this section,

having been noted on the petioles of a few species not in cultivation, but the writers are not aware of glands on the leaf lamina having been reported on any evergreen azalea.

#### **Subgenus azaleastrum**

C&G 5671 is very close to *R. ovatum*.

#### **Lepidote rhododendrons**

##### **Subsection Maddenia**

C&G 5615, 5630, 5631, 5732, 5737 and 5740, collected as *R. excellens*, *R. sinonuttalli* and a hybrid must have looked different in the wild, but the dried leaves have identical characteristics, and are very similar to the collections of the 1990's. The plants that have flowered so far have all turned out to be *R. nuttallii*: the only difference between *R. excellens* and *R. nuttallii* being the number of stamens. *R. nuttallii* is very widely distributed, from Bhutan, S. Tibet, N.W. Yunnan and N Burma as well as Vietnam. C&G5630, however, has a markedly tapered style merging on to the capsule.

C&G 5672, 5685, and 5707 are *R. crenulatum*, previously reported from a single collection in Laos, and represents a new species in cultivation.

C&G 5645 and 5648 were collected as *R. veitchianum*. Depending on which books are consulted they are closer to that species or to *R. cubittii*. The distinctions between the two are confused. *R. veitchianum* has been collected previously in Laos, Thailand and central and lower Burma and *R. cubittii* from N. Burma. C&G 5737 with 7 flowers in the truss is an exciting addition to cultivation.

##### **Subsection Pseudovireya**

C&G 5651 and 5727 appear to be *R. emarginatum*, previously collected from this region, though C&G 5727 has the smaller leaves of the now sunk *R. euonymifolium*.

Once again the flora of the Ben Khoang and Fan Si Pan ranges in the extreme north of Vietnam has produced some surprises, with species related to those found previously in regions a very long way from Vietnam, leading to speculation about what happened in this region during the last ice age. We wonder if other genera will reveal similar patterns: there is much more to be done, and we look forward to Peter Wharton's article which will be appearing in the 2008 yearbook.

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## **MEMBERS NOTES**

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### **A hardy well-coloured form of *R. nuttallii*?**

Geoff Taylor, Pant-yr-Holiad, Ceredigion, Wales

Agreeing in many respects with *R. nuttallii* var *stellatum*, introduced Kingdon Ward in 1924 (AM 1955) a more recent introduction by Alan Clark in 1996 from the Golden Temple, Kunming does show a remarkable degree of hardiness, plus much more flower colour. (RHS chart 1966Edn. Yellow green group 154C).

Provisionally named *R. nuttallii* var *excellens*, a seedling was received from fellow RCMG member Glynne Jones of Cwmrhaidr, in 2002.



Following two seasons under glass, it was planted on a south facing bank within deciduous woodland and has survived three winters without damage, producing in 2007 six trusses with some encompassing five flowers.

Unfortunately scent was not obvious, but the cool conditions experienced in late May could have played a part and another season might yield different results.

Measuring 9cm in diameter, the flowers were so welcome in early June, when many rhododendrons species are past their best and should warrant conditions for planting in all but the coldest gardens.



*R. nuttallii* var. *excellans*

Photo: Geoff Taylor

(*Editors note:* I grow a very similar plant - collectors number AC125 - which shows similar characteristics. However, in the South East of England at altitude 800 feet, it does not flower if left outside throughout the winter. It suffered severely from bark split in the winter of 2005/6 and although forming many buds in the autumn of both 2004 and 2005 they did not open in the following springs. First flowering in June 1999 with disappointingly little scent; this year after over-wintering in a frost-free greenhouse, it produced more than 80 flowers with a strong scent. Similar plants are grown by Mike Robinson, (the source of my plant) on the edge of the Ashdown Forest in Sussex, and with similar results when wintered outside).

### Air Layering Tip

*Stephen Lyus*

During the RCM Group's visit to Mount Congreve we noticed that they had a novel approach to Air Layering their Camellias. Michael White said they had to find a better way for their staff to undertake large amounts of air layering propagation without endangering their sanity!

They have found that a hollow plastic children's toy sold by WH Smith was ideal. As can be seen from the picture, this rugby ball shaped toy has the ends removed and is slit lengthwise to enable it to be fitted over the branch. A standard plant tie is then introduced to provide the secure closure over the usual moist sphagnum moss. Finally the ends should be sealed with grafting wax.



In use at Mount Congreve

Photo: Stephen Lyus

I could not find any of these objects in my local store, so maybe they are only sold in the Eire market? Could our members please keep a lookout for suitable alternatives in this country?

### The warm winter 2006-7 and early Spring...

*Brian Wright, Crowborough, East Sussex*

It is February – Monday the 19<sup>th</sup> to be exact. I know this because I was released from hospital last Friday after being given a new knee. Today, on a stick, with my wife acting as minder, I did a turn around the garden and could not believe the number of camellias I saw in flower (20) at such an early time of year. Of course, this may be small beer for those who live in other parts of the country but for me in East Sussex it is quite, although delightfully, extraordinary.

As I write, I am looking at a cut bloom of the japonica 'Wildfire'. Never before have I seen this blood-red beauty in flower in February. Nor 'Donation'. Nor 'Adelina Patti'. Nor 'C.M.Hovey'. Nor 'Adolphe Audusson'. Nor 'Scented Red' – hardly scented, not like the pervasive perfume of 'Quintessence' which is also in flower. Then there's the early appearance of the retic. hybrid 'Harold L. Paige' with its glowing red traffic light of a flower, and 'Bokuhan' that unmistakable miniature with its sturdy boss of white petaloids against dark, latin red petals.

There is also a plant which I acquired many moons ago as 'Cardinal Var.' 'The books' say that it blooms bright red in peony form and is marbled or, to be frank, virused! Well, mine is certainly 'marbled' but dark pink and tending towards a rose-formed double; so I believe not 'Cardinal Var.' However, the point is not only has it never before flowered in February, it has never flowered as profusely as it does today.

Apart from this marvellous rash of eye-opening early bloom there is also the added bonus of many flowers being somewhat larger than usual.

For those who like to compare notes, my twenty in flower are:

The species *C. japonica* var. *japonica* and *C. transnokoensis*.

The japonicas:

- |                    |                             |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| C. 'Adelina Patti' | C. 'Adolphe Audusson'       |
| C. 'Bokuhan'       | C. 'C.M.Hovey'              |
| C. 'Cardinal Var.' | C. 'Commander Mulroy'       |
| C. 'J.J.Whitfield' | C. 'Mrs. D.W.Davis Picotee' |
| C. 'Pope Pius 1X'  | C. 'Scented Red'            |
| C. 'Wildfire'      |                             |

The reticulata hybrids:

- |                      |                  |
|----------------------|------------------|
| C. 'Harold L. Paige' | C. 'Inspiration' |
| C. 'Tango'*.         |                  |

The x williamsiis:

- |                     |
|---------------------|
| C. 'Donation'       |
| C. 'Mary Christian' |

The hybrids:

- |   |
|---|
| C. 'Quintessence' (jap. x lutchuenensis)  |
| C. 'Winter's Fire' (oleifera x vernalis). |

To put this minor phenomenon into sharper perspective you will, in a normal year in early March, find me scratching around to select prospective blooms for the Early Camellia Competition which takes place at Vincent Square in mid-March. If I find a third of the blooms which I have in flower now, I feel that I am having a good early Spring.

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## LETTERS

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*Due to pressure on space in the Bulletin, some letters have been carried over to this enlarged issue from early this year.*

*Again due to time restraints, some typographical errors crept into the last issue: Brian Moss' letter in March should read that he was a newcomer to the world of rhododendrons when began as a complete novice in 1999, not 1969 as printed.*

*Ed.*

### **Rhododendron lacteum.**

I was most interested in Iris Wright's most scholarly and informative article about *R. lacteum* and its hybrids, published in the 2007 RHS Year book.

Is it possible that this species is allergic to calcium? Our garden is on old forest land and, except where it has been contaminated by dumps of coke or builder's rubbish, the soil has a calcium content of 0.1 to 0.2%, which has caused problems; some plants, including *R. kelecticum*, have required calcium treatment in order to grow and flower. Contrariwise, *R. indicum balsaminaeflorum*, which is a dwarf evergreen azalea with pink rosebud flowers, died after small amounts of lime were added to the soil in which it grew; this plant thrives in other areas of the garden. It occurred to me that *lacteum* might also be sensitive to calcium and therefore grow well here. Accordingly I bought a plant from Millais' Nursery in the spring of 2002.

As purchased the foliage was blotchy, but after planting the buds leaf broke and subsequently the leaves have been of good quality. One flower was produced in 2004, and flowering has improved progressively during the following springs.

Most gardens were at one time farmland, and would have been treated with lime in some form. Experience here suggests that the calcium content of acid soil can vary widely. We have one patch, which originally lay under a pile of bricks, where analysis gave a calcium content of nearly 3%, but the pH was 6.5 to 7.0, and *R. decorum* grows and flowers well nearby. So *lacteum* could be difficult and slow to flower because of the soil composition – and it may well be so highly regarded because of this difficulty.

*John Lancaster, Balcombe Forest, West Sussex.*

### **Winter Hardiness in Rhododendrons.**

I write having read David Millais's note on the above subject and with particular reference to the climate which many of us are happy to experience on the West Coast.

After enjoying the Group's tours in Germany and Belgium it is clear that as you go from the West coast of the UK to the East coast and then across the North Sea to Europe there is a gradual change from the relatively mild conditions of the West Coast to the harsher conditions of Europe. Of course as you move inland the influence of the Gulf Stream is lost and you have the much colder conditions that are found in the Home Counties where David Millais lives than we enjoy 200 miles North of Guildford

To make this point I live in the Wirral just a little closer to the coast than Ness Gardens and I happily grow outside *R. lindleyi*, *R. burmanicum*, *R. megacalyx* and the like.

Yours sincerely, *John Harsant, Heswall, Wirral.*

(See the response from David Millais to this and to comments from others' under the heading 'Rhododendrons' above on p.7. *Ed.*)

Dear Editor,

I am a fairly new member of the South East branch of the Group and have to say at once that, although I have admired rhododendrons for many years, I am NOT an expert and joined the Group to learn.

About 25 years ago we acquired a few acres of blackthorn jungle and a disused railway line. We cleared the blackthorn (whilst retaining the mature oaks) and exposed a miniature valley. Springs feed a little stream where we have constructed two ponds and a lake. A 4 foot waterwheel supplies power to our grandchildren's "Wendy house" and to a small pump which fills a 1500 gallon irrigation tank at the highest point, very useful last year!!

The prospect of an 'Himalayan glade' was irresistible. Lack of money encouraged propagation of our own plants from seed.

There were three main requirements:

1. Large tree-like habit. 2. Nice leaves. 3. Nice flowers. All the females fitted the above (to a degree), males unknown!!

It is progressing well with some very interesting offspring, and like others in the Group, we would welcome a visit from passing enthusiasts.

*Trevor Wells, Groombridge, Kent.*

*Trevwells@btinternet.com*

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## SHOW REPORTS

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The **July Issue** of the **BULLETIN** will in future feature the **Reports from the Shows and Competitions, as well as the Reports of the Spring Group Tours, - rather than appearing in the YEARBOOK, up to 11 months after they took place.**

### THE EARLY RHODODENDRON COMPETITION

March 13th and 14th 2007

Sadly, this report will be the shortest on record, there being only fifteen entries in the twenty-two classes – and all from one exhibitor, John Anderson and Exbury Gardens. Sincere thanks to them for their support and for staging such fine exhibits, when the weather the previous two weeks had been very wet and windy.

Class 1. Three species, one truss of each.

**1<sup>st</sup>:** Exbury with *R. arboreum*, *R. macabeanum* and *R. sutchuenense*.

Is not *R. macabeanum* the finest of all the plants collected by Frank Kingdon Ward? And this was a particularly fine, clean, well-staged vase.

**2<sup>nd</sup>:** Exbury with *R. irroratum*, *R. ririei*, & *R. barbatum*.

Class 2. Any species, one spray or branch.

**1<sup>st</sup>:** a little lucky, with a vase of *R. macabeanum* not fully developed, from Exbury.

Class 3. Any species, one truss.

1 entry from Exbury with a fine truss of *R. macabeanum* was worth first prize.

Class 4. Any species of subsect. ARBOREA or subsect. ARGYROPHYLLA, one truss.

**1<sup>st</sup>:** *R. ririei*

**2<sup>nd</sup>:** *R. arboreum*

Class 5. Any species of subsects. BARBATA, GLISCHRA or MACULIFERA, one truss.

**1<sup>st</sup>:** Exbury with a very good, well-formed *R. barbatum*.

Class 7. Any species of subsect. FORTUNEA, one truss.

The one entry of *R. sutchuenense* was worthy of a first.

Class 12. Any species not included in any subsection mentioned in the foregoing classes, one spray. **1<sup>st</sup>:** Exbury with *R. glischroides*.

Class 13. Three hybrids, one truss of each.

Three good, well-staged trusses of pretty *R. 'Kalimna'*, *R. 'Avalanche'* and *R. 'Nimrod'* from Exbury.

Class 14. Any hybrid, one spray.

A very good, well-flowered spray **1<sup>st</sup>** *R. 'Seta'*.

Class 15. Any hybrid, one truss.

**1<sup>st</sup>:** *R. 'Androcles'* – a large, fine example.

**2<sup>nd</sup>:** *R. 'Avalanche'*.

Class 16. Any hybrid of which one parent is a species of subsect. ARBOREA, ARGYROPHYLLA, BARBATA, CAMPYLOCARPA, GLISCHRA, MACULIFERA, SELENSIA, THOMSONIA or WILLIAMSIANA, one truss.

**1<sup>st</sup>:** *R. 'Red Admiral'*, the only entry.

Class 17. Any hybrid of which one parent is of subsect. FORTUNEA, one truss.

**1<sup>st</sup>:** *R. 'Nimrod'*.

THE ALAN HARDY CHALLENGE SALVER will be awarded to Exbury.

May I say that I hope that The Early Rhododendron Competition in 2008 will be held in APRIL – this was TOO early!

Archie Skinner

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### THE EARLY CAMELLIA COMPETITION

13-14 March 2007

#### **Report of Prizes Awarded**

Division 1: Sprays.

Class 1. Any Camellia *Japonica* Cultivar.

**1<sup>st</sup>** Ms D Choa of Queens Garden London with 'Nuccios Gem',

**2<sup>nd</sup>** Mrs Keates of Kingston upon Thames with 'Covena',

**3<sup>rd</sup>** Mr John Anderson representing Exbury Gardens with 'Lavignia Maggi'.

Class 2. Any Camellia x *Williamsii* Cultivar.

**1<sup>st</sup>** Exbury with 'Bowen Bryant'.

Class 3. Any Hybrid or Species not eligible for Classes 1 or 2.

**1<sup>st</sup>** Exbury with 'Phyl Doak', **2<sup>nd</sup>** Mrs Keates with 'Cornish Spring'.

Division 2: Blooms.

Section A: Camellia Japonica:

Class 10. Any 3 Single Flowered Cultivars 1 bloom of each.

**1<sup>st</sup>** Jill Totty from Fordingbridge with 'Spencers Pink', 'Adelina Patti' and 'Bright Bouy',

**2<sup>nd</sup>** Mr Webster for Chatsworth House with 'Alba Simplex', 'Siebold' and an unknown variety,

**3<sup>rd</sup>** Nick Creek of Ardingly with 'Browncreaks Chiffon', 'Browncreaks Phantom', and 'Browncreaks Rosary'.

Class 11. Any Single Flowered Cultivar.

**1<sup>st</sup>** Nick Creek with 'Browncreaks Chiffon',

**2<sup>nd</sup>** Exbury with an unknown variety,

**3<sup>rd</sup>** Jill Totty with 'Bright Bouy'.

Class 12. Any 3 Semi-Double Cultivars 1 bloom of each.

**1<sup>st</sup>** Exbury with 'Reg Ragland', 'Seagull' and 'Firedance',

**2<sup>nd</sup>** Jill Totty with 'Minnie Maddern Fiske', 'Dr Burnside', and 'Ruddigore'.

**3<sup>rd</sup>** Chatsworth with 'Guilio Nuccio', 'Lily Pons', and 'Latifolia'.

Class 13. Any Semi-Double Flowered Cultivar.

**1<sup>st</sup>** David Davis from Warwickshire with 'Wildfire'.

**2<sup>nd</sup>** Chatsworth with 'Guilio Nuccio'.

**3<sup>rd</sup>** Exbury with 'Seagull'.

Class 14. Any 3 Anemone or Peony Form Cultivars 1 bloom of each.

**1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>** Chatsworth winning with 'Jean Clere', 'HM Queen Elizabeth II', and 'Kramers Beauty'.

Class 15. Any Anemone or Peony Form Cultivar.

**1<sup>st</sup>** Chatsworth with 'HM Queen Elizabeth II',

2<sup>nd</sup> David Davis with 'Elegans Splendour',  
3<sup>rd</sup> Mrs Keates with 'Covena'.

Class 16. Any 3 Rose or Formal Double Form Cultivars 1 bloom of each.

1<sup>st</sup> David Davis with 'Nuccios Pearl', 'Twilight' and 'Desire'.  
2<sup>nd</sup> Jill Totty with 'Cardinal Var,' CM Hovey' and an unknown variety.

3<sup>rd</sup> Chatsworth with 'Grand Sultan', 'Desire', and 'Souvenir de Bauhad Litou'.

Class 17. Any Rose or Formal Double Form Cultivar.

1<sup>st</sup> Nick Creek with 'Dr Tinsley',  
2<sup>nd</sup> David Davis with 'Nuccios Pearl',  
3<sup>rd</sup> Chatsworth with 'Lavignia Maggi'.

Class 18. Any 6 Cultivars 1 bloom of each.

1<sup>st</sup> David Davis with 'Guilio Nuccio', 'Elegans Splendour', 'Onitia Holland', 'Mrs D W Davis', 'Nuccios Pearl', and 'Twilight'.

2<sup>nd</sup> Chatsworth with 'Cheerio', 'R L Wheeler', 'Guilio Nuccio', 'Dixie Night', 'Elegans' and 'Mrs D W Davis',

3<sup>rd</sup> Jill Totty with 'CM Hovey', 'Minnie Maddern Fiske', 'Extravaganza' and its pink form, 'Drama Girl', and 'Bob Hope'.

Class 19. Any 3 Cultivars 1 bloom of each.

1<sup>st</sup> David Davis with 'Margaret Davis', 'Elegans Champagne', and 'Gullio Nuccio',

2<sup>nd</sup> Jill Totty with 'Firedance', 'Blaze of Glory', and 'Mark Allan',  
3<sup>rd</sup> Chatsworth with 'Lovelight', 'Lady Clare', and 'Lady Vansittart'.

Section B: Non Camellia Japonica.

Class 20. Any 3 Hybrids 1 bloom of each.

1<sup>st</sup> Chatsworth with 'Leonard Messel', 'Eldorado', and 'Royalty',  
2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Nick Creek with 'Browncreeks Phoenix', 'Browncreeks Purity' and 'Browncreeks Sunset' and 'Waterlily', 'Mirage', and 'Paradise'.

Class 21. Any Camellia *Reticulata* hybrid with *C. Saluenensis* or *C. x Williamsii* in its parentage.

1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Chatsworth with 'Francie L' and 'Leonard Messel',  
3<sup>rd</sup> Jill Totty with 'Valley Knudson'.

Class 22. Any Camellia *Reticulata* Species or hybrid. 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> David Davis with 'Dr Clifford Parks' and 'Lasca Beauty',  
3<sup>rd</sup> Chatsworth with 'Captain Rawes'.

Class 23. Any 3 Camellia x *Williamsii* 1 bloom of each.

1<sup>st</sup> Chatsworth with 'Anticipation', 'Wilbur Foss', and 'Waterlilly',  
2<sup>nd</sup> Nick Creek with 'Browncreeks Phoenix', 'Browncreeks Purity' and 'Browncreeks Sunset', 3<sup>rd</sup> Jill Totty with 'Elegant Beauty', 'Anticipation', and 'E G Waterhouse'.

Class 24. Any Single Camellia x *Williamsii*.

1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Chatsworth with 'Francis Hanger', and 'Joyful Bells',  
3<sup>rd</sup> Nick Creek with 'Browncreeks Nocturne'.

Class 25. Any Semi-Double Camellia x *Williamsii*.

1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Nick Creek with 'Mirage', 'Browncreeks Sweetness', and 'Browncreeks Phoenix'.

Class 26. Any Anemone or Peony form Camellia x *Williamsii*.

1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Chatsworth with 'Debbie' and 'Elsie Jury',  
3<sup>rd</sup> Nick Creek with 'Browncreeks Sunset'.

Class 27. Any Hybrid other than *C. Reticulata* or *C. x Williamsii*.

1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Nick Creek with 'Spring Festival' and 'Bonnie Marie'.

Section C: Classes not previously listed:

Class 28. Any yellow flowered Camellia cultivar.

1<sup>st</sup> Nick Creek with 'Brushfields Yellow',

2<sup>nd</sup> Mrs Keates with 'Jurys Yellow',

3<sup>rd</sup> Chatsworth with 'Jurys Yellow'.

Class 29. Any Camellia Species, 1 bloom.

1<sup>st</sup> Not awarded,

2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Nick Creek with a *C. Saluenensis* selection 'Browncreeks Joyfulness' and *C. Saluenensis*.

Andrew Simons

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## THE MAIN CAMELLIA COMPETITION

3-4 April 2007

### Report of Prizes Awarded

Division 1: Sprays.

Class 1. Any 3 Camellia Cultivars other than Camellia *Japonica* 1 spray of each.

3<sup>rd</sup> Mrs B Griffiths of Thames Ditton with 'Debbie', 'Spring Festival' and 'J C Williams'.

Class 2. Any 3 Camellia *Japonica* Cultivars 1 spray of each.

3<sup>rd</sup> Mrs E Bullivant of Warminster.

Class 3. Any Camellia *Japonica* Cultivar.

1<sup>st</sup> Mr J Anderson representing Exbury Garden with *Mathotiana Rubra*,

3<sup>rd</sup> Mrs B Griffiths of Thames Ditton with 'Eximia'.

Class 4. Any Camellia x *Williamsii* Cultivar.

2<sup>nd</sup> Exbury with 'Anticipation', 3<sup>rd</sup> Mrs B Griffiths with 'Debbie',

Class 5. Any Hybrid or Species not eligible for Classes 3 and 4.

1<sup>st</sup> Exbury with 'Salutation'

2<sup>nd</sup> Mrs B Griffiths with 'Spring Festival'

Division 2: Blooms.

Class 10. Any 12 Cultivars 1 bloom of each, The Leonardslee Bowl.

1<sup>st</sup> Andy Simons of Ampthill with 'Pink Dahlia' 'Nuccios Carousel', 'Harold L Paige', 'Wildfire', 'Kick Off', 'Desire', 'Pavlova', 'Dr Clifford Parkes', 'Valentines Day', 'Bravo', 'Moonlight Bay' and 'Lila Naff',

2<sup>nd</sup> was David Davis from Warwickshire 'Nuccios Gem', 'Nuccios Pearl', 'Nuccios Ruby', 'Tiffany', 'Wildfire', 'Lovelight', 'Lasca Beauty', 'Dr Clifford Parkes', 'Elegans Champagne', 'Twilight', 'Mrs D W Davis' and 'Guilio Nuccio'.

Class 11. Any 6 Cultivars 1 bloom of each.

1<sup>st</sup> Exbury with 'Grand Prix', 'Deep Scarlet', 'Brigadoon', 'Royalty', 'Reg Ragland' and 'R L Wheeler',

2<sup>nd</sup> Andy Simons with 'Lemon Drop', 'Waltz Time', 'Cupcake', 'Nick Crisp', 'Lady Humes Blush' and an unknown variety,  
3<sup>rd</sup> Jill Totty of Fordingbridge with 'R L Wheeler', 'Eximia', 'Mrs D W Davis', 'Extravaganza', 'Owen Henry' and 'Clariss Carlton'.

Japonica Sub-sections:

Class 12. Any 3 Single Flowered Cultivars 1 bloom of each.

1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Nick Creek of Ardingly with 'Alba Simplex', 'Browncreeks Charm' and 'Browncreeks Chiffon' and 'Evelyn', 'Browncreeks Phantom', and 'Adelina Patti', 2<sup>nd</sup> Exbury with

'Tricolour', 'Hatsu Sakura' and 'White Swan'.

Class 13. Any Single Flowered Cultivar.

1<sup>st</sup> Exbury with 'Elizabeth',

2<sup>nd</sup> Nick Creek with 'Browncreeks Rosary',

3<sup>rd</sup> Jill Totty with 'Midnight Serenade'.

Class 14. Any 3 Semi-Double Cultivars 1 bloom of each.

1<sup>st</sup> Andy Simons with 'Geisha Girl', 'Wildfire' and 'Guilio Nuccio',

2<sup>nd</sup> Jill Totty with 'Wildfire', 'Firedance' and 'Grand Slam',

3<sup>rd</sup> David Davis with 'Wildfire', 'Mrs D W Davis', and 'Guilio Nuccio'.

Class 15. Any Semi-Double Flowered Cultivar.

1<sup>st</sup> Andy Simons with 'Wildfire',

2<sup>nd</sup> Jill Totty with 'Minnie Maddern Fiske',

3<sup>rd</sup> Mrs H Keates with 'Brigadoon'.

Class 16. Any 3 Anemone or Peony Form Cultivars 1 bloom of each.

1<sup>st</sup> Andy Simons with 'Kramers Supreme', 'Nuccios Jewel' and 'R L Wheeler',

2<sup>nd</sup> David Davis with 'Margaret Davis', 'Elegans Splendour' and 'Powder Puff',

3<sup>rd</sup> Exbury with 'Tomorrow', 'Grand Slam' and 'Anticipation'.

Class 17. Any Anemone or Peony Form Cultivar.

1<sup>st</sup> Andy Simons with 'Kick Off',

2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> David Davis with 'Tiffany' and 'Shiro Chan'.

Class 18. Any 3 Rose or Formal Double Form Cultivars 1 bloom of each.

1<sup>st</sup> David Davis with 'Nuccios Gem', 'Nuccios Pearl', and 'Opal Princess',

2<sup>nd</sup> Andy Simons with 'Queen Diana', 'Desire' and 'Nuccios Gem',

3<sup>rd</sup> Jill Totty with 'C M Hovey', 'Willamina' and an unknown variety.

Class 19. Any Rose or Formal Double Form Cultivar.

1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> David Davis with 'Opal Princess', and 'Nuccios Pearl',

3<sup>rd</sup> Andy Simons with 'Desire'.

Section B: Non Camellia Japonica.

Class 20. Any 3 other than *C. Japonica* 1 bloom of each.

1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Andy Simons with 'Harold L Paige', 'Brigadoon', and 'Pavlova', and *C. Glabsipetala*, 'Valentines Day' and 'Bravo',

3<sup>rd</sup> Jill Totty with 'Debbie', 'Leonard Messel' and an unknown variety.

Class 21. Any *Camellia Reticulata* Species or hybrid.

1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> David Davis with 'Lasca Beauty' and 'Nuccios Ruby',

3<sup>rd</sup> Andy Simons 'Bravo'.

Class 22. Any 3 *Camellia x Williamsii* 1 bloom of each.

1<sup>st</sup> Andy Simons with 'Pink Dahlia', 'Waltz Time' and 'Debbie',

2<sup>nd</sup> Jill Totty with 'Elegant Beauty', 'Blissful Dawn' and 'Ballet Queen',

3<sup>rd</sup> Nick Creek with 'Browncreeks Sunset', 'Elsie Jury' and 'Waterlily'.

Class 23. Any Single *Camellia x Williamsii*.

1<sup>st</sup> Andy Simons with 'Cupcake',

2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Nick Creek with 'Browncreeks Rambler' and 'Browncreeks Valentine'.

Class 24. Any Semi-Double *Camellia x Williamsii*.

1<sup>st</sup> Exbury with 'Donation',

2<sup>nd</sup> Jill Totty with 'Mirage',

3<sup>rd</sup> Andy Simons with 'Waltz Time'.

Class 25. Any Anemone or Peony form *Camellia x Williamsii*.

1<sup>st</sup> Mrs A Achow of Tenterden with 'Debbie',

2<sup>nd</sup> Andy Simons with 'Anticipation',

3<sup>rd</sup> Nick Creek with 'Jurys Yellow'.

Class 26. Any Rose or Formal Double form *Camellia x Williamsii*.

1<sup>st</sup> Andy Simons with 'Pink Dahlia',

2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Nick Creek with 'Waterlily' and 'Browncreeks Bountiful'.

Class 27. Any *Camellia* Species or Hybrid not scheduled above, 1 bloom.

1<sup>st</sup> Nick Creek with 'Spring Festival',

2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Andy Simons with 'Sweet Emily Kate' and *C. Glabsipetala*.

Class 28. An arrangement of *Camellias* shown for effect, 1 vase.

1<sup>st</sup> Mrs H Keates.

Andrew Simons

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## THE MAIN RHODODENDRON COMPETITION

21st & 22nd April 2007

The competition was reasonably well supported, with almost 200 entries from 16 competitors, mainly amateurs from most parts of the West Country, but also from as far afield as Kent. However the support from the larger gardens, including Rosemoor itself, was very disappointing, only Exbury and Caerhays being present and deservedly winning many classes. Perhaps in future it needs to be made clearer that last minute entries are accepted, and competitors turning up on the day before the show with new entries are made welcome.

As usual the season meant that a few classes were empty. The winners in the other classes were:-

### **Elepidote species**

Class 2 (3 species) 3 entries: 1<sup>st</sup> Barry Starling with *R. arboreum ssp cinnamomeum*, *bureavii* and *niveum* 2<sup>nd</sup> Exbury, 3<sup>rd</sup> Lukesland – an unusual entry which included a nice *R. valentinianum*

Class 3 (1 species, McLaren Cup) 12 entries:

1<sup>st</sup> Brian Wright *R. bureavii*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Barry Starling *possible sp. nov.*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Pam Hayward. *R. jasminiflorum*

Class 4 (spray of 1 species, Roza Stevenson cup) 3 entries:

1<sup>st</sup>. Exbury *R. oreodoxa var. fargesii*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Pat Bucknell, 3<sup>rd</sup> Caerhays

Class 5 (arborea) 5 entries: 1<sup>st</sup> Exbury *R. arboreum ssp. arboreum*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Terry Vince, 3<sup>rd</sup> Brian Wright

Class 6 (barbata, glischra, maculifera) 3 entries:

1<sup>st</sup> Exbury, *R. pachysanthum*, 2<sup>nd</sup> John Bodenham

Class 7 (campanulata etc) 2 entries: 1<sup>st</sup> Exbury, *R. campanulatum*

Class 8 (falconera, grandia) 2 entries: 1<sup>st</sup> Exbury, *R. praestans*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Brian Wright

Class 9 (fortunea) 1 entry: 1<sup>st</sup> Exbury, *R. orbiculare*

Class 10 (fulva) 1 entry: 1<sup>st</sup> Philip Evans, *R. fulvum*

Class 11 (taliensia) 6 entries: 1<sup>st</sup>. Exbury, *R. phaeochrysum* var. *levistratum*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Brian Wright, 3<sup>rd</sup> John Bodenham

Class 13 (pontica) 2 entries: 1<sup>st</sup> Barry Starling, *R. degroonianum* ssp. *heptamerum* var. *kyomaruense*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Exbury

Class 16 (thomsonia) 1 entry: 2<sup>nd</sup> Terry Vince, *R. thomsonii*

#### **Lepidote species**

Class 17 (maddenian - spray) 6 entries:

1<sup>st</sup> John Bodenham, *R. johnstoneanum*, 2<sup>nd</sup> John Bodenham, 3<sup>rd</sup> Barry Starling

Class 18 (maddenian megacalyx alliance - truss) 1 entry: 1<sup>st</sup> Alun Edwards, *R. lindleyii*

Class 19 (triflora) 1 entry: 1<sup>st</sup> Exbury *R. davidsonianum*

Class 20 (augustinii) 7 entries: 1<sup>st</sup>. Colin Brown (Werrington form), 2<sup>nd</sup> Exbury, 3<sup>rd</sup> Lukesland

Class 21 (cinnabarina etc.) 2 entries: 3<sup>rd</sup> Barry Starling *R. cinnabarinum* var. *purpurellum*

Class 23 (lapponica) 3 entries: 1<sup>st</sup> Barry Starling, *R. russatum*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Exbury

Class 25 (scabrifolia) 1 entry: 2<sup>nd</sup> John Bodenham *R. racemosum*

Class 28 (vireya) 2 entries: 1<sup>st</sup> John Bodeham *R. jasminiflorum*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Pam Hayward

Class 29 (deciduous azaleas - spray) 5 entries: 1<sup>st</sup> Exbury, *R. quinquefolium*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Barry Starling

Class 30 (evergreen azaleas - spray) 2 entries: 1<sup>st</sup> Exbury, *R. obtusum* 'Amoenum', 2<sup>nd</sup> Barry Starling

#### **Elepidote hybrids**

Class 31 (5 hybrids) 1 entry: 1<sup>st</sup> Exbury, R's Duggie Betteridge, Jessica de Rothschild, Edmund de Rothschild, Unique and Aurora

Class 32 (3 hybrids) 5 entries: 1<sup>st</sup> Pat Bucknell, whose entry included the splendid *R. Phyllis Korn*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Exbury, 3<sup>rd</sup> Brain Wright

Class 33 (1 hybrid – truss – the Loder Challenge Cup) 14 entries: 1<sup>st</sup>. Exbury, *R. Fortune*, 2<sup>nd</sup> John Bodenham, 3<sup>rd</sup> Pat Bucknell

Class 34 ( 1 hybrid - spray) 3 entries: 1<sup>st</sup> Exbury, *R. Carita*, 2<sup>nd</sup> John Bodenham, 3<sup>rd</sup> Pat Bucknell

Class 35 (hybrids raised by the exhibitor – the Crossfield Challenge Cup) 3 entries: 1<sup>st</sup>. Exbury R's Janet, Edmund de Rothschild and Lionel's Triumph

Class 36 (Loderi) 8 entries: - a splendid display, with 1<sup>st</sup> prize to Colin Brown, Pink Diamond, 2<sup>nd</sup> Caerhays, King George, 3<sup>rd</sup> Lukesland, King George

Class 37 (other fortunea hybrids) 2 entries: 1<sup>st</sup> Exbury, *R. Duggie Betteridge*, 2<sup>nd</sup>. Exbury

Class 38 (williamsianum hybrids) 4 entries: 1<sup>st</sup>. Colin Brown, *R. Bow Bells*, 2<sup>nd</sup>. Exbury, 3<sup>rd</sup> Pat Bucknell

Class 39 (campylocarpa hybrids) 3 entries: 1<sup>st</sup> Exbury, *R. Unique*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Brian Wright

Class 40 (neriiflora hybrids) 2 entries: 1<sup>st</sup> Terry Vince, *R. May Morn*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Exbury

Class 41 (thomsonia hybrids) 2 entries: 1<sup>st</sup>. Brian Wright, unnamed hybrid, 2<sup>nd</sup> Exbury

Class 42 (falconera or grandia hybrids) 3 entries: 1<sup>st</sup> Caerhays, *R. Lord Rudolph*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Exbury, 3<sup>rd</sup> Barry Starling

Class 43 (griersonianum hybrids) 2 entries: 1<sup>st</sup> Exbury, *R. Matador*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Barry Starling



Winner of Class 44 First Prize - *R. 'Lionel's Triumph'*

Photo: Timothy Swan

Class 44 (taliensia hybrids) 2 entries: 1<sup>st</sup> Exbury, *R. Lionel's Triumph*, 2<sup>nd</sup>. Brian Wright

Class 45 (pontica hybrids) 3 entries: 1<sup>st</sup> Colin Brown, *R. Mrs. G.W. Leak*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Brian Wright, 3<sup>rd</sup> Exbury

Class 46 (arborea or agryophylla hybrids) 4 entries: 1<sup>st</sup> Exbury, *R. Colonel Rogers*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Exbury, 3<sup>rd</sup> Terry Vince

#### **Lepidote hybrids**

Class 47 (cinnabarina hybrids) 3 entries: 1<sup>st</sup> Pat Bucknell – the very unusual *R. Lady Chamberlain 'Seville'*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Barry Starling

Class 48 (maddenian or edgeworthia hybrids) 5 entries: 1<sup>st</sup> Brian Wright, *R. Johnnie Johnstone*, 2<sup>nd</sup> John Bodenham, 3<sup>rd</sup> Alun Edwards

Class 49 (triflora hybrids) 2 entries: 1<sup>st</sup> Exbury, *R. Electra*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Alun Edwards

Class 50 (any lepidote hybrid not included above) 2 entries: 1<sup>st</sup>. Pam Hayward, *R. Karin Seleger*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Barry Starling

Class 51 (any elepidote hybrid not included above) 1 entry: 1<sup>st</sup> Pam Hayward, *R. Lady Digby*

Class 53 (tender hybrids - truss) 10 entries: 1<sup>st</sup> Pam Hayward, *R. Monte Cristo*, 2<sup>nd</sup> John Bodenham, 3<sup>rd</sup> John Bodenham

Class 54 (tender hybrids – spray) 1 entry: 1<sup>st</sup> Exbury *R. loranthifolium*

Class 55 (evergreen hybrid azaleas - spray) 1 entry: 1<sup>st</sup> Exbury (unnamed cultivar), 2<sup>nd</sup>. Exbury, 3<sup>rd</sup> Pat Bucknell

Class 56 (deciduous azalea hybrids – spray) 3 entries: 1<sup>st</sup> Exbury

#### **Restricted entry (gardens under three acres)**

Class 57 (elepidote species) 4 entries: 1<sup>st</sup> Brain Moss, *R. pachysanthum*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Brian Moss, 3<sup>rd</sup> Terry Vince

Class 58 (lepidote species) 10 entries: 1<sup>st</sup> Terry Vince, *R. Katherine Fortescue*, 2<sup>nd</sup> John Jemmett, 3<sup>rd</sup> Brian Wright.

Class 59 (large leaf species or hybrids) 2 entries: 1<sup>st</sup> Brian Wright, *R. coriaceum*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Terry Vince

It was very nice to note that 15 of the 16 exhibitors were awarded prizes, and certainly not purely *pour encourager les autres!*

Mike Robinson

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## BOOK REVIEW

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Oswald Blumhardt, New Zealand Plant Pioneer

by **Catherine Ballard** Limp back 119pp.

David Ling Publishing, Auckland, New Zealand, 2006.

www.davidling.co.nz

As the raiser and distributor of that wonderful magnolia 'Star Wars' and the exciting new (to these shores) Camellia 'Night Rider', Oz Blumhardt's name will be remembered in many countries for a very long time.

This short book covers his life and plant collecting expeditions. His hybridising programmes with magnolias, camellias and rhododendrons are dealt with in separate chapters, and there are interesting and informative illustrations throughout. Catherine Ballard's writing ably conveys the spirit of the man – a plantsman extraordinary who not only introduced many valuable and interesting new species to New Zealand before the present draconian import regulations came into force, but was a brilliant propagator and a hybridiser of almost every genus he grew. Fascinated by plants, he was extremely generous in distributing them, often at the cost of commercial gain.

His plant expeditions began with visits to warm climates such as Thailand and Borneo, Fiji, and Papua New Guinea, collecting *Vireya* rhododendrons and many other genera. He was on one of the first modern plant hunting expeditions to North Vietnam in 1992, and returned there in 1995. These expeditions resulted in many hardier plants being introduced into cultivation, many of which have not been distributed outside New Zealand, and some of which remain unnamed. Indeed it is possible that some are in cultivation only at the Blumhardt nursery. The accounts of the Vietnam expeditions, at least, contain more detail than previously published, and this alone makes the book a valuable addition to the literature.

The chapter on hybridisation of magnolias remind us what a treasury of both deciduous and evergreen taxa has been produced in New Zealand - many still unknown in Europe or the USA. Oz was one of the first camellia hybridisers to use species other than the traditional three (*reticulata*, *japonica* and *saluenensis*), thus helping to instigate the trend towards camellias of different growth habits that is now becoming fashionable. His work on rhododendrons is less well known, but in addition to the many vireyas he produced work was done on producing heat tolerant hybrids.

Though not without spelling errors and other minor flaws, this book fluently commemorates the life and work of a true plantsman, willing and able to share his knowledge and enthusiasm with all, who helped to inspire the tremendous horticultural activity in New Zealand, and who was a true Christian gentleman. It is well worth reading.

M.L.A. Robinson

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## BRANCH REPORTS

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**South East Branch Show, Borde Hill**

14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> April 2007,

Barry Haseltine

After three years in which the RHS held its main Rhododendron Competition at Borde Hill in conjunction with the South East Branch of the Rhododendron, Camellia and Magnolia Group's magnolia show and the ICS's camellia competition, the RHS moved to Rosemoor where it held its show on the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> April. Having been to Borde Hill for several years before the RHS came along, the ICS and the South East branch organised a show there on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> April with the kind permission of Mr and Mrs Stevenson Clark. Entries covered all three of our genera, rhododendrons, camellias and magnolias.

For a very pleasant change, the weather was fine and warm, and there was a superb collection of flowers to be seen. Notwithstanding the very warm weather that had preceded the show, the magnolias were still in very good condition, with a fine collection of large flowered hybrids and some beautiful yellow acuminata hybrids. As has become the norm, Maurice Foster took the PHOSTROGEN CUP for the most points in the magnolia part of the competition, although our Chairman, Mike Robinson, also put in a good collection.

The ICS show was up to its usual high standard, with a tremendous selection of blooms in the various multi-bloom competitions. Brian Wright, a member of the South East Branch, took the 12 bloom class, as he has done previously. When presenting the prizes, Pat Short, of the ICS, remarked how incredibly difficult the 12 bloom competition is – one may have 10 superb blooms, but where are the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>? It did not seem to be a problem for the competitors! Following the sad and premature death of Peter Betteley, a regular competitor of the ICS and RHS competitions, his family donated a cup to be awarded for the most points in the ICS competition earned by a South East Branch member, and this was won by Nick Creek of Imberhorne Nurseries.

We were fortunate to have some heavy-weight gardens entering the competitions for rhododendrons, such as Exbury, High Beeches, Leonardslee and Sheffield Park, so the display was truly outstanding. A good cross-section of members from smaller gardens also contributed to the overall spectacle.

The winner of the JOHN FOX PLATE, for the best performance in all classes was Exbury, but the 'Best in Show' award went to Sheffield Park for a marvellous spray of *R. schlippenbachii* and won the ROSE BOWL. It was fully covered with flowers, all open together and with not a mark on any of them – a very worthy winner.

A new cup, presented to the Branch by Everard Daniel, to be known as the JOHN HILLIARD CUP was awarded to the garden under 3 acres with the best overall performance across magnolias and rhododendrons; it won by John Lancaster – one of our stalwart exhibitors.

## South West Branch – Spring Garden Visits.

Colin Brown

On Friday, 4th May, a day of lovely spring sunshine, we visited two very different gardens in North Devon.

In the morning we had the pleasure of touring the gardens and grounds of Castle Hill, the home of the Earl and Countess of Arran, a few miles from South Moulton. Castle Hill came as a considerable surprise to most of us.

Lord Arran conducted our tour himself and led us beyond the formal gardens to a hidden valley planted on one side with a large and varied collection of rhododendrons, camellias and magnolias. Our guide explained that he and his gardens staff had to contend with conditions that were, in some respects, far from ideal for the easy culture of the tree and shrub collection. The winter weather in North Devon could be cold and stormy and the soil was mostly thin, stony and not moisture retentive. At the time of our visit, this situation had not been helped by a virtually rainless April.

As we wandered along the maze of paths (some of the laggards were soon lost altogether) we did indeed come across areas where the rhododendrons and magnolias were proving slow to establish. But these were in the minority and, rounding corner after corner, we came upon well-established and thriving groupings, containing many rare and beautiful specimens. It was obviously a garden where the microclimate and soil conditions at each site were all important.

Our host encouraged the party to seek out and check the accuracy of the labels and we needed little encouragement to do this. In no time at all learned discussions and quite noisy arguments broke out in all directions, His Lordship making careful notes if and when a consensus emerged.

Everyone enjoyed themselves. It had been a fascinating morning from a rhododendron, camellia and magnolia point of view but it was also a rare privilege to see a great house and its grounds in such immaculate condition.

Our afternoon visit could hardly have been a greater contrast. Bruce Osborne lives in a sleepy Georgian farmhouse in **Westacott**, a hamlet close to the outskirts of Barnstaple, surrounded by an amazingly eclectic collection of trees and shrubs with magnolias a speciality. When I first visited him a couple of months earlier, he had insisted on taking me immediately to admire a *Magnolia campbellii* which he had planted himself and was now in full flower. This in itself was perhaps not remarkable but I was somewhat stunned when he then took me to see other *campbellii* cultivars which he had just planted, - a true enthusiast!

We spent an idyllic afternoon rambling around the informal plantings, full of hidden treasures. I particularly remember a fine specimen of *Magnolia x wiesneri* in full, fragrant flower. When he was finally satisfied that there was not a single question unanswered, our host led us to a shady spot where tables groaned with clotted cream and cakes! An afternoon that we will all remember with affection and gratitude to our wonderful host.

On Friday, 17th May, we headed to the very south-easternmost corner of Cornwall to **Antony House**. The house and the formal gardens surrounding it are in the hands of the National Trust but the Woodland Garden, which stretches for a considerable distance along the shores of the beautiful Lynher estuary, still belongs to the Carew-Pole family. Both are looked after by the Antony head gardener, Valerie Anderson, who conducted our tour.

The rhododendrons had flowered particularly early this spring so many more of them were over. There were still quite enough in flower, however, for us to enjoy seeking them out and, as usual, arguing over their labels and their merit or demerits. The Woodland Garden contains a very catholic collection of trees and shrubs so our discoveries were by no means confined to rhododendrons. Valerie pointed out many rarities and other fascinating specimens explaining that a high percentage of them had been selected by Sir Richard Carew-Pole himself, who lives at Antony. He is also a lover of modern art and has sited fine examples of sculpture at strategic points in the garden.

We were shown how numerous ponticum hedges, thickets and shelter belts were being dug out and burned, the areas being replanted with *Camellia japonica* cultivars (Antony has a National Collection of *C. japonica* cultivars). Antony has so far been spared the ravages of *Phytophthora* but the advice emanating from gardens further west in Cornwall that have not been so lucky, is that one of the best control methods so far identified is the removal of ponticum. Valerie and her employers had decided that they would not wait for the arrival of the disease but would attack the ponticum immediately.

An excellent morning of exploration and sunshine, much enlivened by our expert and amusing guide, to whom we all send our thanks.

In the afternoon we met again at Endsleigh, just north of Tavistock and on the Devon bank of the river Tamar which here forms the boundary between Devon and Cornwall.

The Group last visited this wonderful place some ten years ago but since then much has happened with more than £1m having been spent on the restoration of the gardens which, most unusually, are Grade 1 listed in their own right.

For the historian, it should be explained that Endsleigh was created as a holiday cottage (sic) by the 6th. Duke of Bedford and his duchess in the years 1810 to 1816. The design of the “pleasure grounds”, in the fashionable picturesque style, was entrusted to Humphrey Repton.

Today the pleasure grounds remain largely unaltered and beautifully tended. Beyond them there are many acres of arboreta and other plantings created over the years by a succession of Dukes. These have achieved considerable fame because of the giant size attained by so many different species. Today there are at least twenty “national champions” amongst the trees and shrubs, all enjoying the micro-climate and the fact that they are able to tap into the copious underground water flowing, just below the surface, from Dartmoor down to the river Tamar below.



We were led by the head gardener Simon Wood. Our first stop was in the Georgy, the oldest arboretum at Endsleigh, just to the south of the house. The duke and duchess wandered over this steep slope in the summer of 1839, accompanied by John Forrester, the then head gardener, putting in stakes where the new American conifers were to be planted. The young plants were already being grown at Woburn Abbey from seed, collected from the expedition led by Douglas. Today the survivors of this planting tower overhead although, sadly, they are dying one by one.

Underneath, rhododendrons and camellias have been planted over the years and have attained great size as well. *R. 'Cynthia'* achieves 50 feet here with the eponymous *R. 'Endsleigh Pink'* not far behind. The latter is capable of growing even taller but all the specimens we saw had been drastically pruned. The history of this rhododendron is obscure although reputed to be an arboreum hybrid that occurred naturally at Endsleigh. It was propagated in large numbers and planted all over the estate going back at least a hundred years. In recent years many were destroyed in the great gales of the 1990s but it was soon discovered that the best treatment was to cut Endsleigh Pink down to chest height. The speed and vigour with which they have responded to this cavalier treatment has been quite remarkable and it will not be long before local people will travel again to Endsleigh in February/March just to see them as indeed they always used to do.

We also saw large specimens of the two forms of *R. decorum* which abound at Endsleigh - one is very nearly pink and the other a rich cream. On the day of our visit plantings of *R. 'Azor'* on several sites were just going over - not a colour to everyone's taste. It was also good to see recent plantings of good species and cultivars, *R. montroseanum*, *macabeanum*, 'Polar Bear' and 'Charlotte de Rothschild' among them. Between admiring the rhododendrons we made detours to gasp at the size of the largest *Aesculus indica* growing in the UK and to pay homage below the branches of a tired but magnificent Douglas Fir, 50 metres high and with a girth of 630 cm!

Then across the lawns below the house to the Dell where the stars were two *Magnolia obovata*, 18 metres high and girths of 170 centimetres standing close to the national champion *Halesia monticola*.

Endsleigh is a place of endless superlatives. When we last visited it, the garden was in the care of a struggling charitable trust. It was a huge relief, therefore, to realise that Simon Wood and his augmented gardens staff are caring for the garden and arboreta better than ever before, which is a huge credit to the new owners. To them and Simon our thanks for a marvellous tour, not to mention cups of tea on the terrace behind the "Cottage" with breathtaking views across the Tamar and the richly wooded countryside.

#### **New Forest Branch**

*Robin Whiting*

Our visit this year was to the gardens of two of our branch members who both live on the western edge of the New Forest. John and Mary Davies have lived for ten years in

their home that was built in the 1950's. When they moved in they were confronted with a vast area of ponticum 3 metres high underneath about 100 oak trees. The garden extends to 2 ¾ acres, and it must have been a daunting task to clear and kill the ponticum.

The weather could have been kinder to us. On the day we chose to visit, we had nearly three times the rainfall that fell during the whole of April. Still, Rhododendron enthusiasts don't mind rain, do they, or at least they try not to show it!

The garden is a peat layer varying in depth over gravel with clay beneath that. John had planted most of his rhododendrons and azaleas near the top part of his garden. Mary has a passion for Pieris and there were many fine forms of the genus in the garden. Relations living in Tasmania had encouraged the use of Acacias and Grevillias through the garden. There was also a very good *Olearia Scilloniensis* in full flower. After the tour of the garden we were treated to tea and cakes in John and Mary's home.

It was barely half a mile to Nikki Crawford's garden that we visited next. Nikki and her husband Bob had lived there since 1971 so it was a more mature garden. The drive down to their 2 ½ acre garden was lined with *Azalea periclymenoides* and a huge *Enkianthus Campanulatus*. Further round the garden was another superb member of the genus *Cernuus rubens* displaying its lovely red flowers. Many treasures abound in Nikki's garden. *R. Campanulatum aeruginosum* a particular favourite of this writer was displaying its fine young foliage. Another of the highlights was a superb form of *Stewartia pseudocamellia* with a very good mottled bark. *R. 'Rosevallon'*, not often seen, was an especial delight for the leaf turners.

#### **Lakeland Rhododendron, Camellia & Magnolia Society**

*Fred Tattersall*

The Society enjoyed an excellent Tour in April to the South of England. Seventeen Members participated and we were very fortunate to experience glorious sunny weather. It was however disappointing to see so many distressed plants due to the lack of rain.

On Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> April we welcomed members of The Scottish Rhododendron Society to Windermere for a Joint Visit to Local Gardens. On Monday we visited Broomhill by kind permission of Uter and Thelma Potter and then had lunch at The Royal Windermere Yacht Club. In the afternoon we visited Kath and Dick Brown's Garden at High Cleabarrow and John and Ann Gledhill's Garden at Deer Bield. In the evening we had a formal dinner at the Windermere Hydro Hotel and then Dr David Kinsman gave an excellent Talk on Rhododendrons.

On Tuesday we visited Muncaster Castle and were entertained by Patrick Gordon Duff Pennington as we wandered round his magnificent garden.

On Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> May we held our Show at Holehird. This was very well attended and best in Show went to Anthony Cameron for the second year in succession.

We are delighted to welcome a notable number of new members and hope they will enjoy their membership

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## NOTICES

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Pat Bucknell, Hon Secretary

### MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2007

#### Held on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> June

#### The Hon. Bulletin Editor, Mr. JA Rawling chaired the meeting, as Dr. MLA Robinson was unable to attend

**Present:** Mr E Annal, Mr CTH Brown, Mrs PA Bucknell, Mr DJ Coombes, Mrs P Coombes, Mr RC Eley, Mr M. Gascoyne, Mr MDC Gates, Mrs M Gunn, Mrs JA Hallett, Mr JD Harsant, Mr BA Haseltine, Dr D Ives, Mrs RE LeGrand, Mr S Lyus, Mr G Mills, Mr JA Rawling, Mr A Simons, Mr BE Wright.

**Apologies:** Chairman, Dr MLA Robinson, Mr CEJ Brabin, Mr PD Evans, Mr MC Foster, Miss JE Trehane, Mr AT Stevenson, Mr IT Stokes.

Mr. John Rawling welcomed everyone to the meeting particularly the four Group Members not on the Committee

**The Minutes** of the Annual General Meeting 2006 held on 13th April and published in Bulletin No. 91 July 2006 were amended. Item 10, Dr John David is Head of Botany at RHS Garden, Wisley and not Principal Botanist. They were then agreed to be a true record and were signed by Mr. John Rawling.

**Matters Arising:** There were no matters arising.

**Chairman's Report:** See Chairman's Notes on the front page of this Bulletin.

**Treasurer's Report:** The income and expenditure account, and the balance sheet for the year ended October 2006 were tabled. The result for the year was satisfactory, with the accounts showing a surplus of £2,186 compared with a surplus of £1,383 for the previous year. Total assets stand at £31,917.

Martin Gates spoke on the accounts. Income was slightly lower than the previous year at £19,369. Membership subscriptions were also higher at £13,052, and thanks are due to Membership Secretary, Rupert Eley, for this excellent contribution. Sales of seed were lower but Pam Hayward had a very good year and publication revenue was increased to £1, 880.

There was a substantial saving in the cost of printing the Yearbook. The first instalment of the Group's contribution to the PhD student at RBG Edinburgh was paid without difficulty. There were no donations for plant collections, and administrative expenditure was slightly lower than the previous year. Total expenditure was just about £1,000 lower than last year.

The Treasurer thought that the Group's reserves were adequate but printing costs will be higher in the current year and the cost of the triennial list of members has to be met. There are therefore no grounds for complacency, and if we are to avoid the need for a subscription increase, we shall have to maintain our level of income and exercise strict control over expenditure.

**Appointment of Auditors:** John Harsant had approved the accounts. Martin Gates thanked him and proposed that he do so again next year. This was agreed.

Proposed by Eric Annal and seconded by Barry Haseltine.

**Announcement of Postal Vote:** The Secretary received 43 postal votes confirming all officers in *post*.

**Co-option of Stephen Lyus:** Stephen has successfully managed the Plant Exchange and he was unanimously welcomed to the Committee.

**Possible expansion of the Bulletin:** It has been proposed to publish Reports of the Spring Tour and the Shows in the July Bulletin instead of the Yearbook. Historically they have always been published in the Yearbook. It was decided that they could be integrated into the July Bulletin as long as the present quality of the Bulletin was not compromised. The Editor of the Bulletin would have control of this.

**Any Other Business:** There was no other business.

**Date of Next Annual General Meeting:** This will take place on either 10<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> June 2008 at R.H.S. Garden, Wisley at 2.30 p.m.

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

**Just Published! RHODODENDRON SPECIES 2007**

The yearbook of the Rhododendron Species Foundation. 150pp, illust. Contact Pam Hayward for details.

**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 IN HORTICULTURE & SCIENCE – Eds. Argent and McFarlane 2003**

Full Price: £35 Member's Price: £20 Postage: UK £4, Europe £5, Rest of World £10 (Air)

**RHODODENDRONS & AZALEAS – Kenneth Cox**

Full Price: £29.95 Member's Price: £24.50 Postage: UK £5, Europe £8, Rest of World £15 (Air)

**HARDY RHODODENDRON SPECIES – A Guide to Identification – James Cullen**

496pp, illust. Full Price: £35 Member's Price: £23.50 Postage: UK £5, Europe £8, Rest of World £15 (Air)

**International RHODODENDRON REGISTER and CHECKLIST Second Edition – RHS 2004**

Full Price: £90 Member's Price: £75 Postage: UK £9.50, Europe £10, Rest of World £14 (Air)

**THE RHODODENDRON HANDBOOK 1998**

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## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Date	Organiser	Location	Event	Contact	
<b>September</b>					
11th	Group	RHS	Executive Committee	Pat Bucknell	
<b>October</b>					
9th	Lakeland R.S.	Holehird gardens	A G M followed by Talk on April Tour	Fred Tattersall	015394 43963
19th–21st	Group& ICS	East Sussex	Tour of East Sussex	Pat Short	020 8870 6884
<b>November</b>					
9th	Group	RHS	Executive Committee	Pat Bucknell	
13th	Lakeland R.S.	Holehird	Meeting with a Talk	Fred Tattersall	015394 43963
17th	SW Branch	RHS Rosemoor	All day programme including lecture by Kenneth Cox	Colin Brown	01647 277268
<b>December</b>					
11th	Lakeland R.S.	Holehird	Meeting with a Talk	Fred Tattersall	015394 43963
<b>January</b>					
22nd	Lakeland R.S.	Annual Dinner at Windermere Hydro Hotel		Fred Tattersall	015394 43963
<b>February</b>					
12th	Lakeland R.S.	Holehird	Talk by Alan Clark	Fred Tattersall	015394 43963

**Your local branch will have a number of activities in course of arrangement – Contact your Branch Chairman for details**

### Millais Nurseries show the best Rhododendrons at Chelsea

At the Presentation Ceremony in April 2007, Millais Nurseries were awarded the **Rothschild Cup** for their impressive display at the Chelsea Flower Show 2006

We add our congratulations to those that I am sure have been already received.

### List of Second-hand Books

The success of the first second-hand book sale the Group held last year has prompted me to organise another in 2008. If you have books of interest to our members that you would like to include, please send me details. I require title, edition, condition and price.

*Do not send me books* – all transactions are strictly between members.

Pam Hayward, Woodtown, Sampford Spiney  
YELVERTON, Devon PL20 6LJ  
Tel: 01822 852122 Email: pam@woodtown.net

Photograph relating to the **Notes on the Herbarium collections from Vietnam**, on pages 7 & 8.



*R. hemsleyanum* (affinity) AC 436

Photo: John McQuire

Subsequently recollected in 2006 under AC 5620