

Scottish Rhododendron Society

Yearbook 2021

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Editorial

Welcome to the 2021 Yearbook. This was originally scheduled to be published much earlier in the year, but like a lot of things, Covid 19 got in the way. I could have printed and stapled it in house, like I did for your Spring Review, but that would have resulted in a drop in quality. So I made the decision to shelve it until such time as I could safely and legally get to Glasgow for the professionals to make up the cover and bind the booklet.

As so little has been going on, and most activities cancelled so far this year, there will not be an Autumn Review. This has been an exceptional time for every one, but at least face to face meetings are becoming possible. By the time you read this, your Committee will have had its first meeting in person since February 2020.

Once again your Yearbook contains many varied articles, from climate change to the history of an important plant collector. I know that since Richard Baines wrote his article on the climate at Logan, the garden has suffered torrential winter rain and flooding.



Here, the flowering season was somewhat battered by the frosts in April. Not only were open flowers frosted, but buds also affected. Then new growth emerged and leaves were distorted. Then summer produced a drought here in the West of Scotland. Total rainfall for June, July and August was less than ten inches. That would be a wet summer for some places, but here that's a drought!

John Roy

First flowering for me this year: *Rhododendron lacteum*

Climate change - Opportunities and challenges for the years ahead.

Richard A. Baines, Curator, Logan Botanic Garden

Apart from Covid-19 2020 has undoubtably brought home the undeniable reality that climate change is real and its effects are impacting on our everyday lives on a daily basis. Over the last fifty years the graph below shows the undeniable climatic changes that have been experienced at Logan Botanic Garden and recorded in the Stevenson Screen.



Chart illustrating the reducing severity of minimum temperatures experienced over the last 50 years.

One of the worrying downsides of the recent changes experienced are the new pests and diseases that are becoming more prevalent and posing a serious threat to plant health. These include *Phytophthora ramorum*, commonly called Sudden Oak Death which locally over the past 10 years has devastated the population of larch leading to wide scale culling of this important forest tree. This disease is amplified when the plant is put under stress due to physiological extremes such as waterlogging.

Phytophthora is also having a significant effect on rhododendron collections across the country.

When I took up the post of Curator at Logan 14 years ago almost all the woodland paths had a bark surface. In today's climate amenity bark is no longer an option as it turns into porridge and thus they have been replaced by an open aggregate surface which is working well.

Intensive precipitation is on the increase. Over the last 50 years Logan has only recorded a daily rainfall of over 3 inches (75mm) on three occasions all of which were recorded in the last decade. One of the knock-on effects of this is the requirement to install additional drainage systems to cope with the high volumes of precipitation falling during an intense period. We have had to install a completely new drainage system throughout our Chilean and Australasian woodland in recent years to deal with the change. It is interesting to note that the annual rainfall totals have largely remained unchanged.

Pests such as Cushion Scale that were previously controlled by colder winter temperatures are now commonly observed all year round on plants such as *Rhododen-dron*, *Camellia* and *Ilex*.

Invasive species in the garden have also changed in recent years. The pernicious weed *Epilobium brunnescens* introduced from nursery stock in New Zealand has taken a real liking to the similar climate and is an increasing concern. Other less concerning but commonly observed sporelings include *Dicksonia antarctica*, the common Tree Fern that noticeably in the last decade is freely regenerating around the garden. Likewise *Griselinia littoralis* again from New Zealand is probably the most prolific seedling producer in the garden greatly increasing in the recent decade.

For the visitor to Logan one real noticeable difference is the extension to the autumn season due to higher average temperatures and overall later initial frosts. This has allowed the garden to have plants like Nerines, Banksias, Correas, Gladioli & Salvias in many cases flowering until Christmas.

Whilst there are many negatives to the current situation every cloud has a silver lining. The milder winters are allowing an increased range of plants to be grown outdoors compared to pre–1980s. This is a major opportunity for Logan to experiment with new borderline species.

Recently we planted out 30 members of Protaceae which were collected under licence from high altitude mountains in South Africa. If they become established

they will be the first mass planting anywhere in Scotland. *Protea cyanaroides*, the King Protea has successfully been grown and flowered outside for the last decade. A range of tender rhododendrons, scheffleras and evergreen magnolias from Vietnam are being established to reflect the growing possibilities. In recent years we have been experimenting growing rhododendrons in the Pseudovireya subsection out of doors epiphytically on logs. To date *Rhododendron kawakamii*, *R. sororium*, *R. emarginatum*, *R. trancongii*, *R. densiflorum* have all established well.

When you initially think of Scotland one doesn't initially automatically associate the name with palm trees but in 2020 we have over a dozen different species growing in the garden. On entering the garden one drives along an avenue of cabbage palms that is over ¹/₄ mile long then you are met by a large stand of Chusan palms that transport you to warmer climes. This feeling is continued as one wanders through the Walled Garden with giant echiums from the Canary Islands and giant rhubarb, *Gunnera manicata* from Chile.

Traditionally *Schefflera* were always regarded as house plants. After successful expeditions to the far east namely Vietnam, Taiwan and China, Logan now has a plethora of new species that have become firmly established.

Logan has always been known for its tree ferns which have been growing in the Walled Garden for almost a century. Initially they were all *Dicksonia antartica* collected from Tasmania in Southern Australia. Nowadays it is possible to grow a range of *Blechnum, Lophosoria, Thysopteris* and probably the most stunning of all the Black Tree, *Cyathea meddularis* from the Chatham Islands that can grow as much as 10m tall!

If you think that you have been transported to the Jurassic age when all of the world previously warmed, you would be forgiven especially when you are greeted by a 5 metre tall *Loganosaurus rex* dinosaur created by expert willow sculptor Trevor Leat, quietly munching on the tree ferns!

Who knows in another 50 years certain areas such as Logan or West Cornwall may be frost free some years!

Rhododendron cinnabarinum hybrids are making a comeback

Chip Lima

Rhododendron cinnabarinum and its hybrids are the closest to colours that you see in rhododendrons in Subgenus Vireya. That and their lovely hanging bell shaped flowers are what attracted me to them. In this article I'll describe my experience growing the hybrids.

Back in California 25 years ago I first saw these in books. Then I found that some Rhododendron maddenii x R cinnabarinum hybrids were bred in California where they were miserable with silver leaves from thrips, had very bad downy mildew and needed lots of irrigation. The only Californian hybrid I can recommend here is 'Passion Moon'. *R*. although it is more like *R* maddenii than *R* cinnabarinum.



Rhododendron 'Passion Moon'

All pictures in this article by Chip Lima

Rhododendron 'Passion Moon', (formerly *R*. 'Heavenly Trumpets') is the cross of *R*. ('Pink Trumpets' x 'Alice Eastwood') x pink *R. maddenii* Polyandrum Group. So far it has been bud hardy to -12° C and has grown to $2m \times 1.5m$ in 14 years. It has a sweet, pleasant fragrance unlike its parent *R*. 'Pink Trumpets', which stinks like paper white narcissus. Other *R. cinnabarinum* x *R. maddenii* crosses from California have done poorly here, such as *R*. 'Alice Eastwood' and *R*. 'Helen Strybing'.

My first trip to Scotland in 2002 included visits to all the west coast public gardens

and that's where I saw healthy and amazing *Rhododendron cinnabarinum*, but the flowers were smaller than the *R. maddenii* x *R. cinnabarinum* hybrids I had seen before. I'd also heard that downy mildew was widespread here and killed off many of them in the UK. However, here I was looking at some very healthy, beautiful *R. cinnabarinum* so I suspected that some of them must be tough. That triggered the collector mentality in me; can I get many of them and see which ones do best, then cross them to get bigger flowers but on hardy plants. That experiment is still in process here in my new home in Scotland.

In 2007 I had also started growing some of Mark Jury's *Rhododendron cinnabarinum* x *R. maddenii* hybrids. At the same time Caerhays Castle sent me cuttings of 2 forms of *R.* 'Royal Flush', pink and apricot. There were also a few beauties from Millais and Glendoick to add to my growing collection. Some of the best varieties for me in my conditions are the following: *R.* 'Felicity Fair', Glendoick's cross of *R. maddenii* Polyandrum Group 'Gigha' x *R. cinnabarinum* ssp. xanthocodon which I call *R.* 'Sienna', *R.* 'Trewithen Orange' Glendoick form, my cross of *R. ambiguum* x *R.* ('Conroy' x roylei), and *R.* 'Moon Orchid'. (Pictured below).



Over the years I managed to find a few old hybrids and I have grown these on from cuttings. I find *Rhododendron* 'Conroy', *R*. 'Sirius', and *R*. 'Royal Flush' yellow to be completely healthy if planted in an open location in full sun, but if not they get mildew. *R*. 'Conroy' is much more cold hardy while *R*. 'Royal Flush' can lose buds.



Rhododendron 'Conroy'



It also has remarkable dark black leaves.

My own hybrids are still too young to know if they are worth naming. Here are two from the cross of *R*. 'Barnaby Sunset' x *R*. 'Trewithen Orange': It is similar to *Rhododendron* 'Alison Johnstone' but it is dwarf, to 75cm x 75 in 15 years. A sibling is closer to *R*. 'Barnaby Sunset', very upright but flowers a bit later so it doesn't get frosted.

There are more hybrid *Rhododendron cinnabarinum* that I don't have space to describe, but I do want to mention *R*. 'Pin Gin' from Millais as being very healthy. *R*. 'What a Dane' has lovely flowers and blue leaves though it is sparse, *R*. 'Biskra' is a good older pink hybrid though small flowered, the very beautiful L&S Branklyn apricot is finally for sale at Glendoick. I have found this later species or hybrid to be very slow to



My hybrids of Rhododendron 'Barnaby Sunset' x R. 'Trewithen Orange'



Rhododendron cinnabarinum L&S Branklyn Apricot. Lens cap for scale

get to flowering age, so far it is 9 years old from a cutting and it hasn't flowered. It could be I need advice on growing this one?!

And lastly, which hybrid *Rhododendron cinnabarinum* have not done well? Here is the sad list; *R.* 'Alice Eastwood', *R.* 'Barbara Jury', *R.* 'Pink Trumpets' (does fine but smells awful), *R.* 'Royal Flush' pink and *R.* 'Roylmadd' which does well elsewhere in Scotland but not with

me in Stirlingshire.

There are still many of my seedlings that have not flowered yet and I'm looking forward to seeing what has been created. I'm still making more crosses and some of the seeds from my crosses will show up on the SRS seed list.



Left to right are *Rhododendron* 'Sienna', *R*. 'Moon Orchid', *R*. 'Felicity Fair', *R*. *ambiguum* x *R*. ('Conroy' x 'Roylei') and *R*. 'Polyroy'. All good but the latter hybrid is pretty bud tender

Creating a large pond with rhododendrons and azaleas on the shore

Kristian Theqvist, Turku, Finland

In January 2020 I enjoyed my stay at our summer home on an island in the Turku Archipelago, Finland. While walking in the valley surrounded by cliffs, I got an idea. What if I made a large pond in the valley and plant rhododendron, azaleas, ornamental apple and cherry trees, and other plants on the shores? I have hundreds of large rhododendrons, azaleas and other woody plants that I could transfer from my plant fields to the pond environment.



It didn't take long for me to have a 2.5 m deep test pit dug into the clay soil to get assurance on how water level stays. A ditch runs through the valley, and water flows unexpectedly in opposite directions, south and north, from the point I had thought of making the pond. Maybe there is a spring or high ground-

Above: Excavating the first half of the pond

Right: Geotextile was laid out on the first half to separate the underlying clay from sand

Pictures in this article by Kristian Theqvist



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started to fell trees with my chainsaw to open area for the pond.

The test pit was quickly filled with water pouring up through the bottom clay. The water level was still high enough in July after a long dry period so that I could dare to start the digging of the pond. I

had also built dams in the ditch to control the water flow out from the area. This seemed to work well.

The excavation of a 25 metre long and 350 m^2 pond started in the second week of July. The depth was set at about 2 metres which meant a maximum water depth of

Top: Raking sand on the bottom of the new pond

Above: Clear water flows from a stream through a pipe to the bottom of the pond. The pipe has been laid under the geotextile. Excess water flows to the dam

Right: The pond is full of water



about 1.7 metres. First, all stumps and roots were removed and after that the top 30 cm layer of black acid peat was recovered into large piles for later use. The amount of peat was 18 tractor loads! It took four long working days to make the pond. One man used an excavator and another man carried dozens of tractor loads of clay off the site.

Sturdy non-woven geotextile was laid out on the bottom to separate the underlying clay from fine grade sand that would form the basis for water clear enough even for swimming.

Clear water flows from the cliffs in ditches and is led through a pipe under the geotextile to the bottom of the pond. Excess water overflows from the dams into ditches leading to the nearby bay. The engineering of the pond has been very successful. I hope to get solid thick ice for skating and wait for relaxing swims during warm summer months.

Moving large rhododendrons:

I moved in November about 70 large rhododendrons, azaleas and other woody plants from plant fields to the shore in the vicinity of the new pond. Many of the 16 year old rhododendrons were 1.4 to 2.5 metres tall, densely grown because I had planted the small seedlings in the plant field 12 years ago only 15 cm apart. Many too closely grown plants could not be separated from each other without damaging the roots. This was not what I had planned years ago. As a result, in some instances I had to keep plants from the same cross unseparated.

Many root balls were too heavy to be moved by hand. A problem was also caused



by some rhododendrons growing below the edge of a metre-high ridge. Plants could not be removed except by pulling them over the ridge and then along a temporary five-metre long

A handsome 16 year old and 2.5 m high hybrid was growing on the plant field. It was my cross *Rhododendron* 'Haaga' x *R. vernicosum* and I wanted to move it to the shore of the pond





A 2.5 metre high *Rhododendron* 'Haaga' \times *R. vernicosum*, my cross from 2004, was the toughest one to move. The plant was surrounded on three sides by other rhododendrons and the only way to move it out was to get it up the ridge and then over the ditch. I dug under the

sides of the root ball as far as possible and then pulled the heavy root ball loose from ground using the winch cable of the ATV. The rhododendron was then pulled up on the ridge with the winch.

I made a temporary bridge of five metre long planks and an old metal roofing sheet. I protected the trunk with a thick cloth to avoid damage from the cable. Generally, I would not advise dragging a plant from the

Top: The rhododendron was dragged with the winch of an ATV over a temporary bridge

Above: Pulling the heavy rhododendron on a winter sledge was easy with the ATV

Right: Rhododendron 'Haaga' x R. vernicosum planted on the shore of the pond



trunk as some roots could break. Once over the bridge, the plant was cranked aboard a winter sledge (ahkio). Pulling the heavy rhododendron to the shore of the pond was easy with the sledge and ATV. The plant was then dropped into its new place and finalised by adding peat and mulch.

I have still a lot of rhododendrons, azaleas and other woody plants to be moved from my plant fields. The work continues next season.

Links www.rhodogarden.com/Making_a_large_pond/index.html www.rhodogarden.com/Pulling_rhodo_w_ATV/index.html



Dark leaved *Rhododendron* 'Red River' x *R. brachycarpum* ssp. *tigerstedtii* (ARS 358/06, Sally and John Perkins) and other rhododendrons planted on the shore of the pond

Thirty-nine Trees

Mike Thornley



View of "Granny's Hens" All pictures in this article by Mike Thornley

We re-opened Glenarn as usual on the 21st of March 2020, the first day of spring. The previous morning 4000 garden leaflets had arrived from the printers, just in time. That afternoon I had ordered 39 trees from Weasdale Nurseries in Cumbria. Everything was nearly in place when, on Saturday, I put up the yellow Scotland's Garden Scheme signs, a nasty job attaching them with wire to lamp posts, balancing on the top of a ladder in the cold wind.

Early on Monday we drove over to Kevock at Lasswade to collect £300 worth of primulas for sale to visitors. The motorway was eerily empty, the electronic signs on the overhead gantries flashing their message to stay at home. In the afternoon an email confirmed that the trees had been lifted from the ground and dispatched to the

depot in Carlisle. At 5pm the lorry from the local builders' merchant trundled up the drive with 16 sticks of timber, to be cut into lengths to support the tree guards. Anticipating the lockdown, the driver had been asked to work late and deliver the day's orders to grateful but now worried customers. In the evening we sat in the kitchen listening to the radio broadcast to the nation.

The garden closed and the next morning I took down the signs (easier than putting them up). At 11pm, to our surprise, a white van disgorged 39 trees in front of the house, all of them beautifully wrapped in straw and jute sacks, the roots of the larger ones dipped in a clay emulsion to reduce transpiration. We were ready to start planting. The leaflets, unread in their boxes, explained why.

The 1860 First Edition Ordnance Survey shows a small peninsula on the western boundary, lying between the main burn and a small subsidiary glen. Here the only substantial area of flat ground in the garden was achieved by cut and fill: excavating the earth from the upper part of the peninsula and dumping it on the lower end - to form a tennis court. When our predecessors arrived in the mid 1920s, it was req-

uisitioned by grandmother Gibson for her hen run: hence the name Granny's Hens. After her death in the early 1950s, her sons, Archie and Sandy, re-possessed the ground, planting *Magnolia*, *Eucryphia* and *Eucalyptus* along the edge and rhododendrons towards the centre, to create what was to become one of the highlights of the garden.

Photographs that we took in the early 1980s show the deep red, early *Rhododendron hookeri*, two fragrant *R*. 'Loderi', *R. cinnabarinum* var. *roylei* (as it was called) dripping with flowers, and a pair of *R. falconeri* x *R. macabeanum*, hybrids made by the Gibson brothers, overlooked from the path above by the rare frothy yellow *R. zaleucum* var. *flaviflorum*. Somewhat incongruously was a plant of *R*. 'Crest' which soon succumbed from powdery mildew, as did the *R. cinnabarinum* var. *roylei* (and its replacement).



Rhododendron falconeri x R. macabeanum

Despite these setbacks and the early demise of the eucalyptus trees in cold winters, Granny's Hens continued to live up to the expectations created by its unusual name.

However, beyond the boundary, other changes were taking place, as our neighbours gradually removed trees and tall laurel, to let more light into their gardens, but opening us up to the gales that hurtle in from the north-west. The 3^{rd} of January 2012 storm brought down the largest lime tree in the garden, falling across Granny's Hens. The two *Rhododendron falconeri* x *R. macabeanum* hybrids emerged somewhat battered. The following year, and now less protected, *R. 'Loderi King George'* was blown out of the ground and beyond saving, further exposing the *R. hookeri* which rapidly died back. The *Rhododendron zaleucum* var. *flaviflorum* also faded away in its exposed position. All the colour in this part of the garden was being rubbed out.

The dilemma facing us was that any new shelter on our side of the boundary would eat into the area that we sought to protect, changing its character. Perhaps we could form triangular buttresses of planting that would more easily integrate with the landscape, but this proved easier to sketch on paper than realize on the ground. However, needs must and a start was made when Peter Livingston of the conservation organisation Eadha offered us 27 aspens (9 different clones from the west of Scotland) which we threaded through existing rhododendrons on the exposed side of the site, interspersed with a few rowans (our professional horticultural friends raising their eyes in



Thirty-nine trees planted

horror at the thought of all the suckering material). This nudged us towards the decision to thicken up the shelter around the backbone of the aspens and accept the reduction in the size of Granny's Hens.

David Gray provided ideas about suitable trees: Sweet Chestnut and Hawthorn to do the main work at about 2m centres, to be thinned

or coppiced in the future, a few Hungarian Oak and

Red Oak to give some interest, and a trio of *Betula ermanii*, planted close together as we had seen them in Maurice Foster's garden, as a go between the edge of the new shelter and the now smaller but protected Granny's Hens.

Here, to re-create the theatrical effect of the past, we planted two fine Rhododen-

dron 'Loderi' from Glendoick and the relatively recently introduced *R. ochraceum*, the latter having that ambiguous and interesting quality of a species that looks like a hybrid. A new *R. hookeri* and the late flowering flamboyant *R.* 'Aladdin' (*R. griersonianum x R. auriculatum*) were also planted, grown by Sue from cuttings that she had taken from the original plants in the garden. To provide reinforcements to a couple of existing tough camellias on the path around the edge of Granny's Hens we added the modern and incredibly long flowering *Camellia* 'Freedom Bell' and the more delicate *C.* 'Hiraethlyn': the start of a Camellia Walk, perhaps?

The most radical move was to cut down the Gibson *Rhododendron falconeri x R. macabeanum* big leaf hybrids. They were not an exact pair: one with darker yellow flowers and floppier leaves leaning more towards its *R. macabeanum* parent, and the other towards *R. falconeri*, with paler truss, stiffer foliage and darker indumentum. Most years, possibly under some stress, they both produced quantities of flowers which I dead-headed, probably encouraging the cycle of decline. The leaves dwindled to shadows of their former size and the damage from the storm was irreparable. After failing to propagate them by ground and air layering we sent buds for micro-propagating and it was only after we had confirmation of success that we decided to take action.

We had noticed that both declining specimens had put out single stems of strong growth with huge leaves. Initially, we assumed that these were seedlings that we sometimes find growing in the fibrous, mossy roots at the base of big leafed rhododendrons, but as they

developed the more they appeared to match the characteristics of original plants. Therefore, we cut down the old plants to about 1.0m. They now resemble tortured timber sculptures, out of which each sprout apparently new stems, one adorned with an almost visibly swelling flower bud. We await for April with interest to see if the joke is on us or not and



Rhododendron falconeri x R. macabeanum cut back

then decide how we are going to manage the next stage.

And so, for the first week of the lockdown we planted the 39 trees: an escape, a gesture of defiance, a promise of renewal? For the next month we hardly left the garden. It became our island. As if surrounded by water, we looked out, occasion-ally catching sight of people walking across the fields above the garden, as distant as small flocks of passing birds. Eventually, we ventured forth, to see the cherry blossomed streets of Helensburgh - we had both been reading Naoko Abe's book on Collingwood Ingram ("The Englishman Who Saved Japan's Blossoms" London 2019). The town seemed strangely dreamlike under an intensely blue sky. When we returned to our island we realised that we now saw the garden through different eyes, not outwardly as presented to the visitors who were no longer there, but inwardly, for ourselves.

Of course, there is a sting in this tale. The sun continued to beat down, and the ground started to dry out, and knowing what happened in the past, we lugged 251 cans of water up to Granny's Hens to dribble around the new trees and rhododendrons, in rotation each evening for the following weeks, determined to keep them alive, as the pandemic spread across the world.

Plant Explorer: A Plantsman's travels to Northern Vietnam

by Richard A. Baines



Richard Baines' first book for RBGE promises to be a horticultural delight. This beautifully illustrated and in-depth account provides a first-hand guide of plant exploration and conservation in Northern Vietnam. Richard is the Curator of Logan Botanic Garden and has a particular interest in Rhododendrons, Camellias and Magnolias. A regular writer for horticultural magazines and on the lecture circuit including Guest Lecturer on the Hebridean Princess.

The book provides a detailed and fascinating overview of three collaborative expeditions to North-West Vietnam focusing on the Hoang Lien Son mountain range. This area is a Plantsman's paradise with a wealth of plant material, much of which is proving to be hardy when grown outdoors in the UK. The book highlights the diversity of extraordinary and stunning plants observed during the expeditions and provides a first-hand insight into expedition participation. Planned in partnership with The Institute of Ecology and Biological Resources (IEBR) in Hanoi with fieldwork support from botanical institutions in the UK, USA & Canada.

Highlights:

A unique overview of plant exploration in Vietnam which is a global diversity hot spot for plants in the world. Research before the expeditions showed that plants from this area may well indeed thrive in the mild climate of Southwest Scotland.

Researching plant conservation. Many plant species endemic to this area are currently threatened by deforestation, climate change and cultivation and many survive in small, fragile populations.

A true collaboration between botanical institutions in Vietnam, UK, USA & Canada working together for national, regional and global benefits. Plants developed as a result of these expeditions will be grown in gardens and arboreta across the world.

A visual celebration of the stunning flora and landscapes of Vietnam from vast mountains to plunging valleys and dense tropical jungle. The book also exhibits fantastic visual display of the people who live in the area and their food, clothes and lifestyle.



Appeals to a wide audience of plantspeople, keen travellers and a general audience

Shows RBGE's commitment to the global strategy for plant conservation. Many of these plants are now growing as part of ex-situ conservation projects in gardens and arboreta across the world's such as Logan, RBGE, Long-wood Gardens & RBG Kew.

Above: Guide with Schefflera macrophylla

> Right: Rhododendron emarginatum

Pictures by Richard Baines



A Protestant plant collector: Pastor Ernst Faber

Dr Hartwig Schepker, Bremen (Germany)

In the history of plant discoveries in China by Western nature travellers from the 19th century onwards, Ernst Faber is an outsider. His name is mentioned, if at all, only comparatively seldom when it comes to the plant hunters of days gone by. George Forrest, Frank Kingdon Ward, Ernest Wilson and Joseph Rock roamed the vast country at the beginning of the 20th century in search of new plants, commissioned by nurseries or private individuals, by scientific or horticultural associations and societies. Their experiences and the many plants they collected have since been made known to a wide public through numerous books. However, these men, many who came from England or Scotland, benefited considerably from the preparatory work of those mainly French missionaries who, after the end of the opium wars, were sent to the previously almost completely unknown country from 1860 onwards. Some of these names are well known, too, as they are mainly found in the Latin names of the new discoveries: Père Jean Marie Delavay was immortalised, for example, in *Abies delavayi* or *Rhododendron arboreum* ssp. *delavayi*, and Père Armand David can be found in *Davidia involucrata* or *Rhododendron davidii*.

Ernst Faber falls outside the scope of this list in two ways. Firstly, he is one of the very few German or German-speaking natural scientists who have carried out botanical research in China. Apart from Faber, these are the aforementioned native Austrian Joseph Rock (born in Vienna in 1884 as Joseph Franz Karl Rock), his compatriot Heinrich Handel-Mazzetti, who travelled in China during World War I, and the Baltic German Emil Bretschneider, who investigated the Chinese flora from 1866 to 1883 as Russian legation doctor.

Pastor Ernst Faber was also the only Protestant who made substantial plant collections during his missionary time in

Ernst Faber as a young man





Pastor Ernst Faber as a missionary in China

China. His merits in the research of the Chinese flora are seldom emphasised, but he also received the honour of plants named after him. Thus the Asteraceae genus Faberia bears his name, as do the maple *Acer fabri* and the storax tree *Styrax faberi*.

Coburg in Northern Bavaria was the home town of Ernst Faber (Fig. 2). He was born there on April 25th, 1839 (Rosenkranz 1959, Wu 2014). After an apprenticeship as a plumber, he entered the seminary of the Rhenish Mission in Barmen in 1858. After studying theology and natural sciences, he was sent to Fumen in the southern Chinese province of Guangdong in 1864, where he worked as a preacher and in literary missionary work until 1880. After that Faber lived as a free

missionary in Hong Kong, south of Fumen.

During this time, he wrote an important book ("Civilization, from West to East"), which established his reputation as a widely recognised sinologist and later earned him an honorary doctorate from the University of Jena. Faber was also a respected man among the Chinese of his time, as he not only did missionary work, but was also very interested in Chinese philosophy and tried to make it better known in the West. In 1885 Faber joined the General Protestant Evangelical-Protestant Missionary Association and worked from Shanghai as their first missionary in China. For a few weeks from April 1898 he became the leader of another station of the missionary association in Tsingtau, today's Qingdao on the north-eastern coast of China. In November 1897 Tsingtau had been occupied by the German Reichsmarine and belonged as a colony to the German Reich until 1914. The life of Ernst Faber (Fig. 3) ended in Tsingtau. On September 26th, 1899 he succumbed to the consequences of a dysentery and typhoid epidemic.

When Ernst Faber arrived in April 1887 with the steamer "Kiang-tung" from Shanghai in Yichang (then called Ichang) on the Yangtze Kiang in the central Chinese province of Hubei (O'Brien 2011), he had already made a name for himself as a leading Western scholar of the Chinese faith. His destination was the Emei Shan,

a holy place already famous at that time for Chinese Buddhists. Faber was also an enthusiastic botanist, who could already look back on some experiences with the Chinese flora. Some years before, he had explored the northern mountainous region of Luofu Shan with the director of the Hong Kong Botanical Garden, Charles Ford, and discovered the comparatively small and mostly evergreen maple tree *Acer fabri* in September 1883 (Kilpatrick 2014).

In Yichang he met Augustine Henry, an Irish doctor and botanist who was stationed here for the "Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs Service" and who played a decisive role in the introduction of the handkerchief tree *Davidia involucrata* by the plant hunter Ernest "Chinese" Wilson. *Aconitum henryi*, *Lilium henryii* and also *Rhodo-dendron augustinii* are named after Henry.

The two researchers already had knowledge about Emei Shan. 10 years earlier, the Briton Edward Colborne Baber had been the first westerner to climb both the Emei Shan and the southwestern neighbouring mountain Wa Shan (O'Brien 2011), but botanically the Emei Shan was still uncharted territory. After a few days in Yichang, Faber continued his journey by boat on the Yangtze Kiang to Chongqing and from there on the Min River to Leshan, an important port of call for travelling in western

Szechwan (Sichuan) then and now, and about 40 km from the destination.

Buddhist monks had protected the Emei Shan for centuries. Trees were taken down only for building temples or as firewood. Thus, the original forests had remained unchanged, which at that time, as Ernest Wilson repeatedly described in his reports, were already endangered in China by clearing etc. As one of four holy Buddhist mountains in China, the Emei Shan has been a popular pilgrimage destination for centuries. At that time, there were more than a hundred monasteries on its slopes, which were connected by a network of pilgrim paths. Because of

Type specimen of *Rhododendron faberi*, collected by Ernst Faber in July 1887

© Herbarium Catalogue, Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh





Abies fabri and *Rhododendron faberi* on the top of Emei Shan

© Hartwig Schepker

the Cultural Revolution, there are now only about two dozen monasteries, many of which can still be reached on foot via thousands of steps. Today the Emei Shan area is not only a protected area, but

since 1996, it has also been a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

From his former headquarters, a monastery at an altitude of about 1,050 m, Faber roamed the untouched mountain forests for fourteen days in the summer of 1887. Among his most significant finds are *Abies fabri* (Mast.) Craib and *Rosa sericea* ssp. *omeiensis* (Rolfe) A.V. Roberts. The impressive fir tree and the pretty shrub rose are not only widespread in Emei Shan, but in western Szechuan as a whole. Ernest Wilson later introduced both species into European gardens. Among the rhododendron species that Faber found on his tours were *R. concinnum* Hemsl. and *R. hanceanum* Hemsl. (Forbes & Hemsley 1886-1902). On the summit of Emei Shan, Faber finally discovered *R. faberi* Hemsl., a pretty, slightly pink flowering, later completely white

from the species subsection Taliensia (Fig. 1), which occurs in large numbers up here together with Abies fabri (Fig. 4). His find of 1887 is now in the herbarium of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh as a Rhododendron faberi on Emei Shan

© Hartwig Schepker





Rhododendron faberi with a pink tinge at the Golden Temple on the Summit of Emei Shan

© Hartwig Schepker

type specimen, which provided the basis for the first description of *R. faberi* (Fig. 5). The species is characterised by dense, round growth and a two-layered indumentum on the underside of the leaf. The upper coat is

brownish (Fig. 1) and decreases with age, while the thin white lower indumentum remains permanently. Up here, at an altitude of over 3,000 m, stands *Primula faberi* Hemsl., another species (Fig. 6) named after him.

After returning from his four-month journey to Yichang in September 1887, Faber sorted his finds together with Henry. Duplicates of the herbarium receipts were immediately sent by his host to Kew in London. There the head of the herbarium, William B. Hemsley, devoted himself to the finds. It turned out that Faber had discovered a total of 70 new species on the Emei Shan in addition to many already known species. Since then the author's name Hemsl. has been used to identify these species.

Another set of herbarium specimens with about 700 species remained with Henry (O'Brien 2011). He later sold part of this

Primula faberi, Wu Meng Shan

© Pam Eveleigh



set to the Arnold Arboretum in Boston (USA). How important this division of the finds was to become clear a few years later. Faber's own collections from Emei Shan were destroyed in a fire in his house in Shanghai in 1892 (Bretschneider 1898).

The news of the Emei Shan's wealth of plants quickly made the rounds in England. Less than three years later, Antwerp Pratt (*Rhododendron prattii* is named after him) set off on his journey. Many more Chinese and international botanists and plant lovers followed in the last 100 years. Even today, the Emei Shan is without doubt still one of the top botanical destinations in China.

Emil Bretschneider had already honoured Faber's botanical collections in 1898 in his book "History of European Botanical Discoveries in China". "The Journal of the Linnean Society" lists the extent of Faber's discoveries in detail in several volumes between 1886 and 1903 (Forbes & Hemsley 1886-1902). And in the wonderful book by Jane Kilpatrick "Fathers of Botany" from 2014 Faber is honoured on 2.5 pages. The most lasting memory of this only German-Botanical missionary in China, however, are the 20 plant species named after him (including *Senecio faberi* Hemsl. and *Machilus faberi* HEMSL.) as well as the Ernst Faber House in Coburg, which was opened in his honour in 1962 in his native town.

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SRS Yearbook No 22 Rhododendron 'Ken Janeck'

John M. Hammond

There is a long list of selected forms of the species *Rhododendron yakushimanum* and for many years there has been a continuing debate as to whether the large type of *R. yakushimanum* are varieties of the species or perhaps hybrids with *R. smirnowii* or other species. This has led to the larger types being somewhat unremarked, because of the indecision as to whether they are species or hybrid, so they rarely get entered in Rhododendron Shows, or mentioned by commentators in reports of garden visits.

The best of the large forms is *Rhododendron* 'Ken Janeck' for its appealing, heavily indumented foliage and richly coloured pink flowers. It was raised by Kenneth N. Janeck and Helen, his wife, of Tacoma in Washington State from *R. yakishimanum* seed sent from Japan and is a selected seedling from the seed pan, which was registered with the ARS Plant Registrar by the raisers in 1964 and introduced commercially in 1965. The name is sometimes misspelt as *R*. 'Ken Janek'.

Rhododendron 'Ken Janeck' is a hybrid, probably a *R. degronianum* ssp. *yakush-imanum* x *R. smirnowii* cross, growing to 3 feet in 10 years; hardy to at least -15° F/-26°C. Dark pink buds open to fuchsine to roseate purple pink, sometimes likened to 'apple blossom' pink, before fading to white with 13 to 17 flowers in a truss and a few green spots on the dorsal lobe. It is an early midseason bloomer having beautiful dark green foliage with a heavy pale brown indumentum that is persistent on the bottom of oblong-elliptic leaves and the upper surface of young growth is covered by white tomentum. It is claimed that deer will be deterred by the indumentum and it grows into a fine plant that is mounding, compact and buds-up young. *R*. 'Ken Janeck' won the ARS Award of Excellence in 1969, it is the only 'Yak' to win this Award. It also received the RHS AM on 21^{st} May 2001 when exhibited by the Crown Estate Commissioners, The Great Park, Windsor.

This shrub does best in full sun to partial shade. In common with *Rhododendron yak-ushimanum* it requires an evenly moist well-drained soil for optimal growth but will die in persistent standing water and is subject to chlorosis of the leaves in alkaline soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution and will benefit from being planted in a relatively sheltered location. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone in winter to protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates.

The plant in my garden is now around 30 years old, nearly 6ft tall, almost as wide and was brought back as a small plant from an ARS Convention plant sale in the

Pacific Northwest. It is hardy and a reliable bloomer, has performed well despite our high rainfall over these last few years, has no chlorosis problems, and covers itself in flowers every Spring. *Rhododendron* 'Ken Janeck' is a most attractive specimen and is the finest of the 'Yak' x *R. smirnowii* hybrids for both foliage and flowers, which should be grown more widely.



Rhododendron 'Ken Janeck' at The Three Chimneys, Starling 14th April 2009

Picture by John Hammond

The Scottish Rhododendron Society Timeline Highlights Part 4

Willie Campbell

Newsletter No 22, March, 1991: This Newsletter opens with some sad news (writes Mervyn Kessell) that Gene Heresen, husband our past Secretary, Rorie had died suddenly. Gene worked tirelessly behind the scenes and was very much involved in the Scottish Rhododendron Society's garden at the Glasgow Garden Festival.

The **Spring Weekend** garden visits in May was to be based in Poolewe with visits to **Tournaig, Inverewe** and **Achnashellach** gardens, stopping on the way home at Jim Sutherland's nursery near Inverness, run now by his son Alister.

The Society welcomed new members among them **Symon and Penny Murch** of Osberton Nurseries, who still attend many of our Garden Tours today.

Hamish Gunn the Society President welcomed all members to the AGM held at the Corran Halls after the 1990 show in Oban. The minutes were recorded in this Newsletter for all our members unable to attend to view and comment.

Powdery Mildew was much in the minds of many rhododendron enthusiasts and society members reported from around the country. **David Chamberlain RBGE** had asked for any reports from gardens. Below are just a fraction of those who replied and their problems.

In **Argyll Sir Ilay Campbell** writes "We are riddled with it" then "plants holding their own and learning to live with it"

Reg Pohlomann from Stoke Gabriel, Devon, "only a few were infected namely thomsonii, wardii, callimorphum, campylocarpum, cinnibarinum and the hybrid Hotei" the maddeniis were not nearly as badly infected

Sir Arscott Molesworth from Pencarrow, Cornwell states "the cinnabarinum species and hybrids have survived the winter almost leafless from powdery mildew but were now seen to be making a good recovery".

All interesting reading for the keen gardeners.

Dr. Mavis Paton of Barnhourie Mill, near Dalbeattie in Galloway, discusses the merits of *Rhododendron yakushimanum*. She says "*Rhododendron yakushimanum* from a small island in southern Japan growing at around 6,500 feet is indeed a very tolerant plant, it will grow in full sun or dense shade and survive periods of drought as well as heat and cold". A happy and most rewarding plant.

To finish this newsletter, **Brian Carter** gives a long article on rhododendron culture on heavy clay soil in Birmingham.

Newsletter no 23 July 1991: Help, Bill Davidson who has been editing the Newsletter for the last two years has decided to step down, volunteers required as a replacement. Please.

Annual Show 1991 was at Colinton Village Hall was opened by the Countess of Roseberry who delivered a splendidly amusing opening speech.

The major prize winners were – Glendoick, Arduaine, Glenarn, Blackhills and Benmore.

The judges were John Basford and David Chamberlain.

The Secretary welcomed new members, some below you may recognise,

Marlene and David Storah, from Todmorden.

Ross Kerby, RBGE Edinburgh.

Maurice Wilkins, Head Gardener at Ross Priory.

As well as a host of other names. A really good year for recruitment.

Spring Meeting - 19 members were present, weather: showers with a blink of sunshine now and again.

Tournaig - Lady Horlick was on hand to meet the party and guide them through the extensive gardens. The group walked through an area of massive trunks of old hybrids, the highlight was of *Rhododendron* 'Old Port' in full flower. Other areas included new plantings of species rhododendrons and azaleas. On arrival back at the house, refreshments were served, and Sir John Horlick gave an interesting impromptu talk on a remarkable collection of miniature military uniforms to the assembled group.

Inverewe – The group were met by Peter Clough, the Head Gardener. All agreed the garden was in good shape, even though powdery mildew is prevalent and was difficult to deal with at a garden open throughout the year.

After a long day, the members wished Peter well and looked forward to returning to this wonderful garden again in the future. The group retired to the **Poolewe Hotel**.

Achnashellach – Our hostess Mrs Diana Turner was ready with morning coffee on arrival on a wet morning. The party split in two with Diana leading our party through terrain which resembled a Himalayan hillside complete with waterfall. There was a mixture of both species and hybrid rhododendrons on all sides all happy in an area that received 100 inches of rain per annum. The other group headed off to the old station house, at one time the train stopped here to discharge country gentlemen in tweeds to go deer stalking in the surrounding hills. The garden at that time opened under Scotland's Garden Scheme.

The last item in this newsletter was by **Sue Thornley** reporting on a visit to the Blue Mountain gardens, in Australia. During the ten day visit they visited some 14 gardens including the Mount Tomah Botanic Garden, which is to Sidney what Benmore is to the RBGE.

Newsletter No 24 – December 1991: The Committee thanked Bill Davidson for his contribution as editor of the Newsletters and welcomed Brian Carter a member from Birmingham as the new Editor.

Secretary's Notes – Started with reminding members to pay the subscription of £15 (not a lot of change today).

The **Spring Meeting** was to gardens in North of England, staying in Newcastle and the trip was being organised by Ian Stewart, who lived and gardened in Edinburgh. New Members you may remember or still around today, (20 all told this time)

Nicolette and Ewen MacPherson of Attadale Gardens.

John and Barbara Lord from Stockport.

Philip Bowden Smith, Nurseryman at Braevallich, Argyll

John and Sandra Roy, Ballachulish.

E G Millais, Nurseryman Farnum, Surrey

Thelma and Uter Potter, Windermere, Cumbria.

Mary Stewart writes: In October this year, 30 members and guest enjoyed a most instructive day at the RBGE. Thanks to David Chamberlain and his colleague Dr Stefan Helfer.

In the laboratory Stefan addressed the dreaded subject of powdery mildew. The group were told that "the white patches of mycelium develop on the leaves during the growing season, and that the mildew enters from the top and bottom of the leaf, and penetrates the cells directly, not through the stomata, causing the leaf drop". Members were advised to follow Peter Cox advice and restrain visitors from treading near the roots of plants to read the labels.

The group were surprised that the four Botanic gardens were spending over $\pounds 10,000$ per year on spraying for powdery mildew.

The second half of the meeting was conducted by David Chamberlain and our members were divided into groups, (1) on working on flower parts, looking at herbarium specimens. Peter Cox quote "Flowers are a bonus to identification". (2) This group worked on the leaves as a diagnostic tool, references to hair types in Subsect Falconera being "vase" or "cup" or "bowl" or broadly or narrowly funnel shaped. Scales can also a key indicator in rhododendron identification.

Next came the final test of the day for the groups or teams, which was visual identification quiz, thankfully none of the results were published.

Peter Cox explains in the next article the "**Concept of Species and use of keys**" (it's a long article and if anyone would like to view it, just ask).

Again the Newsletter reported on "**Outstanding New Rhododendrons**" this time: *R. kesangiae* - Long and Rushworth, 1989

HT 8 – 12 Mtrs Tree or Shrub, single or multi trunked and so on.

Only known from Bhutan so far, 2,900 - 3,500 mtrs. In fir woods or hemlock forests, Flowers pink or white in April – May

Then we have a letter from a beginner; our own **Matt Heasman.** (He was still in short trousers.)

Matt explains he joined the society in 1989, eventually was given some seeds which he germinated, potting on the little seedlings and looking forward to the flowers in the future. Now he has constructed a mist propagator, so he can take cuttings and/ or try grafts.

Matt goes on to say "I have made a great number of friends, all so helpful and generous, to them and the Scottish Rhododendron Society, I am thankful".

Newsletter 25 April 1992: Breaking News - that the **Wright** Brothers were **pre-senting Arduaine** to the National Trust for Scotland. It had been agreed that Members of the SRS and ARS on producing their membership card would gain "Free Entry"

Other news was that **Peter Cox** was awarded the **Victoria Medal of the RHS**, the premier horticultural award in the UK.

More information was that the show this year would be held in Clarkston Hall.

The garden visits for the spring tour were announced for the visit to Northumberland – Belsey, Durham University Botanic Garden, on Saturday with Cragside and Howick on the Sunday.

New members you may recall (12 in total)

Nigel & Illia Price, Head Gardener at Brodick Castle.

Dr Ray Thornton, Tudor Lodge, Southampton. (Donator of magnolia seeds.)

Plant Hunting in Vietnam, 1991 – A.J.Clark. Alan writes – It was first suggested by Keith Rushford and it was only 5 weeks before departure that permission had come through to explore the **Fansipan Range** in the extreme North West of Vietnam. The Fansipan range rising to 10,300 ft was just a few miles south of the Yunnan border in China. We were met by Prof. Dr. Vo Quy and Prof. Dr Nguyan Ngia Thin who were joining the team on the trip north.

Arriving at Cha Pa after dark in thick cold fog, the team were to be staying in what was described as "a cold, dirty and damp Government guest house". Next morning the Vietnamese guides were asked about the tents requested. Soon after the team realised that no tents were available and the only option was to take that day off trekking.

The team visited many sites of varying interest and Alan listed the plants the team had discovered from these day trips, Alan ends the article stating "My feeling is that this mountain range has only yielded a fraction of its plant treasures"

Jotting from South of the Border – Roger G Woodhouse.

Roger writes about his success and failures to grow plants from seed and his hybridising trials and the current insect damage on many of his plants.

Outstanding new rhododendrons:

"Swift" the latest to addition to the Glendoick bird hybrid series started in 1960 with

"Chikor", "Curlew" and "Ptarmigan" the series now numbers over twenty. "Swift" is a cross between (*R. ludlowii* x *R. mekongense* viridescens)

Matt Heasman – writes about plants for cold weather. Matt's motto as always "you will never know until you try it".

This Newsletter finishes off with a letter from **Sam Macdonald** of Barguillean nurseries. Sam said they grow 35 "yak" hybrids at the nursery near Taynuilt in Argyll. Many are on show in the developing 11 acre **Angus's Garden** for all to see and admire.

Newsletter No 26 – August 1992: Society Secretary Hubert Andrew muses over his new status as retired and talks about the major works round his 1 ½ acre garden, with a gentle slope in the background, coming down to new pond and bog garden now completed with many of Mervyn Kessell's primulas planted. A new glasshouse and conservatory are planned along with a 30 ft polytunnel for plant propagation.

Hubert then goes on to thank Rorie Heresen for opening her garden on behalf of the Society, which benefited to the tune of £400. Jean Thornley at Glenarn on behalf of the Society as well. Both were thanked.

October Garden visits were to visit three commercial nurseries in Mid Argyll, staying at the Stag Hotel in Lochgilphead. The nurseries included were

Braevallich on Loch Aweside, **Inverliever Heathers** and **Barguillean** by **Taynuilt**. The **1993 show** was to take place at the Corran Halls in Oban in May.

New members some 14 - some you may recognise

Christopher Fairweather – The Garden Centre, Brockenhurst.

Jim Inskip – Cobham, Surrey.

This Newsletter contained the minutes of the AGM meeting held at the Show in Clarkston Hall. There was a lot of discussions on the Arduaine handover to the NTS and the early planning for the up and coming **ARS Worldwide Convention 1996**.

Report on the 1992 Annual Show at Clarkston Hall concludes that it was excellent show with blooms in good condition. Major trophy winners were **Arduaine** and **Blackhills**. Along with Lingholm Gardens, Keswick and Mary Stewart from Balerno taking the newcomers section trophies.

Next were the reports on the Spring tours,

The first visit was to **Belsey Hall**, originally home of the Middletons but now in the care of English National Heritage. The group were impressed by an mighty border of old stalwart hybrids such as 'Old Port', 'Cunningham's White', 'Cynthia' and many more all flowering just for our arrival. The group were being conducted round by John Anderton to a beautiful croquet lawn bordered by banks of azaleas and newly planted species rhododendrons.

The afternoon saw the group at the **University of Durham Botanic Gardens** which was interesting but obviously required more maintenance. The group then retired for the Saturday evening to the Jesmond Hotel in Newcastle.

On Sunday we were met at **Cragside** near Rothbury by Head Gardener, Andrew Sawyer, who explained the difficulties facing the NT in restoring the property, glasshouse and gardens to their former glory. The main valley where the Debton burn run though had an impressive collection of conifers.

The highlight of the trip was to **Howick gardens**, where we were met by Lady Mary Howick. This was most certainly the "jewel in the crown" for a springtime outing. The garden set amidst mighty oaks and Scots pines, where her collection of species and hybrid rhododendrons set for much interest and a lively debate with the experts in the group.

We were all pleased to see that there was not a trace of powdery mildew and everything was in such good heart. The shrub borders and underplanting with meconopsis and primulas were just outstanding. This is a must garden to return to in the future.

The last article was from a member in East Birmingham. **Stan Harrison** described his garden and his collection of plants. Stan and his wife had never visited Scotland but issued an open invitation for any SRS members to visit his garden.

That takes us to the end of 1992, I do hope you have enjoyed some notes from past and recognised some of the members from the past in the Newsletters of the Scottish Rhododendron Society.



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The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the SRS committee. The committee, however, support the right to freedom of speech.

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Two dark flowered rhododendrons from Germany. Top: *R.* 'Dramatik Dark' Above: *R.* 'Polarnacht' Pictures by John Roy

