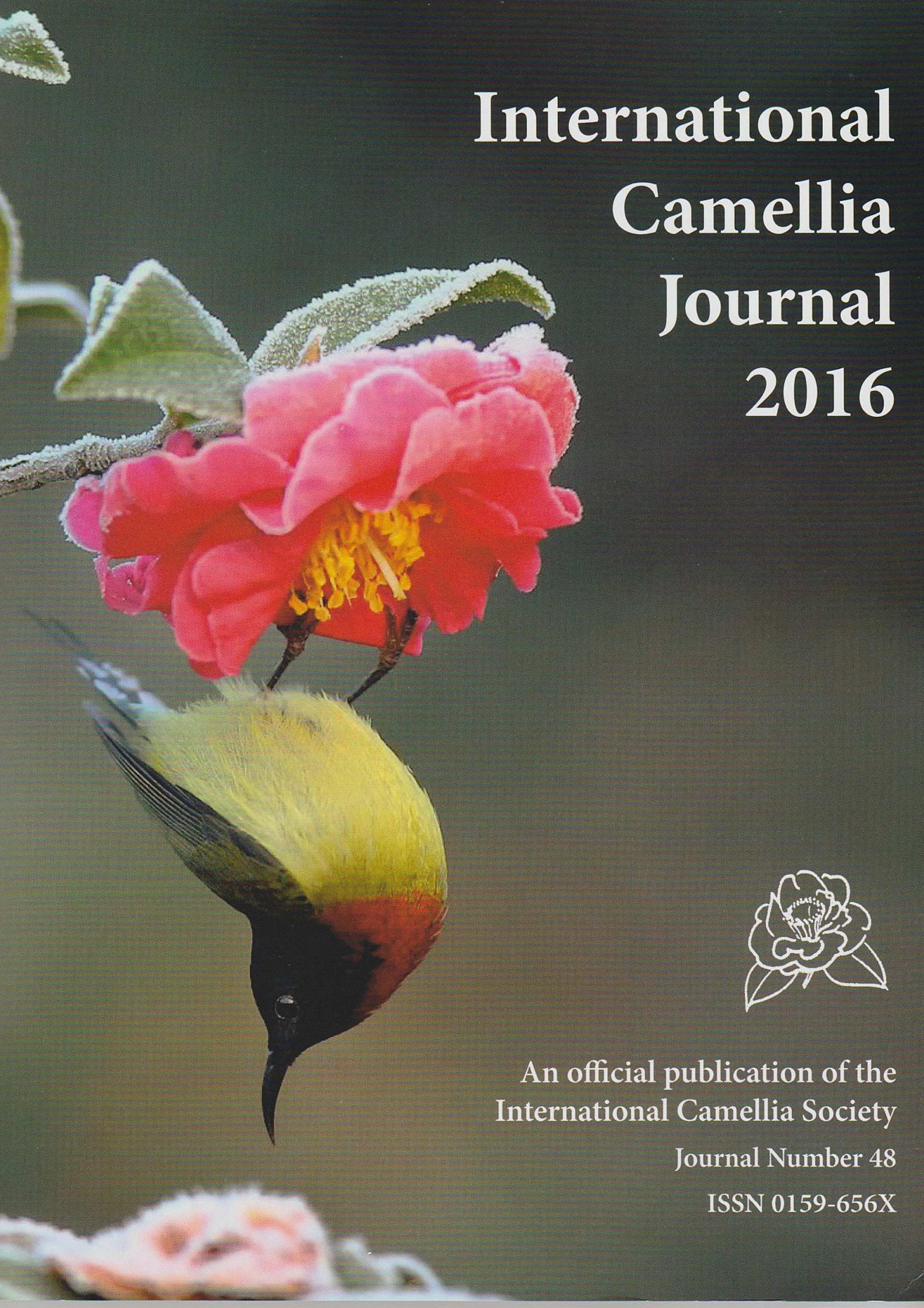

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If the camellias were planted in 1800, Osterley would have been the property of Lady Sarah Sophia Fane. She was the 15-year-old granddaughter of Robert Child, who had placed his vast holdings, including Osterley, in trust for her before he died. But why wasn't 'Variegata' planted along with 'Alba Plena'? Perhaps it was, but died? And why were the single red and 'Alba Plena' planted so close together? Because no one at that time realized how large camellias could grow?

Or if they were planted a bit later, perhaps George Villiers might have been involved. He married Lady Sarah in 1804, just one year before he became the 5th Earl of Jersey. And might it have been a romantic planting? The two camellias very close together, tucked away behind the stairs at the back of the house.

We probably will never know. But we owe Scott Waldon a big "Thank You for the find".

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Photos by Scott Waldon and Patricia Short

The tallest *Camellia* tree in the world grows in the Botanic Garden of Lourizán (Pontevedra, Spain)

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The Botanic Garden of Lourizán, about 3 km southwest of Pontevedra, is located in the heart of *Rías Baixas*, an area widely known for the abundance and vigour of the camellia trees (Salinero and González-García, 2006). The current appearance of this garden dates from the late 19th century, as it is shown in the map drawn by Fernández-Soler in 1887, which is kept in the main building of the Centro de Investigación Forestal de Lourizán (Forestry Research Centre of Lourizán). In this garden more than 850 taxons, mainly trees, have been catalogued so far (cf. Silva-Pando, 2011), most of them planted from 1950 onwards. In fact, some of these outstanding specimens are included in the *Catálogo Galego de Árbores Senlleiras* (Galician Monumental Tree Catalogue) (Consellería de Medio Ambiente Desenvolvemento Sostible, 2007). There is an important collection of camellias (*Camellia japonica* L.) (EFA-CIF, 2010; Salinero et *al.*, 2016) growing in different areas of the garden, most of them

are found in open places (EFA-CIF, 2010), isolated or next to other specimens of this species.

In the area known as Park of the *Rías* there are several trees of considerable size, such as southern magnolias (*Magnolia grandiflora* L.), wild privet (*Ligustrum vulgare* L.), a Japanese cedar (*Cryptomeria japonica* (L. f.) D. Don) and London planes (*Platanus* × *hispanica* Mill. ex Münchh.), the latter exceeding 50 m in height. Among the specimens of *Camellia japonica* L. growing in this area, there is one that stands out for its height. This camellia is hardly visible because of the trees that surround it. From a single trunk (45 cm in height and 28 cm by 40 cm in diameter) three main stems grow upwards, the highest one reaching 20.5 m height and 18 cm in diameter, and the secondary stems are shorter than 18 m. It was noted that the tips of the shoots are broken because of the contact with nearby trees, but new twigs have started to emerge. The height of this tree may be related to competition for light with higher trees growing around.

This tree dates from the late 19th century. The map drawn by Fernández-Soler in 1887 divided the area known as Park of the *Rías* into two distinctive zones, namely Park of the Roses and Park of Diana. The map clearly shows in the first park two buildings used as tool sheds, which still exist today, next to some symbols representing shrubs, which may correspond to our camellia. López-Otero (1900:64) includes a description of our garden: *Paths bordered by camellias and fruit trees paths meet at the park, which is a wide meadow with some chestnut trees, where streams meander; they either murmur in a foamy manner, or become waves that break into foam against the rocks, and cascades (...)".*

The chestnut and fruit trees quoted in his work are no longer planted in this garden, but the camellias still exist today.

According to the literature reviewed, the tallest camellia specimen recorded is planted beside the Taoist temple Ling Guan de Wei, in the Wei Bao Shan Mountain, in China, and is 18.8 metres high and has an estimated age of 400 years (dating from the Ming Dynasty), according to the information provided by Zhang Maoyun, engineer and secretary of the Camellia Association of Dali Bai Autonomous Prefecture and Li Duowen, engineer and secretary of the Camellia Association of (Wei Shan) Yi Autonomous Prefecture and Wei Shan Tourism Department, who reported that the specimen is still growing quite fast. In 25 years it has grown from 17.5 meters to 18.88 meters from 1984 to 2009, adding 1.38 meters to its height (Absolute China Tours, date of reference: 25-IX-2016). In addition, on February 23th 2008, Gregory Davis, then president of the International Camellia Society, and other researchers proved that this ancient tree was the tallest camellia in the world (Absolute China Tours, date of reference: 25-IX-2016).

Thibault (2001) states that specimens of *Camellia reticulata* Lindl. can reach 50 feet in height (15.25 m), which coincides with the information provided by Salinero and Vela (2005) who report a similar height, while Sargent (1894:17) indicates that in Japanese mesophytic forests the camellias can become 40 feet tall (12.2 m). When studying the camellias in Finca de Buçaco, in Portugal, Cordeiro (2014) found a specimen of *Camellia japonica* 'Fimbriata' that is 13.81 metres tall and with a trunk girth measured at chest height of 96 cm (30.55 cm in diameter).

In *Rías Baixas*, where the camellias thrive

extraordinarily well, after having measured more than 1,000 camellia specimens growing in several gardens, a specimen was found in Torre Agrelo (Redondela, Pontevedra) that was 13 m in height; in Lens (Ames, A Coruña) there is a specimen 12.3 m in height and 3.40m of tree girth and in the Botanic Garden of Lourizán there are several specimens 11.5-12 m in height and an age similar to the trees previously reported.

In conclusion, the specimen growing in the Botanic Garden of Lourizán in the area known as *Ría of the Roses* is the tallest camellia tree in the world (20.5 m) recorded to date, and has an estimated age of about 130 years.

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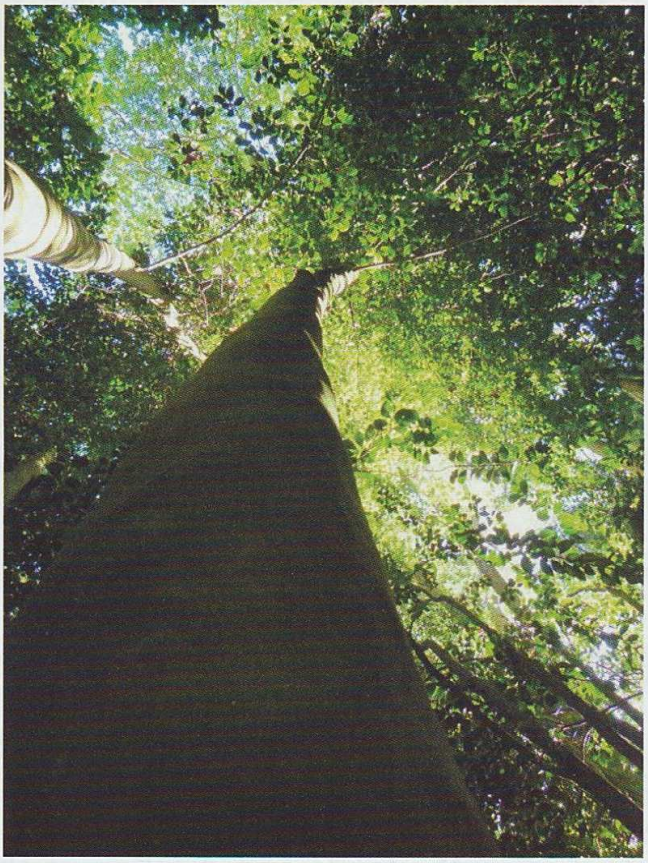

Specimen of Lourizán being 130 years old and 20.5m in height

The Birth of Camellia Ark Australia Inc.

Dr Stephen Utick,

ICS Director for Australia (2016-18)

A significant year

The year 2016 has been a significant one for camellia culture in Australia with the establishment of a new national organisation dedicated to conserving for Australia its rarest Theaceae, including *Camellia* species and hundreds of rare and beautiful cultivars. Named Camellia Ark Australia Inc, the association had its inaugural general meeting at CamelliasRUs Nursery, Harrisons Lane, Glenorie NSW on Sunday 17 April.

The reasons for such an initiative are first, the strict but necessary quarantine regulations that make it extremely difficult to import further camellias into Australia, particularly cultivars that need to be propagated as clones; and second, the contraction of supply from specialist nurseries (a challenge not limited to camellias). The association's momentum has been assisted by the earlier conservation work undertaken by the Camellia Ark Project initiated by the E. G. Waterhouse National Camellia Gardens at Caringbah – now an ICS Camellia Garden of Excellence - and CamelliasRUs (an article summarising this was published in the 2012 edition of the *International Camellia Journal*, pp.58-60). That initial project, which operated during 2009-14, managed to conserve over 100 rare cultivars or species of *Camellia*, which now are available to the new association for further propagation.

Objectives of Camellia Ark Australia

Camellia Ark Australia has four objectives, the first of which is of high relevance to the International Camellia