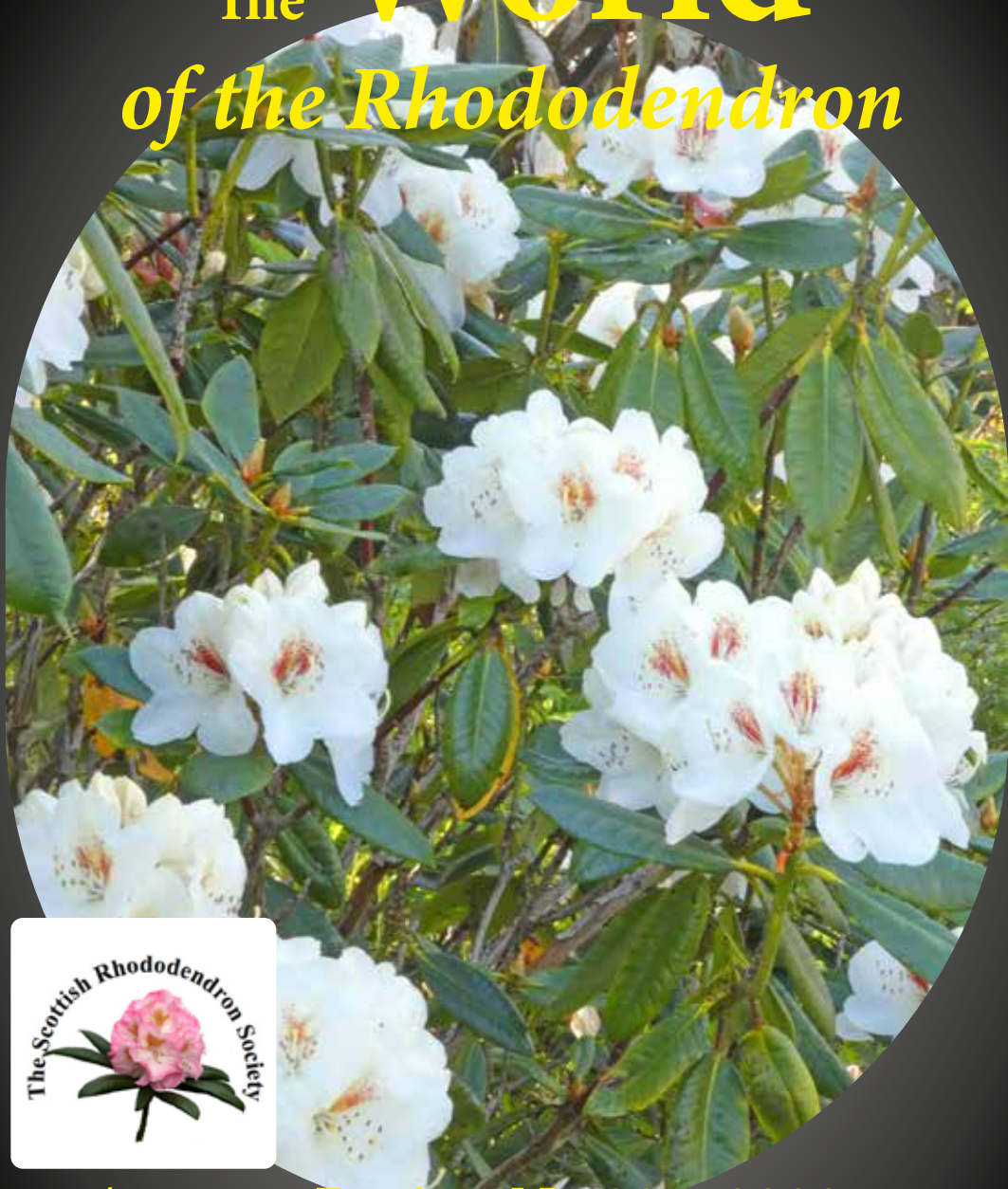


The **World** *of the Rhododendron*



Autumn Review No.89 ~ 2022

The Scottish Rhododendron Society



Left: A magnolia with peachy flowers is the cross *Magnolia* ‘Red Baron’ X ‘Gold Cup’. Given to me by Chip Lima, it is happy in its new home.

Picture by John Roy

Arboreum Walk at Baravalla is home to many forms of *Rhododendron arboreum*. This good dark flowered form caught my eye this spring.

Picture by John Roy



Scottish Rhododendron Society

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Cover Pictures: Front: *Rhododendron* 'Phyllis Korn'
Back Top: *Rhododendron davidsonianum*
Back Lower: *Camellia* 'Brushfield Yellow'

All pictured at Glenwhan Garden by Ross Underwood

President's Chat

Willie Campbell

Many of you will be aware that I was elected as your Society President at the AGM in May at Garelochhead. It's an honour and a privilege to take over the President of the Scottish Rhododendron Society, following past Presidents in recent times John Hammond, David Starck, Ian Douglas and Mervyn Kessell.

But first, I must pay tribute and a huge Society thanks to the outgoing President John Hammond. I first meet John in 2002 when I was gardening at Gargunnoch House, just outside Stirling. John and Ian Douglas were invited along by Sir James Stirling, to view and discuss the collection of 1950 hybrid rhododendrons planted after the war by Miss Viola Stirling. He was also writing a 2003 Yearbook article about the connection between the Campbell Gardens at Ardkinglas and Gargunnoch House. As we toured the gardens, Fiona and I tried to keep up with the names of this and that which both John and Ian rattled off. Needless to say, I was encouraged to join the SRS.

In 2003 John was the prime mover in a Joint conference at the RBGE and late George Argent who was leading for the RBGE encouraged me to ask the RHS for a bursary to attend the conference. (This is like what we are setting up with the Education Fund.)

I was made welcome and joined in with whatever and whoever I could learn more about the SRS and rhododendrons. The conference to me was such an eyeopener with delegates from Scotland, England, Europe and the USA. What a collection of world experts meeting in the Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh, where many of us think as the "Home" of rhododendrons.

A year later there was a call from Ian Douglas, asking if I would become the Society Secretary and I did. David Starck took over as President until 2007, then John was installed as President just before the 2008 conference, which he again was organising with the RBGE.

The 2008 conference was another success, with International Speakers, delegates, conference tours. Buses were leaving daily on tours around the country; what an organisation, much of it down to John Hammond. The conference success was helped along by the "Two Peters" Cox and Hutchinson book "Seeds of Adventure". I have my signed copy I look at regularly.

John was at this time the ARS “Director at Large” for Europe and “behind the Scenes” it was suggested to me that John deserves the highest accolade that can be presented to an ARS/SRS member, the ARS “Gold Medal”. John already had the “Bronze Medal” for the work he had been involved with over the years, including the ARS Convention held in Oban in 1996. John received his ARS Gold Medal in 2013 at a conference in the US.

It was around 2005/6 that Ian Sinclair talked about species rhododendron conservation and following a meeting at Gargunnock the Rhododendron Species Conservation Group was formed with John as its secretary. Again, John was the main driver, setting up the constitution, gardens for survey, contacting all involved and generally keeping the group together for all these years since it formed. Conferences were organised each spring, setting up of venues, speakers, and the all-important meals, for Matt and myself to enjoy.

In 2013 John and the RSCG organised a Conservation Conference again at the RBGE, meeting on the Friday through to Sunday. Another successful weekend was had by all.

Off course we cannot just talk about John, behind all this success was Margaret who helped with a lot of the conference organisation over the years. Margaret has also been by John’s side at most of the SRS tours and conferences. Over the last couple of years Margaret has had some mobility problems and I am sure we all wish her well with her knee replacement operations later this year.

One of the Society overriding ambitions, is to grow the Society. We want to spread our message not just about rhododendrons and azaleas but the wonderful gardens that are growing them, the propagators, nurseries and the plantsmen. If you have friends that are interested in rhododendrons, please encourage them to join us.

We are so lucky to have many experts in our Society, and we want you to feel that you can contact them for any information.

If you have something interesting to tell and share, send it to our Editor John Roy.

Sadly, we must report the passing of one of our Member Jim Inskip, Jim was an azalea man, we send our condolences to his family and friends.

Finally, I would like to thank my team of committee members for all the work they have done.

Happy Gardening, please rain soon.

Secretary's Notes

Katrina Clow

It is very cheering, after 2 years of virtual inactivity, to report that the SRS has organised 3 successful events this year, allowing members to meet up again and exchange gardening news. It has been a great flowering this spring and early summer. No late frosts and a warm March but the drought, especially severe in the east, is a cause for great concern. The stress, especially on old large trees and shrubs will become more evident next year. All that we can say about our weather is that it is unpredictable!

The 8 day tour to South West Scotland took place in late April and is reported in this Review. The Annual Show at Garelochhead on 7th May was a great success with a splendid array of exhibits and some examples not normally seen, as the show date was slightly later than usual. The show was a great opportunity for members and friends to meet up once again and for committee to meet visitors, answer questions and make the acquaintance of new members. As usual, the plant sale was extremely well supported, both with generous donations of plants, many from Paul Haynes, Oliver Miller and Willie Campbell and enthusiastic purchasers. Local people seem to have realised that they will find unusual and reasonably priced plants at the SRS sale plus a large range of rhododendrons from Alan Clark. The outstanding profit from the plant sale will be added to the burgeoning 'Education and Exploration Grant Fund'. The show is such a happy, lively and colourful event and all those who help to make it so are to be warmly thanked.

With a break from tradition, the AGM was held on Friday afternoon, the day before the show. It was thought that this would give the committee more time at the show and would encourage exhibitors to attend the AGM before set up at 3pm. The jury is still out on the success or not of this change but about the same number attended as in 2019.

In October 2021, our President and Chairman Mr John Hammond advised us that he wished to stand down in November. He has given 14 years of dedicated service to the Society but we shall not lose his input as he will continue to serve on the committee as a Past President.

It was necessary to elect a new President / Chairman at our AGM. Nominations were sought from our members and two candidates were proposed. It was thought that an election would be required at the AGM but at the eleventh hour, Matthew Heasman

graciously declined to stand and Willie Campbell was duly elected President / Chairman, to great acclaim. Willie has contributed for many years and in so many ways to the running of SRS - as a past Secretary, Treasurer, show organiser, plant supplier, and organiser of the very successful Seed Exchange. Most recently, he laid out a detailed proposal for an Education / Exploration Fund to enable grants to be offered by SRS for potential travellers or those involved in woody plant projects. The scheme has been agreed and is now under the guiding hand of Philip Rankin and ready to launch.

I am sure we all wish Willie success in his tenure as President and with his talent for innovation, the Society will continue to evolve and flourish. Matt Heasman will become our new Vice Chairman elect, as Ian Sinclair had advised that he wished to demit his VC role. We also heard recently that Ian Douglas, a long standing committee member, is to stand down. He will be sorely missed and I shall miss the opportunity of seeing his lovely woodland garden when the committee met at Craigothie. Chip Lima has also tendered his resignation.

Apart from this, the committee remains unchanged but we will welcome Bryony who manages Achamore Garden on Gigha on to the committee at our next meeting and, of course, anyone who feels willing to contribute to the running of the society should apply.

We are pleased to welcome these new members:

Frans Van Der Heyden

Colin Crosbie

Gyrd Harstad

Gillian Boyle

Andrew Leverton

Elizabeth Anne Hawkins

Michie MacDonald

Bruce Ewan

Sally Lovell

Anne-Maree Mitchell

Anne Robertson

Anne and Douglas Treble

Susan Hood

Gill Hart

We hope that you enjoy your membership. If you attend an event, please make yourself known to committee members.

Scottish National Rhododendron Show – Saturday 7th May 2022 – Gibson Hall, Garelochhead

Gloria Starck

Welcome to this Show Report for 2022. It is so great to be back seeing our members in person. It seems an age since the last Show, although only 3 years.

The format for the weekend was slightly different this year, as we were trying a new time for the Society's AGM, which normally takes place on Show Day. This year we had the AGM on Friday 6th May in the afternoon, prior to the set up for the Show. This seemed to work well, as Committee Members were then available in the Hall on Saturday to mix with visitors and give advice and information as needed.

The judging commenced at 10.00 and the judges were Richard Baines, David Chamberlain and Alan Clark. The stewards were John Roy, Ian Douglas and me, assisted by Barbara Anderson who also took photographs during the judging.

There were a large number of entries in most classes, although a couple were empty. The display en masse was amazing. The standard of entry is getting better each year and there were large numbers of entries that received a Highly Commended award which in another year could well have been in the points.

Listening to the judges discussing the entries is always an education in how to present the specimen and what makes one more interesting than another. I often hear the judges saying 'that's interesting' or 'how unusual'. Sometimes it is a very fine line between a first, second or third award.

If you do not think you can exhibit a rhododendron or azalea, why not try entering the Wildlife Photo Competition. This competition has three sections: Rhododendron Portraits, Other Plant Portraits and Animal Portraits. This competition is open to all photographers, amateur or professional, living anywhere. Photographic prints must be suitably mounted on card, maximum size A4. So get out there and take a few photos.

The trophy winners this year are as follows:

The Kildarden Trophy – For the winner of Class 1	Mike & Sue Thornley Glenarn
The George Sherriff Cup – For the most points in Section 1	Mike & Sue Thornley Glenarn
The Sir John Stirling Maxwell Trophy – For the best species in the show grown in the open	Mike & Sue Thornley Glenarn <i>R. falconeri</i>
The Harry Fairbairn Cup – For the most points in restricted Classes 45–48	Annette Treble
The David Stuart Cup – For the best species or hybrid exhibited in Classes 45–48	Michie MacDonald
The John Hammond Cup – For the most points in the species and hybrid Azalea Classes (25, 34, 35)	Mike & Sue Thornley Glenarn
The Argyll & Bute Trophy – For the most points in all Classes grown in an Argyll & Bute garden	Mike & Sue Thornley Glenarn
The Scottish Rhododendron Society Cup – For the best hybrid in the Show	Mike & Sue Thornley Glenarn <i>R. falconeri x R. sinogrande</i>
The Keyline Cup – For the most points in all Classes grown in a garden of up to an acre	Philip Rankin
The Marlene Storah Cup – For the most points in all classes for gardens not open to the public more than once a year.	Wang Liston
The Mervyn Kessell Cup – For the most points in Classes 42 and 43	Philip Rankin
The Stephen Fox Picture – For the best species of wild collected origin grown from the ARS/SRS seed exchange. (A catalogue/collectors number must be clearly marked on class card to be considered for this award).	Matt Heasman
The Wild Argyll Cup – For the best photographic print in the Show	Stella Irving Peacock Butterfly
The Banks Medal – For most points in Show	Mike & Sue Thornley Glenarn

The 2023 Annual Show will be held on Saturday 6th May in the Gibson Hall, Garelochhead. Exhibits can be staged late afternoon or early evening on Friday 5th May or on Saturday morning 6th May before 9.45.

The Post Show Tour: details are included with this Review.



**Left and below:
Judges at work**



**Left:
Mike and Sue
Thornley receive the
Banks Medal for the
most points in show.**

**Pictures by Barbara
Anderson**

Aeolia Garden and Blackmill Garden, Kilsyth

Christine Haynes

Sunday the 8th of May was a beautiful hot and sunny day for our first Post Show Tour since the start of Covid 19. Nine members met in Allanfauld Road, Kilsyth to visit two gardens on the same road – Aeolia gardens and Blackmill Gardens. Both properties were built over 60 years ago and although they both have many rhododendrons in common they are very different types of gardens.

We began with Aeolia garden. This is the home of Mr George Murdoch. This mainly woodland garden is 1/3rd of an acre in size. The garden has colour all year round as his daughter Fiona who helps her father with the garden, explained to us. It starts with snowdrops in the spring, followed by bluebells and rhododendrons, then the herbaceous plants in the borders in summer and finally pots of dahlias placed in the borders and all the colours of the leaves on the large trees and many different acers.

The garden is accessed up a short steep drive with a wall on the garden side and a greenhouse containing grape vines on the other. We were met by George and Fiona at the top of the drive. In front of the house on a level area is a paved patio and lawn edged in borders containing rhododendrons, acers and herbaceous plants. Many of George's rhododendrons and acers he brought back from America.



Many of the plants had cages and chicken wire shielding them. Since the start of the Covid restrictions the area has

George's garden has mature trees as a backdrop to the plantings.

Picture by John Roy

become very quiet and the deer and rabbits are no longer frightened to visit. They have started eating the plants.

Next to the lawn at the side of the house are two small ponds surrounded by mature trees, many different acers and rhododendrons. The owners retained the trees when the house was built, the lower limbs have been removed with good effect to let light in to the shrubs below. Opposite where the garden starts to drop down are fruit bushes and trees. The ground then drops into a hillside covered in rhododendrons of many different colours and sizes with paths weaving their way to the bottom. On the way down one of the paths was an American rhododendron called 'Crater Lake', a lovely lilac flower. At the bottom was a massive pink flowered rhododendron called 'Bow Bells' which is actually over the fence in the neighbour's garden.

We then made our way back to the drive where George had an area of plants for sale. We all left with at least one each.

We then crossed the road to Blackmill Garden, the home of Alan and Alison Patrick. We were welcomed with coffee and home baking. This garden is three acres in total, two acres woodland planting and one acre a more formal garden. The two areas are split by the Garrell Burn with its 23 feet high waterfall running down to the hydro scheme. Alan has often been asked if he built the waterfall himself.

On either side of the entrance are two well kept lawns with borders of trees, rhododendrons and shrubs. The area in from to the house is terraced with pools and other plantings.

From the parking area a wide path wound down to the connecting bridge between the two parts of the garden. On the opposite side of the Burn were rhododendrons that Alan planted using a ladder because the sides below the waterfall are so steep to walk or climb up.

At the top of the steps leading to the garden a stream comes off the burn and flows through the garden forming a small river and a large pond. This area contains well established trees, acers, rhododendrons and herbaceous plants.

Throughout the gardens are many statues, inspirational plaques and brass globes and ornaments. The plaque that I liked was the one about water in the garden. There were five brass elves each with an explanation of their elfin origin. They were River, Spring, Puck, Pod and Pip. In the pond were other ornaments including a hippo, frog and pagoda.

The stream though the garden had a bridge over it with a low bridge sign! There were many beautiful rhododendrons in flower and lots of acers .

Two wonderful gardens well worth another visit.



The waterfall and rhododendrons planted by ladder on the far bank.

Stream with low bridge sign. Statue of Spring is on the right.

Pictures by Christine Haynes



Tour of Gardens in South West Scotland

April 26th – May 3rd

The first Spring Tour since 2019 took place this year. It was great to get back to touring. David and Gloria Starck had organised a variety of great gardens for us to visit. Our thanks to them for the hard work in the successful organisation of a very interesting tour.

Craichlaw

Becky Keeble-Payne

We opened the 2022 Scottish Rhododendron Society tour with a guided visit to the lovely Craichlaw Gardens in Kirkcowan, Newton Stewart. The owners, Andrew and Mary Gladstone, showed us around and gave us an insight into the history and future development of the Gardens. This extensive garden with woodland areas, loch, pond and formal planting, surround the family home and a striking 19th century crenelated tower. Much of the woodland planting here began in the late 18th century and Andrew and Mary have spent the last few decades tackling the overgrown nature of the gardens immediately around the house.



Clipped Hornbeams at Craichlaw

We started our tour at the tower and Mary explained how they designed the formal gardens here to create view-points through to focal points, such as standing stones. Borders are mulched heavily and netted to provide support for taller herbaceous perennials to grow through. Gardening here needs to be low maintenance as it is

done by the owners with help for only a few days a week. The use of clipped hornbeams gives structure to perennials such as *Cimicifuga* (*Actaea*), *Veronicastrum* and *Cynara cardunculus*. *Clematis* are then trained up arches to edge the garden.

As we left the formal gardens the landscape opened up into wildflower meadows containing snakes head fritillaries and daffodils. We passed through a grove of Wellingtonias and mature trees leading to the water gardens. These consisted of a loch and ponds dating from the 1830s that had provided water for a mill and sawmill. In winter it became a practise ground for the Kirkcowan Curling Club, the second oldest in Scotland. Now the loch is used for wild swimming and a beautiful cedar deck and summer house make it the perfect spot to enjoy the evening sun.

Between the house and the Loch, a drystone walled garden has been planted up as an arboretum containing *Magnolia* ‘Elizabeth’, *Betula ermanii* and heritage apple varieties such as ‘Galloway Pippin’. These have been planted in a grid pattern and protected from grazing sheep and deer by wire mesh surrounds.

On our way back to the house we were told that over 100 big trees were lost in the storms last winter. However, this will provide an opportunity for new planting which may otherwise have not taken place. Some species rhododendrons (*R. arboreum* and *R. barbatum*) and unknown hybrid rhododendrons lead up to the house. Ross the Younger also spotted a *R.* ‘Couldbeanythingensis’ and a *R.* ‘Haven’tacluei’.



Above all it was a family garden, as could be seen by the amazing zip wire across a meadow, the free-range chickens and the BBQ station overlooking the loch. Mary then showed us around her pottery workshop and studio with beautiful pieces inspired by the natural world around her.

It was a treat to be shown around their garden by Andrew and Mary and a lovely start to the SRS tour. It was fascinating to hear how they have taken their family home from its past incarnation into the future with new planting, and how they are developing it with nature and conservation in mind.

Plantings into gravel save labour

Pictures by Becky Keeble-Payne

Glenwhan Gardens

Ross Underwood

Day one and the afternoon of the SRS tour took us to the fabulous Glenwhan gardens near Dunragit not far from our base at the North West Castle Hotel, Stranraer.

The most special gardens, in my humble opinion, are those that evolve over the years and are very much the passion project of interested and enthusiastic owners. Glenwhan certainly lives up to this standard.

We arrived and were served an enormous lunch of soup and sandwiches in the on-site café which provided an opportunity to chat and catch up with a contingent from Germany, led by Hartwig Schepker, who joined us on part of the tour.

The gardens at Glenwhan have been created over the last 40 years, though conjured might be a better word to describe their creation. The owner, Tessa Knott (and her first husband) purchased 103 acres of rough, gorse covered ground in 1971 though the advantages of the site for garden making became obvious. Warmed



**Stunning vistas at
Glenwhan**

**Pictures by Ross
Underwood**



by the gulf stream and with panoramic sea views and a southerly aspect this is an excellent landscape in which to grow and display rare and exotic plants, shrubs and trees. There are few of us who could say we were lucky enough to begin our gardens with a blank canvas.

The garden is based around two small lochs created using the water that flows through the garden from a Georgian reservoir and this brings so much life and movement to the garden as well as reflecting the plants and the sky.

Rhododendrons feature prominently at Glenwhan including many hardy hybrids that were amongst the first things to be planted including old favourites such as *R. 'Cynthia'*, *R. 'Phyllis Korn'*, *R. 'Cunningham's White'* and the *R. 'Loderi'* group. As the shelter belt grew up and Tessa's interest increased species rhododendrons were planted to take advantage of the microclimates within the garden. These include impressive examples of the large leaved species including *R. sinogrande*, *R. macabeum* and *R. sinofalconeri*. As someone who gardens in Shropshire, a drier part of the country without the moderating influence of the gulf stream, I must confess that my mouth was watering at the sight of such impressive plants. There were also impressive specimens of *R. oreotrephes* and the wonderful *R. kesangiae*. It was great to see this latter plant in flower as mine has not reached that stage yet. *R. davidsonianum* and *R. rubiginosum* were also impressive in the sunshine.

There were also numerous plantings of evergreen azaleas including the bright (though not garish) *R. 'Kirishima'*

Also impressive were the large *Myrtus lechleriana* that were in full flower which almost obscured the neat glossy foliage and I frankly confess to losing my heart to a wonderful *Betula potaninii* which displayed its wonderful peeling bark in shades of russet, brown and orange.

Camellias were also still going strong in some parts of the garden including *C. 'Brushfield Yellow'* with soft lemony centres to its creamy flowers. *Olearia phlogopappa* 'Combers Blue' displayed its daisy like purple flowers. From a distance it seemed like an out of season aster!

Our visit culminated with a group photo and expressions of warm appreciation and affection for this outstanding and deeply personal garden.

Logan Botanic Garden

Willie Campbell

It was the second morning of the SRS tour in Southwest Scotland as we edged round the Mull of Galloway towards Logan Botanic Garden. The drive into the gardens is lined by *Cordyline australis*. This reminds us that the gardens are influenced by the warming of the gulf stream.

We were met in the car park by Richard Baines, Logan's Curator. Richard set off into the gardens stopping near the Café (cake already) and explained that because of the mild conditions an array of over 5000 different species of trees, shrubs, herbs and bulbs from warm temperate regions of the world especially the Southern hemisphere flourish in the gardens. Where we were standing, we saw a rockery full of different succulents from the Mediterranean region growing happily.

We then proceeded to the Logan "Dinosaur", made from willow weaved to create a scary monster for the many families coming to the garden. Richard happily told us that visitor numbers to the garden are increasing year upon year and they have won many "Visit Scotland Tourist Awards".

We walked round the pond watching the monster carp swimming around. Much of this area is dotted with mature palms, again we are informed that the garden has over 30 different species of palms.



In the walled garden many of the tender rhododendrons live and thrive in the mild conditions. Lots of sub section Maddenia rhododendron species and hybrids were in full flower. One hybrid that Richard was particularly proud of was *R. 'Logan Surprise'* bred here in the

Richard showing off some of his tender rhododendrons



Red labels used for endangered or extinct in the wild plants

Pictures by John Roy



garden. Many of these tender plants were along one wall taking shelter from any winter frosts.

There were many other plants of note in the walled garden, some very good magnolias taking pride of place in the manicured lawns. Richard pointed out tender camellias that grow so well at Logan. Richard is to give a talk on “Camellias for every season, a world of opportunities” at the autumn joint SRS/RSCG conference at Threave on Saturday 1st October.

The Logan Conservatory, which is a three-glass zoned area, is planted with exotic plants that need some extra protection. I was particularly interested in the collection of pelargonium plants on one bench and sure enough there was *P. ‘Lord Bute’* a plant with very dark crimson flowers. Back in 2014 the Conservatory was the first public glasshouse generating its own heat using sustainable green technology. PV solar panels and air source heat pumps generate enough heat to sustain a temperature of 8 C or 47 F.

An area dedicated to previous Logan Curators has a collection of their own plants. The Castle woodland features mostly southern hemisphere plants and some very special tender rhododendrons, too many to describe in this short article. There is also a newly planted collection of Vietnamese plants, many collected by Richard himself in recent years.

A *Gunnera* bog was just coming into growth, over the Logan burn to the Tasmanian Creek with a super viewing platform, looking on to mature eucalyptus trees, where children and adults alike can look out for the Koalas. Then we headed back down to

the Australasian collection through a series of maturing woodland glades that evoke parts of New Zealand, Chile, and New South Wales.

We stopped outside the Potting Shed Bistro, lunch was calling. But Richard had one last surprise, a behind the scenes look at the propagation area, where we were shown collections of plants in nursery beds, trays, and pots, some that will go into the garden at Logan and to other gardens for conservation purposes, worldwide.

Logan Botanic Gardens is a jewel in the crown of the best of Scottish Gardens, at the forefront of conservation, natural habitat, bug hotels, and housekeeping to the highest standard. It is a must see garden, organise your visit now.

Logan House Garden

David and Marlene Storah

Following the group visit to Logan Botanic Gardens we then visited the completely different landscape of Logan House. The house fronts onto a large gravel driveway. It is a Queen Anne house which sits in a large designed landscape of which the garden and woodland garden form a part.

Part of the original woodland garden and kitchen garden is now incorporated in Logan Botanic Garden. To the upper boundary of the woodland garden, plants have “escaped” from the Botanic Garden including echiums which form a rather spectacular hedge. Species rhododendrons form the structure, many raised from seed from expeditions of George Forrest and Reginald Farrer. Other natives of temperate zone countries were introduced to the garden and have become well-established. *R. arboreum* specimens border the lawn areas in a vista from the front of the house. Rhododendrons predominate the south-west of the house, in the Monkey Puzzle shrubbery are several fine *Eucalyptus* among them, *E. coccifera* and *E. globulus*. In the Garden south of the house are some fine *Embothrium*, in particular *E. lanceolatum* ‘Norquinco Valley’, *E. coccineum*.

The rhododendron woodland extends along the north east boundary of the garden between the house and the park north east of which lies the bog garden. There are a number of significant specimen trees in the garden including *R. decorum*, *R. grande* and *R. sinogrande*.

Within the garden are a number of champion trees for Scotland. In addition to the rhododendron and eucalyptus there are *Eucryphia* and *Juniperus recurva*. There was

damage in the recent gales which is being cleared away. Replanting is taking place and the present owners have been improving the garden slowly over the past years

Grass terraces provide a setting to Logan House and an effective transition between Logan House and the woodland garden, with extensive bulb planting within the grassland. A raised terrace was created at the east front of the house using masonry from the Victorian front of the house which was demolished when the house was returned almost to its original design.

Castle Kennedy Gardens

Peter Furneaux

We were met by the new Head Gardener, Ann-Maree Mitchell, at the shell of the 17c castle, gutted by fire within a hundred years and never repaired. Up much of its height was a magnificent *Wisteria*, in bud at the time of our visit. A short walk took us to the enormous walled garden (in fact one of two). Herbaceous borders were beginning to sprout and were flanked by *Embothrium*, *Eucryphia* and *Drymis* avenues. The damage from Storm Arwen had been largely cleared but the remaining stumps indicated the size these trees would have been. An occasional *Embothrium* and many *Drymis winteri* were in full flower.



The landscape of Castle Kennedy is partly natural: gently sloping hills and lochs, but mainly created by the 2nd Earl of Stair in the 18th c. One such area is the Round Pond, filled with water lilies of several colours. It must be spectacular at flowering time. There are many trees and shrubs here; we noticed a *Cercidophyllum* which is one of twenty Champion Trees at Castle Kennedy. Others we saw include *Heptacodium miconioides*, not in flower but with its attractive peeling bark and *Nothofagus solandri* var. *Cliffortioides*. Our walk took us up the long Monkey

Broad rides with mature trees and rhododendrons are characteristic of Castle Kennedy

Picture by John Roy

Puzzle avenue where many of these amazing South American trees showed the characteristic banded pattern of the trunk. There are of course many rhododendrons but largely unlabelled at Castle Kennedy. Some could be recognised including *Rhododendron parmulatum*, *R. neriiflorum* and *R. ‘Sir Charles Lemon’*.

Our visit ended near the original castle at a cafe where we were able to sit in the sunshine for lunch. We thanked Anne-Maree and the retired head gardener, John MacArthur of that ilk, who had joined us during our walk.

Galloway House Garden

John Roy

Built between 1740-42 the house and policies were constructed for Lord Alexander Garlies, later 6th Earl of Galloway. A Trust was established in 1987 to continue the maintenance of the Garden after the house itself was sold into private hands. We were shown around by three of the trustees.

The big red hybrid *Rhododendron ‘Altaclarensis’* was in flower and looking magnificent. Another notable big tree was *Drymis winteri*. We were slightly too early to see the flowers and bracts of *Davidia involucrata*.

The wide and well-kept trails took us round the garden until we came to the walled garden. Huge glasshouses were attached to the outer wall, but these were in a state of disrepair. The Trust is hoping to raise sufficient funds to bring these back into use.

While at the walled garden we were able to have refreshments and say thanks to the Trustees for giving their time.

***Rhododendron ‘Altaclarensis’*, one of many splendid trees at Galloway House Garden.**

Picture by John Roy



Midkelton

David Sillar



Our tour programme told us “This is a very young garden”. We had seen Richard in action two days earlier in his role as Curator of the Logan Botanic Gardens so we should have been prepared for the unexpected. What greeted us was a delight; a conventional mix of open and woodland garden, and something very different, surrounding his house at Midkelton and all developed over the last 21 years.

The older elements of the garden were full of interesting and unusual specimens including *Magnolia* ‘Eileen Baines’ (bred by Richard and named after his mother) sheltered by *Acer* and two *Quercus*. Noticeable were the strikingly silvery *Betula* and the Monkey Puzzles; lots of them, both in pots round about the slightly less than tidy (this is a gardener’s garden) but very functional greenhouses and propagation area, as well as in the one acre Monkey Puzzle grove on the east side of the garden. In fact I think Richard has more *Araucaria* than all the other gardens seen on our tour! Other delights were the double yellow gorse, *Rhododendron decorum* and *R. concinnum*;

Top: Richard’s young arboretum

Picture by David Sillars



Right: Richard with his cuttings of *Magnolia* ‘Eileen Baines’

Picture by John Roy

Richard told us he grows 90% of his rhododendrons from seed.

None of this prepared me and I suspect most of the group for the really “young” bit of the garden. This consisted of some 4 acres of what looked at first glance to be two untended fields with a few scruffy young conifers and some plastic tree shelters. Closer inspection and Richard’s word picture enabled us to see his master plan - an arboretum of magnolias (500 hundred of them?) sheltered by Sitka spruce, alder and oak, protected from deer by a fence - but not badgers c.f. Baravalla. Richard’s approach to husbandry appeared positively Darwinian but with a forester’s eye I could see that ‘beating up’ (plant replacement) will take place over the next few years.

The visit ended with a very convivial mug of coffee in Richard and Liz’s house. If I live to be 100 I hope someone kind will take me to see this garden, or at least show me a photo of it. It is going to be one of the most outstanding gardens in the South West.

Cally Garden Nursery

John Roy

Whilst in the area, a visit to Cally Garden Nursery was a must. I was there years ago when Micheal Wickenden was still alive and in charge. Now Kevin Hughes is custodian. Kevin’s background is in ecology, so it was no surprise to find the garden dedicated to nature. The beds are not meticulously weeded, the paths not sprayed with weedkiller, the bushes not sprayed with insecticide. An area to the rear is being successfully turned into a wild flower meadow.

To some eyes, this might give the garden an air of untidiness. But Kevin boasts of many successful birds nesting, unusual butterflies and the air hums with pollinating insects.

Within its walls, Kevin rears some rare and difficult to grow plants. On our visit to the Nursery area, many people found plants to buy.

People found plenty to look at in the Garden

Picture by John Roy



Alan Shamash's Garden

Katrina Clow

The Garden is on Shore Road, on the west side of the Dee Estuary, between Kirkcubright and Borgue in a very favoured, sheltered setting.

The house sits well above the shore and is reached by the main road. The group parked on Dhoon beach and made the rather hair raising ascent on the-busy, winding road, to Mill House in continuing drizzle. On arrival, you are instantly aware of a very special garden, as the area around the house is full of interesting, unusual and tender plants eg: *Fallopia*, *Edgeworthia*, *Buddleja salvifolia* and *Grevillia*. We were fortunate that Alan was present to guide us around as there was so much to see on three parallel paths, on descending levels, down to the shore.

The planting is so bountiful and varied and the positioning of different plants so exciting that you instantly see a discerning, master hand at work. There is a superb collection of species rhododendrons and magnolias plus: hydrangeas, trees and shrubs of multiple genera, intermingled with perennials and climbers. There are few repeats and new cultivars of *Magnolia*, e.g. *M.* 'Sunburst', *M.* 'Lois', with yellow/rose flowers and many hybrid rhododendrons abound.

We were led down a path from the house and arrived at an oval grassy glade, planted on both sides and with paths above and below. At the lower level we could see a glade of different acers, forming a beautiful tapestry of colour. We dispersed in all directions and, en-route to the far end of the garden, I saw *Rhododendron* 'Graf Lennard', with big blousy yellow flowers, *Deutzia hookeriana*, *Cephalotaxus*, a lovely young specimen of *Magnolia* 'Sunburst', *Stachyurus praecox* and a *Eucryphia* cultivar called 'Dump-ling' and so many others but the drizzle made note-taking increasingly difficult and others

Alan Shamash's steep garden has been skillfully terraced and planted



Picture by John Roy

will have spotted many, many more plants of interest. The garden is surrounded by a deer fence but it was evident that planting was continuing into the wilder woodland above!

At the end of the garden, a gate opened into a path descending to the beach and worth the walk as wonderful fragrance provided by roses and a specimen of *Rhododendron* ‘Loderi’ in full bloom.

This is truly a garden for all seasons, one which would provide interest at any time of the year and always delight plant lovers. I for one thank the tour organisers for arranging this visit.

Visit to Orroland Garden May 1st 2022

Anne Fox

Welcoming us to Orroland, Mr Kennedy said “We haven’t really got a garden here”. What we discovered was a series of changing landscapes full of surprises both horticultural and architectural.

Fortified by coffee, we took an uphill track adjoining woodland with birch and larch just coming into fresh green leaf. Underneath, the lush grass with bluebells and red campion gave the feeling of Spring emerging.

Suddenly we reached the upper level of the estate. Our vista opened out dramatically and the view ahead across a large tranquil lake was like a landscape painting come to life. A pavilion at the far end draws the eye and the still waters of the lake give a reflection of the four-pillared building and the two towering eucalyptus behind it. The shoreline of the lake is softened by the delicate pink of low growing rhododendrons.

We proceeded by a lakeside path, and after passing the pavilion we were on the edge of woodland on our right. There was a splash of bright colour from a deep pink cherry tree and then another deep pink highlight from a rhododendron. A witch hazel with creamy flowers and fresh green leaves was as ornamental as any “garden” tree.

Looking left, we wondered whether we had stumbled upon a giant pre-historic burial mound or ceremonial meeting place. Rising imposingly from a flat grassy area is a large and impressive green mound – “The Snail” built when the lake was excavated. It has a certain mysterious fascination for all ages, but is particularly loved by visiting children who enthusiastically ascend the spiral path which circles round the mound



A pair of boxing hares with the “Snail” behind

Picture by John Roy

to the top. It was a surprise to find that the sloping sides are clad with periwinkle; green like the surrounding grass but with an interestingly different texture. Presumably it also saves having to mow a difficult slope.

A second small lake follows, and then soon our track led

downwards. The woodland on our left was underplanted with *Gunnera* and had a dark and somewhat sinister look; to our right was a planting of deciduous azaleas to provide a bright contrast. Soon we descended between steep wooded slopes completely clothed in wild garlic, to arrive eventually at the coast. Our more energetic members completed the rather steep descent to the beach.

Returning via the holiday cottages, we met a very fine metal dragon sculpture. Other artefacts seen on our way round included some classical statuary, a rather cute stone dragon and some boxing hares. A taxidermy collection in a shed near the walled garden is pronounced a “fantastic” display of Scottish wildlife. Our exit through the walled garden gave us one more surprise; a small Indian temple with an onion dome is built against the garden wall, providing a final quirky touch to our tour of varied landscapes and imaginative features.

Auchencairn

John Roy

Before lunch at the “Big House” we had a walk around the extensive garden grounds. An avenue of trees and rhododendrons took us to a large pond. Most rhododendrons were hybrids that were yet to put on their show. At the bottom of the pond grew moisture loving *Gunnera manicata* and *Primula pulverulenta*. From there we could here waves breaking on the shore through the trees. Very tranquil. In more open areas there were carpets of bluebells and cowslips.

On our tour of South West Scotland we saw a lot of damage being done by soft scale insects sucking the sap from the leaves of rhododendrons. This falls on to the leaves below and attracts sooty mould which not only looks unattractive, but cuts out light getting to the leaves. Auchencairn was trying to get on top of the problem by thinning out the worst affected branches and burning them.

After looking round the productive walled garden, we went into the house for a sumptuous lunch served by our hosts, Piet and Sue Gilroy.

Threave Gardens

Willie Campbell

Day 5 on the SRS Tour to Galloway, garden number three was the National Trust for Scotland, Threave Gardens and Estate.

Threave is a teaching garden and many generations have been trained here at the School of Heritage Gardening. Many of these gardeners have gone on to be leaders in their fields and have developed innovative projects around the world. At present the teaching school has 5 students. These students are each given an area to work on and leave their own individual mark on the development of Threave.

This is a garden that Fiona and I are very familiar with; Fiona's parents lived not too far away in Dalbeattie, where we were married in 1969 so we have seen many changes to the gardens over the years.

We were met by Brian at the main building. Brian has worked in the garden for many years and lives on the Estate. He explained the role of the full-time gardens team, students and how they are given tasks, areas of development, each part being assessed, leading to their qualifications. Most students go on to find work as horticulturists in gardens around the country.

We started our tour by making our way down to the walled gardens. You enter the garden, and your eye is immediately caught by two long herbaceous borders backed by long yew hedges. We wandered through the garden spaces noting that collections of blueberries and rhubarb were on the north and west sides, with lines of cordon apple trees all superbly pruned and full of flower. The glasshouses are on the south facing wall and filled with tender and tropical plants.

Leaving the walled garden, we saw beds of dwarf rhododendrons and many other



**Brian showing us round
dwarf rhododendrons and
woodland plants**

Picture by John Roy

interesting woodland plants, trilliums, primulas, etc. This area of the garden is being restored and many of the rhododendrons were flowering well, the area was well mulched and grass edges looking good. However, we could not help noticing that many of the rhododendron

plants were wrongly labelled.

Past a pond and water feature, we came to the rockery, with a large water feature resembling a tumbling stream. Brian informs us that this part of the garden is next to be restored and many of the large rocks removed and replaced with a more maintenance friendly alpine area.

We entered what was called the garden of “Peace and Tranquillity”, a space gentle on the eye, a rest area and views out and over to the Galloway hills.

We saw examples of areas where the students were working, preparing large herbaceous borders in front of Threave house and from my own memories of the garden, these late season borders are such a delight to wander through and must be colourful from the house itself.

The path took us through an arboretum of trees. The head gardener has a passion for Ilex or hollies, and we saw many planted in the easy on the eye well-maintained grass parks. We noted some of the shelter belt had been blown over in the recent storms and we were told will be planted now with native species trees.

We were nearing the end of our trip round Threave. Brian asked if we wanted to visit the Heather Garden at the top of the hill, but we declined feeling that we all had walked plenty after three garden visits that day.

We arrived back at the main buildings, thanked Brian for taking the time on a Saturday

to guide us round the gardens he has an obvious passion for, then some of the party headed for the shop or plant stall and others headed back to our Hotel in Castle Douglas.

Threave Gardens are well maintained, interesting, educational and if your are in the area a good place to stop for lunch, has a huge play area for children and good parking facilities.

Corsock

John Roy

This gem of a woodland garden has been visited before by the SRS. Owner Jane Ingall met us and handed over to Head Gardener Jamie Lawrie and retired Gardener Jim Laurie to give us the guided tour. The amount of tree damage caused by last winter's storms was immense with clearing up still going on.

Corsock Loch has been harnessed to provide a meandering stream with several ponds that provide the backdrop to the plantings. Various sculptures can be found among the



trees and shrubs. Interesting rhododendrons are everywhere. Fine *R. lacteum* was in flower, plants I remember from before but now much more mature. Another rarely seen rhododendron was *R. longesquamatum*, identifiable by its rigid leaves
Above: Water is a key aspect of the landscape at Corsock

Left: Storm damage from the winter was still being cleared

Pictures by John Roy

with a hairy midrib. In the moist areas around the ponds, *Gunnera manicata* and *Darmera peltata* were pushing through the ground.

Large hybrid rhododendrons guided us across a small stone bridge with a cobbled deck and on to the Loch. We walked back to the house with the sound of heavy machinery working at tree and stump removal as the storm damage was gradually cleared. There will be fresh planting opportunities after this has been completed.

Brooklands

John Roy

We were met by garden owner Mrs M Herries who was joined by head gardenener Holly Young. First designed in the early 19th century, the garden has mature trees and shrubs, a working walled garden with herbaceous perennials and fruit and vegetables. Holly was keen to learn about the plants in her care.



The garden has a good selection of rhododendrons and azaleas. The group were able to name quite a few and Holly took photographs and noted the names. For once there was broad agreement

on nomenclature!

This garden had also suffered losses in the winter storms, with rhododendrons blown over and



Above: The owner receiving advice about a wind blown rhododendron

Left: Plant identification with Holly Young

Pictures by John Roy

their root plates sticking up at 90° to the ground. Members offered advice about the best methods to deal with this. Pruning back and jacking the shrub back upright was the favourite.

After walking around the woodland we went to the walled garden where well built fruit cages and a polytunnel were erected. Some herbaceous perennials were showing through the ground but their best time would be later in the year.

Brooklands is a lovely garden with something to interest throughout the year.

Gardens of Arbigland

Fiona Campbell

The last garden on the SRS tour of Galloway was Arbigland, a property with 24 acres of gardens SW of Dumfries on the Solway coast. We were met by owners Alistair and Wayne outside the 1750s Adam-style house which they have owned for 4 years. The gardens mainly were set out in the late 1800s to 1930s and contain mature trees and shrubs. In recent years the gardens have been largely untended and the new owners have a massive task of restoration which they have already started.

To our surprise a large number of crates containing marble statues and other artifacts, recently purchased, were placed near the front of the house. Throughout the garden statuary was to be seen, and an old well head had inspired Wayne to make the marble purchases. Behind them the *Rhododendron ponticum* wind break had been cleared to open up the view and rhododendron hybrids were revealed reaching for the light. Also in this area were goats, chickens and rheas.

Wayne was our guide round the garden and we set off through the old 17th century stable block to the herbaceous border on the north side of the house, and then proceeded to the Broad Walk. This stretched all the way to the sea with

View to the Solway Firth





mature trees and shrubs on either side. Most rhododendrons appeared to be old hybrids, one of them *R. 'Viscy'* caught my eye and nearby were possibly *R. sinofalconeri* and *R. sinogrande*. On the opposite side was an enormous multi-stemmed *Cercidiphyllum*.

Near the end of the Broad Walk Wayne pointed out piles of *Rhododendron ponticum* branches cleared to make new terraces for exotic plants. In the same area another huge clearance had been bamboo.

After viewing the Solway Firth, we turned off the Broad Walk to walk through the Sundial and Sunken Gardens. Here were box parterres built on the footprint of an older house, and surrounded by ornamental trees such as *Magnolia*,

a large *Euchryphia* and a *Davidia*. Turning back towards the house we encountered a large pond again slightly overgrown, but with pathways all cleared. We passed more azaleas, rhododendrons and carpeting the ground candelabra primulas and wild garlic everywhere. A casualty of the storms was *R. auriculatum*, still alive, and the tree that brought it down was to be a feature by the pond.

The last area Wayne took us round was the old Japanese Garden, named after the many Japanese acers there and next to it under construction was the New Japanese garden in which Wayne will have moss and gravel areas.

A delicious lunch was served in the dining room, giving us a chance to see some of the interesting interior décor of the house. Alastair took some of the party on a tour round and this was a fitting end to our week of Galloway gardens.

Top: Box parterres

Right: Clearing round the pond

Pictures by Fiona Campbell



2020	Wuerzburg		Radlett		Glendoick	
	mm	inches	mm	inches	mm	inches
January	22.0	0.87	119.5	4.70		
February	55.0	2.17	46.0	1.81		
March	25.0	0.98	24.0	0.98		
April	12.0	0.47	6.5	0.26		
May	49.0	1.93	111.5	4.39		
June	87.0	3.43	82.0	3.23		
July	63.0	2.48	66.0	2.60		
August	19.0	0.75	55.0	2.17		
September	24.0	0.98	58.5	2.30		
October	39.0	1.54	117.0	4.61		
November	39.0	1.54	13.5	0.53		
December	43.0	1.69	80.0	3.15		
Total 2021	477.0	18.83	779.5	30.73		
Total 2020	485.0	19.09	815.5	32.11		
Total 2019	418.0	16.45	724.0	28.50	729.8	28.73
Total 2018	448.0	17.64	663.5	26.13	643.7	25.34
Total 2017	587.0	23.13	642.5	25.30	818.0	32.21
Total 2016	622.0	24.49	692.0	27.24	783.3	30.83
Total 2015	529.0	20.83	662.5	26.11	948.0	37.29
Total 2014	517.0	20.36	862.5	33.96	915.5	36.05
Total 2013	655.0	25.79	735.5	28.95	665.5	26.21
Total 2012	585.0	23.04	903.5	35.56	980.0	38.58
Total 2011	506.0	19.93	520.5	20.51	815.6	32.10
Total 2010	776.0	30.54	682.0	26.87	741.8	28.22
Total 2009	518.0	20.40	793.0	31.23	782.0	30.79
Total 2008	521.0	20.51	753.5	29.67	810.8	31.92
Total 2007	786.0	30.93	785.5	31.00	801.0	31.51
Total 2006	583.0	22.95	617.0	24.29	752.7	29.63
Total 2005			477.0	18.78	899.4	35.40
Total 2004			662.0	26.06		

The weather stations:

Wuerzburg is in Lower Franconia, North Bavaria, Germany.

Radlett is in Hertfordshire, north west of London.

Glendoick is in Perthshire, east central Scotland.

Glenarn is on the Gareloch, west central Scotland.

Ballachulish is in the Scottish west Highlands.

Ellon is in Aberdeenshire, north east Scotland.

Morar is in the Scottish west Highlands

Glenarn		Ballachulish		Ellon		Morar	
mm	inches	mm	inches	mm	inches	mm	inches
174.5	6.87	244.1	9.61	137.0	5.39	131.0	5.16
177.8	7.00	228.3	8.99	48.0	1.89	81.0	3.19
120.7	4.75	361.2	14.22	38.0	1.50	228.0	8.98
79.5	3.13	54.6	2.15	28.0	1.10	36.0	1.42
98.3	3.87	78.7	3.10	88.0	3.46	55.0	2.16
63.5	2.50	92.5	3.64	18.0	0.71	92.0	3.62
25.4	1.00	54.1	2.13	46.0	1.81	84.0	3.31
110.0	4.37	97.3	3.83	35.0	1.38	101.0	3.98
38.1	1.50	169.4	6.67	58.0	2.28	146.0	5.77
317.5	12.50	452.9	17.83	165.0	6.50	322.0	12.68
107.9	4.25	275.1	10.13	96.0	3.78	256.0	10.10
171.4	6.75	194.3	7.65	84.0	3.31	172.0	6.79
1485.9	58.50	2302.5	89.95	841.0	33.11	1704.0	67.01
1987.0	78.23	3709.4	146.04	911.0	35.87	2298.0	90.50
1682.8	66.25	2795.0	110.04	876.0	34.49	1927.0	75.87
1577.3	62.13	2769.6	109.04	709.0	27.90	1789.0	70.43
1692.5	66.63	2759.8	108.66	918.5	36.16		
1647.7	64.87	2827.5	111.32				
2196.7	86.50	3858.7	151.92				
1933.5	76.11	3359.9	133.28				
1641.2	64.61	2654.6	104.51				
1956.3	77.01	2615.0	102.95				
2257.6	88.75	3468.5	136.56				
1403.8	55.27	1727.0	67.99				
1889.1	74.37	2980.7	117.35				
2056.6	81.00	3321.1	130.75				
1921.5	75.63	3236.6	127.42				
1722.2	67.79	3314.0	130.47				
1511.3	59.50	3082.2	121.58				
1619.3	63.50	3266.6	125.03				

We are unlikely to get readings from Glendoick in the future as Peter is now in care in Perth. It seems to have been a dryish year across all weather stations with Glenarn and Ballachulish having their driest year since 2010. Morar also had the driest since Paul has been sending readings.

Air Layering

Marlene Storah

Most of us are of the age where joints get stiffer and hands are not so nimble. When air layering I found it difficult to hold the rooting material and plastic in place while fastening the cable tie. Then I thought of the metal crocodile clips used to hold things together while the glue sets. They worked well but were a bit big. I found a similar thing in plastic made for fastening plants to stakes. These are light and easy to use, they allow for water getting in the top and draining at the bottom. I have found them very successful and reusable.



Pictures by Marlene Storah

Tullich Garden

Wang Liston

The editor has asked for comments on the garden this year. Just as in previous years, there have been good things and bad things. I will start with the good. The winter was not too cold, but was quite long, so things were perhaps a little slower than usual to start into growth. However the really good thing was that there was no late frost in April or May. The last frost we had here in Wester Ross was early March. This did affect some early flowering rhododendrons, such as *R. sutchuenense* and *R. oreodoxa*, which had produced a good show prior to this, but allowed later ones to demonstrate good blossom. There was no frost harm to early vegetative growth in most species. The *R. decorum*, of which we have many, were particularly good. So were the old favourites: *R. augustinii* and *R. yunnanense*. These species were some of the first varieties that I raised from seed in my rush of enthusiasm about twenty years ago.

The second favourable climatic factor was the weather we had here in May. Usually May is our driest month. We advise visitors to come to the west highlands in May to get the best weather and early May to avoid the midgets. This May the monsoon arrived early and it rained almost every day. The rhododendrons loved it. The new growth on them was fantastic, particularly those big leaved Grandia and Falconera subsections,

such as *R. sinofalconeri*, *R. macabeanum*, and *R. suoilenhense*. I hope that this means that they will flower soon! Of course other plants loved it too, especially brambles and grass. The lack of frost also meant that there was a good selection of plants for the show which happily took place again at Gareloch-head in May. A further really good thing was the germination of Willie Campbell's seeds. They came up like cress, leaving me with the problem of thinning them. I am never brutal enough with my thinning, thinking all the while of the time and trouble taken in collecting them, cleaning them, sorting them and distributing them. Every year I say to myself

Left: Kay Liston with *Rosa* 'Kiftgate'

Next Page: *Rhododendron* 'Polar Cub'



I must sow them more thinly. The work that Willie does in organising the seed collection and distribution is quite fantastic and deserves several medals. Our garden in May looked as good as it has ever done, though many would rate it a wilderness when compared to some that we have seen on the rhododendron tours.

Towards the end of June the colour from the rhododendrons seemed to disappear and in July the garden became a verdant green. But there are still some good things out in the garden now as I write in mid July. There is a fine *Rosa* 'Kiftsgate' sprawling up to 30 feet over a *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana* var. 'Filiformis', alive with bees when we get sun. Another very good rambler rose is *R.* 'Wedding day'. It flowers a little earlier than *R.* 'Kiftsgate' and is a little purer white but is terrific sprawling across our carport.



Hypericum 'Rowallane' with its larger yellow flowers is an improvement on the standard *H.* 'Hidcote', which itself is a very good shrub for July and August. The red variety of *Leptospermum scoparium*, though a bit tender, is very fine just now. I collected some seeds when walking in the Wicklow mountains in Ireland. The first of the eucryphias, *E. lucida*, is in flower. This is the tasmanian leatherwood. We hope to get some leatherwood honey from it with the help of the bees. What about the rhododendrons? One in full flower just now is a seedling from *R.* 'Polar Bear' with fragrant white flowers. We have named it *R.* 'Polar Cub'. One or two flowers remain on *R. decorum* and *R. keysii* still has a few flowers. Still to come are *R. serotium* and *R. auriculatum*.

These are the main good highlights. Now we come to the bad, even bitter bits of the year. It is the fate of the trees. When we came to this house sixteen years there were surrounding it several big old trees: ash, elm and sycamore. They were probably about 140 or so years old and much admired. Now most of the elms are dead or dying from Dutch elm disease and many of the ashes are affected by *Chalara*. The bigger older ones seem to be a bit more resistant to the organism but the younger ones are mostly dead. If we add in the threats of *Phytophthora* in larches and *Dothistroma* in pines, the outlook for trees seems poor. Is this another sign of an approaching apocalypse as humans conspire to destroy the planet with overpopulation, over consumption of the earth's resources and too much travel? Like lots of old men, I continue to plant lots of trees in the hope that some will survive, and that I thus will become a "Good Ancestor". Read the book of that name by Roman Krznaric.

Cutting back update

Mike Thornley

Writing in the 2021 Year Book on “*Thirty-nine trees*” I described cutting back two old plants of *Rhododendron falconeri* x *R. macabeanum*, a cross made by the Gibson brothers in the early 1950s, which had been key components of an area in the garden at Glenarn called Granny’s Hens. Although displaying wonderful yellow trusses these interesting hybrids had regressed over the last 20 years, their leaves getting smaller until they had become a parody of their former selves. We pondered on their removal for a long time but because of their historical value had been reluctant to take out the saw. It wasn’t until we had been told that some micro propagated material had been raised successfully that we decided to act.

However, and confirming the advantages of giving ailing plants some time, we had noticed that both plants had apparently thrown out new growth in the form of single sturdy stems and large leaves. At first, we assumed that these were simply seedlings that had lodged in the moss at the base of each plant, but closer inspection revealed that their leaves compared with the slightly different leaves of the parent plants, the foliage from one leaning more towards the *Rhododendron macabeanum* origins and



the other more like *R. falconeri*. Also, in addition to new leaf buds there were also flower buds on both of these possible off-shoots. As I wrote: “*We will wait for April with interest to see if the joke is on us or not and then decide how we ought to manage them*”.

Sure enough, in April there were signs of imminent flowering, the buds indicating a promising yellow tinge. At the same time, to our frustration, the temperature dropped, forcing us to place large paper bags over the buds for protection against frost at night, which gave these tortured

Left: Paper bags to protect the flowers from frost

Pictures by Mike thornley



The flowers did not come to their full fruition

timber sculptures, as I had described the stumps, an even more bizarre appearance. Each day I had to walk up the garden to take off the bags and allow the emerging flowers to soak in the sun, returning each evening to wrap them up again.

Although not entirely successful, with the flowers only half-opening and being tinged brown, it was enough to confirm that the old plants had indeed put on new growth, which we put down to their *Rhododendron macabeae* parent, and its ability to create new epicormic growth, the tiny off-sets emerging straight from the trunks. But perhaps of even more interest were the new leaves that had grown on the

two new sturdy stems, all that remained after we had cut down the main plants to 1.3 metres the previous spring. That summer the new leaves had put on huge growth to achieve the maximum size of a young, healthy plant. It was as if all the rising sap from the much-reduced plant, with nowhere else to go, had been channelled into the single remaining new stem on each plant. However, this came at a cost, for the leaves were thin, almost cabbage-like, failing to achieve fully developed leaf structures, and took a hammering in the cold winter.

It appears that the cutting back has only resulted in a temporary spurt of growth, and the leaves that emerged the following spring, along with the flowers described above, are much reduced in size and match those on the declining plants. Thus, while continuing to survive the rhododendrons in this case are not fully restored after the severe treatment. Maybe the cutting back should have been carried out over a number of years, to give the new stems more protection and less stress from enforced growth. My inclination now is to cut the remains down and winch out the root plates, but the other opinion, giving the plants more time, has prevailed, perhaps because of the thought of the daunting effort of their final removal. In the meantime, visitors to the garden will have to continue to wonder at the sculptural effect for another year.

***Rhododendron sinogrande* Seasons**

Anne Hawkins

In September 2019 I started a City and Guilds Diploma in Patchwork and Quilting. The course requires students to have a theme, my broad theme was my garden on Arran. Very quickly I had to hone the theme and I became more focussed on specific plants.

One requirement of the course is the production of a quilt / wall hanging measuring a minimum of 60 inches square . I decided to research *Rhododendron sinogrande* for this piece.

We have what I believe to be a *Rhododendron sinogrande* in our back garden at “Woodlands”. Initially working on line I researched how *R. sinogrande* came to the UK .I knew little of the plant hunters and was fascinated by their activities. It was George Forrest and his team who found *R. sinogrande*.

It is quite difficult without hugely in-depth research to fully map its journey. My goal was to work out how one got into our garden. At Heligan I found reference to it first flowering in 1919. In 1923 Lady Mary Louise Hamilton 6th Duchess of Montrose started clearing land at Brodick Castle for rare plants. She also bought shares in plant hunting expeditions. I am assuming therefore that *Rhododendron sinogrande* was probably planted at Brodick castle in the late 1920s. I think that it probably found its way to our garden in the 1970s .I have based this assumption on the size of the tree when we bought our house in 1999.

My research lead me to the work of Lilian Snelling whose drawings were an inspiration to me and to the wonderful book, Seeds of Adventure by Peter Cox and Peter Hutchison.

I have to admit to becoming quite obsessed by *Rhododendron sinogrande*, I took hundreds of photos during the course of the year. I sketched all of the different parts, took rubbings from the leaves, printed from the leaves on to fabric. I even stitched leaves into a window hanging. Eventually the experimentation had to stop and I had to design a wall hanging. After a number of false starts I settled on a panelled piece which attempts to show the *R. sinogrande* through the seasons.

The magnificent leaves dominate the wall hanging and are made from procion dyed



recycled cotton sheets, hand and machine stitched. The flowers were a challenge but PVA glue enabled me to stiffen light fabric and shape the individual parts of the flower. The trusses were more of a challenge and are made from wire, painted bias binding and beads. The base of the wall hanging is a carpet of fallen leaves some hand stitched others painted with acrylic paint and soldered to give rough edges.

The piece is mainly made from recycled fabrics much of it procion dyed, however the centre section is made from Ramie fabric which comes from the nettle family, this was rust and tea dyed.



I exhibited the quilt in May as part of my Tutor's annual student exhibition . I was nominated and subsequently shortlisted for the City and Guilds annual student award which will be judged at the Festival of Quilts at the NEC in Birmingham in August 2022. For this I have to exhibit a range of my work and "*Rhododendron sinogrande* Seasons" will take centre stage in my display. The *R. sinogrande* journey continues albeit in fabric form.

Pictures of some of the components and the finished wall hanging by Anne Hawkins



SRS Education and Exploration Fund

Willie Campbell

The SRS Education and Exploration Fund is now at a point where it is almost ready to go. The name has been changed yet again, and now includes both of the earlier titles. It is hoped that this will appeal to a wider range of applicants. As we have no endowment, we have spent the last two years or so building up the “ring fenced” fund through a combination of funds from the SRS General Account, proceeds from our annual plant sale and donations. *In the past six months £943 has been added from our plant sale and £500 from the sale of rhododendrons generously donated by Chris Booth of Crieff.* The total is now just over £5000 which gives us a reasonable starting point. It is envisaged that this method of maintaining the Fund will continue in future.

The objective of the Fund is to provide one off grants to young horticulturists and gardeners to support research and further studies into the genus *Rhododendron* and also the wider range of plants found in the Sino Himalayan region, an area rich in plant species, now found in our gardens.

This could include study tours and exploration to observe plants in their natural habitat, to increase our knowledge and understanding of these plants their value in cultivation and their conservation issues. Conference attendance may also be considered if relevant.

Preference will be given to students in full time horticultural education or those who have recently completed a full-time course in horticulture. They need not be members of the SRS. The maximum grant will be £1000, and two referees will be required in support of the application.

Applicants will be required to show clear proposal objectives and methods of achieving these. Applications will be assessed by Ian Knott Sinclair and John Roy both well versed in visits to the Himalaya and the Sino Himalaya, and Philip Rankin. The successful applicant will be required to submit a detailed report to the SRS on the outcome of the project within three months of completion.

The Scottish Rhododendron Society

Bronze Medal Award

You have been active in the Scottish Rhododendron Society for many years and voluntarily took on the role of Tour Bus Marshal at the 1996 ARS Convention held in Oban, which was an onerous task that you very successfully organised, involving 11 full-size and two half-size Tour buses with a programme of 42 Tours to be arranged over the eight-day duration of the Convention.

Two years later you became a Committee Member of the Scottish Chapter with a remit to assist the Shows Committee to organise and run the Annual Show and Plant Sale. For more than twenty years you have regularly donated plants and helped to run the Plant Sale.

When the Scottish Rhododendron Society came of age in 2008 and celebrated on an International Level by holding a three-day Silver Jubilee Conference at the Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh, you took on the role of leading the three-day Pre-Conference Tour of Gardens in a full-size Tour bus.

You have always been ready to share your wide knowledge regarding plant pests and diseases gained whilst working with Scotland's Plant Health Executive, together with your experience whilst working with a plant nursery, from which many members have benefited.

More recently you have regularly audited the Society's Accounts and supported the work of the organisation in many other ways, for which the Directors are delighted to present

Philip Rankin

with the Scottish Rhododendron's Society's highest award, the Bronze Medal of the American Rhododendron Society, our parent body.

Given at the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, this day 2nd October 2021.

John M. Hammond
President

Ian G. Stewart: An Appreciation

John M. Hammond

We were deeply saddened by recent passing of Ian Stewart, a past active member of the SRS since the mid-1980s. Ian died peacefully on 23rd September 2021, aged 98, at Cluny Lodge Care Home in Edinburgh, after complications arising from Alzheimers disease.

Born in Bridge of Allan in 1923, Ian was educated at Fettes College and St. Andrews University. During WWII he was in the RAF, stationed at the Ganavan & Isle of Kerrera Airfields near Oban, where he flew in a Flying Boat Squadron protecting shipping conveys arriving from and departing to North America, whilst Oban was also the gathering location for ships in the PQ convoys to Russia that required submarine protection. After the war, from 1948 to 1950 he was a Commonwealth Fund Fellow at the University of Chicago, the Federal Trade Commission and Harvard University. Ian spent time as a research Officer at Cambridge University, where he acquired a reputation for his work on national income accounting and input-output analysis at the Department of Applied Economics before moving to the University of Edinburgh in 1957. He was quickly promoted to a senior lectureship in 1958, a readership in 1962 and to a personal chair in 1967. During his time at Edinburgh, he was also a consultant to the Government of Western Nigeria, the Philippine Government, and the World Health Organisation. He served as Dean of Social Sciences in the period 1977-80, and from 1971 to 1984 was Head of Department of the School of Economics until his retirement in 1984 as Emeritus Professor of Economics.

Ian married Mary in in 1949 and together they had an interest in horticulture and gardening, being particularly fond of rhododendrons. Ian & Mary joined the SRS in 1985, or thereabouts, and in the years that followed assisted with setting-up the Society's Annual Rhododendron Show, which was peripatetic at that time, and were instrumental in organising the Show when on occasion it was held in Colinton Hall, close to their home in Balerno. In 1991 the American Rhododendron Society (ARS) asked the SRS to host the 1996 National Spring Convention in Oban and for the event to last around a week to make it worthwhile for Overseas members to travel to Scotland. Ian became part of an enhanced Committee responsible for organising and managing the Convention, and whilst Sir Peter Hutchison took on organising the schedule of garden tours, including booking a fleet of tour buses and a Cal-Mac Ferry for the eight-day event, once the initial groundwork had been put in place by Sir Peter, Ian took over the running of the Tour Programme, which extended to a total of 42 Tours. Subsequently,

the Convention Subcommittee met at Ian's home on several occasions and had the opportunity of visiting his interesting garden.

Ian was also interested in the history of rhododendrons and was aware of the 'linkage' between the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh and the early collections of rhododendron plant material by doctors, some of whom had an interest in botany and the use of plants for medical purposes, and having been sent out to India, brought back, or sent back, seed to R.B.G., Edinburgh. In 1996 Ian and Joan Ferguson, formerly the College Librarian, published an interesting article in the 'Proceedings of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, 1996; Vol 26: pages 282-294, entitled, '*Rhododendron, Doctors and India, 1790-1860*', based on records in the College Library, which was later published privately as an extract. Amongst the doctors discussed in the article are the work of William Roxburgh, Francis Hamilton Buchanan, Nathaniel Wallich, Robert Wight, John Forbes Royle, Hugh Falconer, William Griffith and Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker, some of whom had rhododendrons and other plants named after them.

Ian was married to Mary for 63 years until her death in 2012. They had three children, Fiona, Alasdair and Kate; three grandchildren, Gordon, Cameron and Alexandra; and a great-grandchild, William.

Jim Inskip: An Appreciation

John M. Hammond

Some of our 'Senior' members will recall the name Jim Inskip, who resided at Cobham in Surrey, and had been on the Society's past Membership Lists since the late-1980s, but as he was rarely involved in our activities our members know little about his interests. Sadly, Jim passed away in May of this year after a long debilitating period of illness and is survived by his twin sons.

Jim was an early activist in the conservation field and, together with his long-time partner Malcolm Nash, they sought to re-establish collections of deciduous azaleas, with particular reference to the Ghent and Knap Hill Azaleas. The Ghent Azaleas had been bred mainly by nurseries in the vicinity of Ghent in the 19th Century, whilst the Knap Hill varieties were bred by Anthony Waterer prior to the Great War, the only nurseryman propagating Azaleas in Britain at his Knap Hill Nurseries, apart from a few crosses made by Harry White, the highly respected Head Gardener at Sunningdale Nurseries at Windlesham near Ascot. Using plant material supplied by Knap

Hill Nurseries, further hybrids were made by Lionel de Rothschild after 1920. Ghent Azaleas were very popular decorative plants on account of their brightly coloured flowers, and these were regularly incorporated into the landscaping of country house gardens in the late-Victorian and Edwardian eras. Harry White at Sunningdale Nurseries had records of around 500 varieties in the early 1900s.

Unfortunately, the ravages of the Great War and WWII on the Continent led to vast losses of many varieties of Ghent Azaleas being raised in the nursery fields in Belgium, whilst here in Britain most nurseries and the estates of ‘Gentlemen of Leisure’ lost the majority of their gardening staff when they volunteered, or were requisitioned, for active service. Many never returned from the battlefields, or were severely injured, and in the post-war years any fully active individuals were required to work in employment that benefitted the economy of the country. Many estate gardens were turned over to food production during the wars, whilst woodland gardens tended to be unmaintained and left to their own devices, so returned to nature. Meanwhile, nurseries that specialised in growing ornamentals cut back massively on items that were difficult to propagate in the aftermath of hostilities, which many Ghent Azaleas are, so by the time that most plants were being grown commercially in plastic containers only those few that were relatively easy to propagate were available in the trade.

Around 30 years ago Jim became aware I was propagating Azaleas and organising garden tours and he asked for help in the search for ‘lost’ varieties, as at the time he was interested in identifying the location of old gardens where groups of plants were still extant. By chance, Jim and Malcolm had met during a visit to Sir John Quicke’s garden in Devon and realised they had similar interests, which they followed mainly in the South of England, and were active members of the Wessex Branch of the R.C.&M.G. We regularly exchanged information by letter, together with the occasional phone call, as I was able to identify very old stands of Ghent Azaleas during my many visits to old gardens in Northern England and Scotland. Jim followed these leads up whenever he was able to do so. In return, Jim and Malcolm provided identification data on various Ghent varieties that I was propagating for the Ardkinglas Estate on Loch Fyne. They had visited Ardkinglas Estate in 2001 to search through the Ghent Azaleas and found ‘Arethusa’ and ‘Rosetta’, which they were pleased to have located and intended to return at a later date, as there were three other varieties still to be identified. Jim noted in January 2006 that he carried out much of the propagation work at his ‘Azalea Farm’, established in 1991 on a 25 acre parcel of land and the enterprise had then reached a size that it had become difficult to manage without living on the site. The propagation unit required special attention if the plants were to survive, as they currently had thousands of plants being raised. Jim’s objective was to set up a micro-propagation laboratory to produce some of the very rare plants that were difficult to propagate, which Malcolm and himself held; however, there

were difficulties obtaining planning permission to build a home on the site. Malcolm helped out in the nursery on a couple of days each week and also updated the records and wrote the articles for publication. Under a mutual benefit arrangement both were involved with exchanging information and plant material with the Ghent Azalea ‘Guru’, Albert De Raedt in Belgium. Through their conservation work they were able to provide plant material to collections in a number of key gardens and supported several conservation projects.

In 2016 the R.C.&M.G. produced a Centenary Edition of its Yearbook and Malcolm Nash authored the chapter covering *Deciduous Azalea Breeding in Britain*, whilst I wrote the chapter on the *Introduction of Evergreen Azaleas in the Western World*. Sadly, Malcolm passed away suddenly on 9th May 2016 following a fight with leukaemia, shortly before the Yearbook was published. This was a major tragedy so far as Jim was concerned, as they had worked together for over 20 years. Jim had some difficulty coming to terms with the loss and following a phone call to say he was no longer able to look after the nursery operation our communications ceased. Many gardens benefitted over the years from Jim and Malcolm’s conservation work, and they will be greatly missed, whilst their expertise will be extremely difficult to replace.



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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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Colin Whitehead wrote in the Summer:

You may be interested in this photo of *Rhododendron excellens* taken today in my greenhouse. I grew the plant from seeds, one of Alan Clark's collections from Vietnam as I recall. I planted it out thereafter in my garden and it grew well and set flower buds, only for these to die over the winter. Last summer it set a lot of buds so I moved it in the autumn into my greenhouse. I had almost given up on the buds for they did nothing in the early part of the year. However in the last few weeks they started to develop and are now in magnificent bloom. I am knocked over by their magnificence - I do not think I have seen *R. excellens* in flower before.

Picture on the Right



**Above: A gorgeous *Rhododendron lacteum* at Corsock during the Spring Tour.
Picture by John Roy**



