



CHISWICK HOUSE & GARDENS TRUST

Camellia Report

by

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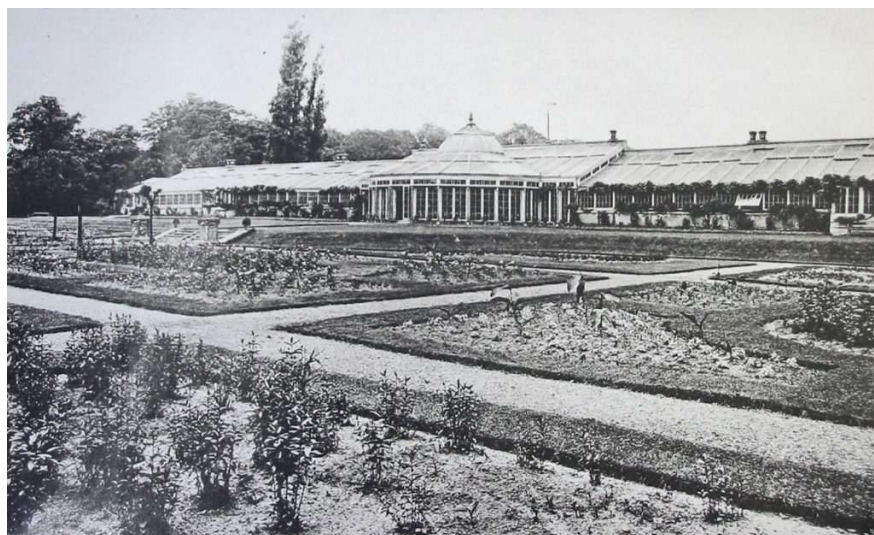
CHISWICK HOUSE: The Conservatory

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Image: MacGregor, J., 1918

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The Conservatory c1900 (photograph from WSA, 2021)

Aims

The Grade I listed conservatory at Chiswick House and Gardens is in need of major repair/restoration works and is currently closed to the public for safety reasons. The staff at Chiswick are exploring a number of options for repair and considering future uses of the building.

This report aims to collate available information on the camellia plants housed within the conservatory, with a focus on their ages and provenance, and provide recommendations for their future care.

Introduction

To date, it has been widely understood that a number of the camellias in the Conservatory were planted in 1828 by the gardener of the 6th Duke of Devonshire, owner of Chiswick House and Gardens from 1811 - 1858 (Woudstra, 2010, p.112-122) and that camellias have been displayed in the Conservatory from that date onwards. Chiswick House and Gardens has changed ownership/tenants several times between the 1860s and the present day and it is known that the planting has been added to during this time, with some camellias acknowledged to have been introduced more recently.

Following a period of neglect and poor plant health, the International Camellia Society (ICS) became involved with the camellias in 1994 and provided support to restore them to full health. Between 1994 and 1997, the ICS set about identifying the different varieties and most camellias in the Conservatory have now been positively identified.

The camellias are currently cared for by the Head of Gardens and Garden Team of the Chiswick House and Gardens Trust.

There have been two academic 'deep dives' into the history of the gardens at Chiswick and the camellias in recent years, by Gillian Mobbs (1999) and Jan Woudstra (2010). The International Camellia Society has also published research on the topic. The planting is, at present, believed to be highly significant due to its age and the range of varieties represented. The intention of this report is not to duplicate work that has already been undertaken, but to use these papers as a means to cross-reference information and access original sources, where possible. We will not be questioning the expertise of the ICS in its identification of the Chiswick camellia varieties, where it has been possible for them to do so. Similarly, we will not examine the general history of the camellia, the development of its varieties and its introduction to Europe and Britain, which has been thoroughly researched and written about over many years. However, we will advise on any ambiguity or potential inaccuracy relating to the story of the Chiswick House camellias.

Despite the efforts of previous researchers, there remains a lack of available, relevant records from the 19th Century; meaning the provenance of the camellias at Chiswick is still somewhat unclear. It has been suggested that the story of the camellias that is currently presented could be, in part, conjecture. As the

Conservatory in its current condition poses a threat to the camellias, it is considered timely to review the story as it currently stands, discuss its accuracy and highlight the unknowns.

Approach

The authors have reviewed existing information regarding the camellia planting available at the time of writing. This includes several documents from the archive at Chiswick House (mostly copies of original documents held elsewhere), documents stored digitally on CHGT's shared drive and documents available from other online sources including digitised journals and articles. Where we have been aware of the existence of specific documents, Cluny Wells, CHGT Volunteer Archivist, has either visited or been in contact with the National Art Library, the John Soane Museum Archive and the RHS Lindley Library along with the archive at Chatsworth House.

The online catalogue of the National Archives has returned no results significant to this report.

Horticultural Society Gardens

It is important to note that the Horticultural Society of London (later the RHS) also had a garden in Chiswick during the period we are looking at. The following information comes from an article *Chiswick's gardeners: Kent, Lindley, Paxton & the RHS Chiswick* on the Chiswick Book Festival's website (no date), with information credited to Gillian Clegg, Local Historian.

'The Horticultural Society had experimental gardens in Chiswick from 1822 to 1904. They occupied the land now covered by Alwyn Avenue, Barrowgate Road, Hadley Gardens and Wavendon Avenue. The Society leased the 33 acres from the Duke of Devonshire of Chiswick House. Half the gardens were allocated to fruit and vegetables; 13 acres to flowers and shrubs and there was an eight-acre arboretum. (...) hot houses were built for the exotic plants now being brought back from the Far East, the Americas and other places. The Society also ran conferences and a training scheme for young would-be gardeners and this is where Joseph Paxton, later to build the Crystal Palace, was trained. Dr John Lindley, who lived in Chiswick, became Assistant Secretary of the gardens in 1822, and was the Secretary between 1858 and 1863. In 1870 the Royal Horticultural Society reduced its Chiswick acreage to just 11 acres. The glasshouses were demolished and the arboretum swept away. By 1900, with Chiswick becoming built over, the Society was looking for new land. In 1903 the Society was presented with an estate in Wisley, Surrey and moved its experimental gardens there in 1904.'

The Horticultural Society's Garden is referred to as Chiswick Gardens. It has therefore been necessary, throughout the course of this research, to establish those sources which refer to Chiswick Gardens (Horticultural Society) and those which refer to the gardens of Chiswick House & Gardens.

This has been a complication for all writing on the history of Chiswick House's camellias, in 1874, the *Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener* wrote on the topic:

‘..it is difficult to dissociate the Society’s gardens from those of Chiswick House, however different their work and objects; the same broad shady avenue of Lime trees led to both, both had the same head, and thousands of visitors on many a July Show passed from the grounds of the Society to those of the Duke when it was but a few steps from the one to the other.’ (p.386)

Additional information:

The Hidden Horticulturalists by Fiona Davison provides a background on gardeners working at RHS Chiswick Gardens and Chiswick House Gardens during the 19th Century but has not been reviewed by the authors.

The Conservatory

The following quotation comes from Historic England’s Official List Entry (most recently amended 16th November 2022).

‘The Conservatory (Grade I-listed) was built as a hothouse for fruit species in 1814, to a design by Samuel Ware, architect for the Burlington Arcade (Grade II-listed), as, what is thought to be, the earliest large glasshouse built; a forerunner of Decimus Burton’s hothouse at Kew, and Sir Joseph Paxton’s at Chatsworth and Crystal Palace.

It was used as a show house for flowers by about 1828. In 1855, it was altered with new glazing and a modernised heating system. The glazed superstructure was replaced in 1932 to 1933 by Messenger and Co, and again in 2008 to 2010 closely matching the 1930s glazing pattern but retaining the patent clear span post-tensioned steel rafter system and rods and gears providing the roof ventilation system.’ (Historic England, 2022)

For the purposes of this report, the detailed history of the Conservatory will not be examined. However, 1895 is also noted as a significant date, in a recent appraisal by West Scott Architects (WSA, 2021), when the structure was substantially renewed and repaired.

WSA observed, in 2021, that there were discrepancies between the last Historic England List Entry of 1973 and information available in CHGT documents (chiefly the Conservation Management Plan). The Historic England Listing has since been amended. Historic England lists several references which can be viewed on their website.

The condition of the conservatory is described in 2021 by WSA as poor. The timber structure is stated as being extensively and seriously decayed.

It is therefore understood that the present risk to the camellias, despite their current condition being fair/good, is higher than it has been for some time due to the increased risk of safe access to care for them.

Future decisions about the conservatory, considering the options for its imminent repair outlined by WSA, should be informed by an accurate history of the camellias. The ongoing conservation and care of the camellias, including any protection during future works to the conservatory, should be proportionate to the significance of the plants as best as it is understood.

Section I - Key Documents

Much of the writing about the camellias at Chiswick by external consultants, the International Camellia Society and CHGT Staff and Volunteers make use of the same relatively small number of primary sources. The aim of this section is to review both modern and historical sources and bring them together into a comprehensive list ordered by date of publication, with the earliest first.

Historical Sources

Camellia Britannica, 1825

The catalogue, *Camellia Britannica 1825*, introduced by Alfred Chandler and Buckingham [Plates, with descriptive letterpress by Edward Bourne Buckingham.] supplied by the RHS Lindley Library.

The expense for the Gardens and Pleasure Grounds at Chiswick - year ending 31st December 1828 (log book)

A record in a financial ledger kept in the archives at Chatsworth House, titled as above, lists purchases made for Chiswick House Gardens in 1828. One entry is as follows: 'Chandler and Buckingham for a Collection of Camellias - 12.11.6'

Illustrations and Descriptions of the Plants which compose the natural order Camellieæ, and of the varieties of Camellia Japonica, cultivated in the gardens of Great Britain. The drawings by Alfred Chandler. The descriptions by W. B. Booth. vol. 1 - 1831

A reproduction of this book is available in the Chiswick House Archive. It is referred to in many more recent papers as a 'catalogue' of camellias available from Chandlers of Vauxhall.

It provides descriptions and drawings of different camellia varieties but does not give information about the nurseries specifically or any prices. This book has been key in identifying the varieties of camellias in the Conservatory and was used by the International Camellia Society (ICS, 1997) to aid identification. It is understood that original versions of the book are available in the British Library and the RHS Lindley Library.

It makes one reference to the 'Garden at Chiswick'; however, it seems likely that this refers to the Horticultural Society Garden at Chiswick, rather than Chiswick House and Gardens.

CAMELLIA SASANQUA, Lady Banks's Camellia

Among the Chinese drawings in the Library of the Horticultural Society, there are three representations of this camellia: one with the flowers perfectly double, like those of the White Rosa Banksiae, and two with the flowers semi-double. A plant of the former variety was

imported for the Society, by Captain Drummond in 1823, and flowered in the Garden at Chiswick in December 1826. It has since been published in the Botanical Register, folio 1091. (Chandler & Booth, 1831)

The Botanical Register, folio 1091, 1827 in reference to *Camellia Sasanqua, Lady Banks's Camellia* states 'Our drawing was made in the garden of the Horticultural Society, in December 1826.' (Botanical Register, 1827)

No mention of this camellia variety in the Conservatory at Chiswick House and Garden has been found.

The History and Antiquities of Brentford, Ealing & Chiswick, 1845, Thomas Faulkner

A photocopy of an extract from this book is kept in the Chiswick House Archive. It references the presence of camellias in the Conservatory (p. 431) but does not provide the names of varieties or the number of plants.

The Cottage Gardener and Gentleman's Companion, October 30th 1855

Here follows three published Journal entries from 1855, 1874 and 1887 describing visits to Chiswick. These are also referenced in other sources throughout this report. They are provided in full below, with PDFs held on file by CHGT. The website of the Biodiversity Heritage Library holds digitised versions of these Journals, available to download.

Mr Thomas Appleby writes: '*The road we took brought us to the front of the long range of hot-houses, 330 feet long. The centre is a greenhouse, with a small stove for exotics at each end. The centre of the greenhouse has a circular projection. All the houses were undergoing a thorough repair; the old-fashioned small glass has been taken out and long squares of the best glass put in. The garden, consequently, was crowded with strange workmen, such as carpenters, bricklayers, glaziers, painters and whitesmiths.*' (p.69)

The latter were putting up a new hot-water apparatus (the houses hitherto had been heated by common flues), and double rows of four-inch pipes. '*The arrangement of this extensive greenhouse is this - A broad border at the back, a walk in front of that, and next the front windows two flagged platforms, to hold plants in pots; the one next the wall a trifle lower than the other. It must take an immense number of plants to furnish these two long platforms. In the border, there are planted out in the soil a great number of fine bushes of Camellias, well set with buds, Rhododendron arboreum, Magnolias, Acacias, and other conservatory plants. The supporting pillars are clothed with climbing plants, the loveliest of which is, without doubt, the Acacia pubescens, with its beautifully fine foliage, and long racemes of bright, orange-coloured flowers. When all these are in bloom, in early spring, the house must be exceedingly gay.*' (p.70)

This appears to be the first available/published mention of camellias growing in the Conservatory, however the names of varieties are not provided. The *camellias* are described as along the 'broad border at the back', still their current position, but at this stage they seem to have been accompanied by

Rhododendron, *Magnolia*, *Acacia* and other plants. It is not noted whether they are in a specific location or throughout the whole length of the Conservatory.

Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener, May 14th, 1874

'... we pass to the conservatory, 300 feet long, but of no great width, having a domed centre forming rather more than a semicircle. Here there is a magnificent display of Camellias - the house is Camellias from end to end, and the effect of their thousands of red and white flowers, self, and striped, and mottled, is one that cannot be forgotten, and in autumn the Fuchsias trained on the rafters are scarcely less effective.

'On the front stage flowering plants are introduced according to the season, but respecting these we need not enter into particulars. There is a small Orchid house at the end, but only a few of these plants are cultivated, the remaining occupants being Crinum and some fine-foliaged plants.' (p.387)

Here, the *Camellias* are described as 'from end to end', and no mention of the other species described in 1855 is provided. From this information, it seems likely that the other plants mentioned previously (*rhododendron*, *magnolia* etc.) were removed and replaced with *camellias*, and that this took place between 1855 and 1874. A more recent ring-width study of the Chiswick *camellia* '*Anemoneflora*' which died in 2001, discussed later in the report, also corroborates this; estimating that it was planted around 1860.

Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener, April 28th, 1887

'We must devote a few brief remarks to the plant structures and their contents. The Camellias are the chief plants to arrest attention. Fancy a structure devoted to their cultivation 100 yards in length, and filled from end to end - and such plants, fine bushes in fact, all of them at the time of our visit showing well for flower. They are all old and good sorts, such as Alba plena, one of the best still, fimbriata, this plant having grown so big that the house had to be enlarged to accommodate it, but it has almost seen its day. Lady Grafton, Lady Hume's Blush, Woodsi, Beali, Nobilissima, Imbricate, Chandleri Elegans, and many others that were famous in their day but are not now in general cultivation.' (p.329)

Here we are provided with a little more information on the different varieties of *Camellia*. And the description 'a structure devoted to their cultivation' implies what is suspected from the 1874 entry, that the other large plants (*Rhododendron* etc.) had been removed by this date.

'Alba Plena' - an example is in the present-day planting, number 21, but it is not in the group of the largest *camellias*.

'Fimbriata' - Not known to be represented in the present-day planting. The International *Camellia* Register states 'In the foliage it is scarcely, if at all, distinguishable from the double white.'" (*Alba Plena*) Originated in China as a sport of *Alba Plena*. Brought to England in 1816.'

'Lady Grafton' - Not known to be represented in the present-day planting.

'Lady Hume's Blush' - this is also known as '*Incarnata*' - an example of which is in the present day planting but is not large - number 15.

'Woodsii' - 'Woodsii' is in the present-day planting, number 16. Number 20 is also labelled as 'Probably 'Woodsii''.

'Beali' - Not known to be represented in the present-day planting. Synonyms are; 'Bealii Rosea' 'Beali Rosea'.

'Nobilissima' - Not known to be represented in the present-day planting. The International Camellia Register states: 'in appearance like *Pompona*. (...) given as introduced from Belgium in 1834.'

'Imbricate' - synonym for 'Imbricata', number 29.

'Chandleri Elegans' - more commonly known as 'Elegans' - two examples of which are in the present-day planting, however one (number 10) is substantially larger than the other (number 24).

'and many others that were famous in their day but are not now in general cultivation' - implies there are other camellias, of some age, but unfortunately provides no further information.

The Gardening World, May 7th 1887 (available at the RHS Lindley Library, photograph available on CHGT Shared Drive)

'Turning to the glass structures, the visitor cannot fail to be struck with the massive bank of Camellias that line the greater part of the length of the large conservatory. These are planted out in a wide border and also cover the back wall with a living carpet of green, studded with innumerable flowers of the ever useful and acceptable Camellia japonica. There are whites, reds and striped flowers in all shades of intensity, but many of them were past their best at the time of our visit, and having commenced to make fresh growth were being syringed to encourage it. Several fine specimens of C. reticulata are grown against the wall or in the border; but a magnificent and aged specimen in the central and domed part of the conservatory particularly took our attention by the thickness of its stem.'

Again, no varieties are provided. The noted 'magnificent and aged specimen' in the central domed part of the Conservatory provides food for thought but there are no Camellias planted in the domed area of the Conservatory in the present day, or any in containers, so we cannot say for certain which this could be.

C. reticulata does not appear to relate to any camellias in the present-day planting.

Country Life Illustrated - October 1898

Country Life Illustrated reported a visit to "the splendid collection" in the "unique" camellia house (ICS, 1995, p.44). This has not been seen by the authors of this report but may be accessible through the National Art Library.

Gardens of Celebrities and Celebrated Gardens in and Around London, Jessie Macgregor, 1918



Jessie Macgregor was a painter, originally from Liverpool, who went on to reside in London where she visited many celebrated gardens of the time. This book, which was published in 1918, describes her visit to Chiswick House in 1915 and includes plates showing her illustrations.

'It is to the sixth Duke of Devonshire the gardens owe the very beautiful conservatory which is shown in the illustration. It is remarkable for its great length, and for having been the first important work undertaken by Joseph, afterwards Sir Joseph Paxton, whose talent the Duke discovered when Paxton was a mere boy in his employment. It is unnecessary to remind anyone that Paxton, born in 1801 of quite humble parentage, rose from the modest position of an under-gardener in the Arboretum at Chiswick, to be superintendent of the Duke's gardens at Chatsworth, and manager of his Derbyshire estates; and that he designed the palace of crystal in which was held the first great international exhibition.' (p.182)

'A feature of the conservatory is the bank, or thicket, of magnificent camellia shrubs, or rather trees, for they rise from the ground to the roof. They extend the entire length of the glass-house, which is three hundred feet; the glossy beauty of their smooth dark leaves would render them attractive at any season; even when out of flower, but in the earlier months of the year, when, from base to summit, they are laden with blossoms - rose, scarlet and white the effect of the long perspective of the conservatory,

studied from either extremity, is really wonderful. The camellia is an aristocratic flower, almost as much so, although in shape and manner of growth it differs widely from it, as the stately white Nile Lily, of which the conservatory at Chiswick shows fine specimens.' (p.183)

'In March, when the bright petals of the camellia commence to drop, making a splash of red on the ground below the shrubs, the conservatory at Chiswick begins to think of putting on its summer robe, for at midsummer it wears a new, and very lovely aspect. The gardener has then filled the space to the left with rows of choice greenhouse plants, in bloom.' (p.184)

The Middle Years

Following on from these older references, there then appears a substantial gap in published material on this topic. It is the understanding of the authors that the property was tenanted between 1858 and 1928, when it transferred to public ownership (Middlesex Council, Ministry of Works, Hounslow Council, English Heritage). The Conservatory underwent renovations in the early 1930s, but it is widely acknowledged that this was followed by a decline in the condition of both the buildings and gardens until the end of the 20th century. There remains very little available documentation from this period until 1994, when the International Camellia Society became involved with the camellias. We then start to see some other internal (Hounslow Council, English Heritage) documents surfacing, mostly relating to the restoration of the site in the years between 1999 and 2010.

Modern Sources

REHABILITATING THE CHISWICK HOUSE CAMELLIAS, International Camellia Society Journal, 1995, Jane Callander with Marigold Assinder and Herb Short

The authors of this article make use of several of the historical quotes referenced above and go on to discuss the condition of the camellias in 1994 and the approach taken to rehabilitation. They also present musings on several of the varieties and their ages.

Quotes are provided from two historical sources:

Mr. Appleby wrote in 1855, "The arrangement of this extensive greenhouse is this (...) In the border, there are planted out in the soil a great number of fine bushes of *Camellias*, well set with buds, *Rhododen-dron arboreum*, *Magnolias*, *Acacias*, and other conservatory plants" (Callander et al, 1995, p.44)

In October 1898, *Country Life Illustrated* reported a visit to "the splendid collection" in the "unique" camellia house. (Callander et al, 1995, p.44)

We are also provided with descriptions of several varieties in more detail;

'Meanwhile, limited research began to open our eyes to the potential historical importance of the Chiswick House camellia collection. The blooming season was over and many of the camellias were not labelled. But some of those that were, if named correctly, gave pause for thought- - *'Variegata Vera'*, *'Imbricata'*, *'Woodsii'*, *'Chandleri'*, *'Elegans'*.' (p.45)

'Variegata Vera', synonym for *'Variegata'* - imported in 1792 with *'Alba Plena'*, the first named camellias brought to the West from China aboard Captain Connor's East Indiaman "Carnatic", for John Salter of India House.

'Imbricata' - imported in 1824 from China by John Dampier Parks for the Royal Horticultural Society; first flowered in England in 1827.

'Woodsii' - seedling of *'Anemoniflora'* originated by Alfred Chandler of Vauxhall about 1819.

'Chandleri' - seedling of *'Anemoniflora'* originated by Chandler of Vauxhall in 1819.

'Elegans' - seedling of *'Anemoniflora'* originated by Chandler of Vauxhall in 1823.

The ICS refer to the nurseries as 'Chandler & Buckingham of Vauxhall' and make use of a 'receipt of purchase' quoting that 'in 1828 William Lindsay, the head gardener hired by the Duke four years earlier, paid for a collection of camellias from Chandler and Buckingham of Vauxhall' (p.45). This appears to be the first mention of the ledger entry from 1828, which will come up in most written pieces on the topic and is commonly referred to as a 'receipt'. It also appears that this ledger entry is key in contributing to the belief that camellias were first planted at Chiswick in 1828. With assistance from Cluny Wells (Volunteer Archivist, CHGT), the authors of this report have been able to confirm that a financial ledger relating to the 6th Duke's Gardens at Chiswick House does record a purchase for 'a collection of camellias' in 1828. A photograph of this entry is available.

Callander, Assinder and Short also note that planting records, if they still exist, have yet to be found (p.45).

*'While the size of some of the camellias would indicate that they may have been later plantings, measurement of several of the largest plants (difficult because they are multi-trunked at the base) show that 'Anemoniflora' has a circumference of 42 in (107 cm), 'Imbricata' a circumference of 33 in (84 cm) and one of the 'Chandleri' a circumference of 30in (77 cm).'**

*Measurements are later described as incorrect, in ICS Journal Article 1997.

'Considering the English climate and that at times the trees were pruned to keep them within the confines of the conservatory, while at other times they are completely neglected, it is reasonable to assume that many of these camellias are the Chandler and Buckingham originals.'

'Speculation about some of them can be fascinating. For instance, 'Variegata' is no longer in commerce. What happened to John Salter's original? The Duke of Devonshire has an old one at Chatsworth, but it is not nearly as large - perhaps a cutting from the one at Chiswick?

'Imbricata' is still a popular variety in England and many old ones exist. But what happened to the Parks original for the RHS? The Duke of Devonshire gave the RHS land adjoining Chiswick House and had a door made in the wall so that his guests could conveniently wander in the RHS gardens. Is it possible that he obtained the Chiswick 'Imbricata' from the RHS? In any event, the Chiswick one is huge and quite old - perhaps the oldest one alive in England?' (p.45)

'We have been able to confirm that several of the camellias are correctly labelled and have identified a few others - these include 'Anemoniflora', originally imported to England in 1806, 'Incarnata' ('Lady Hume's Blush'), also imported in 1806, and 'Pompone', imported in 1811. And there is one that is slightly scented and generally seems to fit the description of 'Myrtifolia', imported in 1808.' (p.47)

*'One of the interesting things is to speculate about the varieties that might have been expected to be in an old collection but are not there. For instance, we were puzzled that there is no 'Alba Plena' and only recently discovered that it had been in the collection in the 1880s. A victim of age or neglect?' (p.47)**

*It was later confirmed that 'Alba Plena' was actually in the present-day planting, but had not been identified at this stage by the ICS as it had not yet flowered (Short, 1997, p.123)

There are no direct references provided for the historical information regarding the varieties discussed in this article, however, a more in-depth list of references has been provided for their article of 1997, further discussion to follow.

We are not provided with a source for their statement that they have 'recently discovered ('Alba Plena') had been in the collection in the 1880s' but can presume this was a reference to the mention of 'Alba Plena' in the Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener, April 28th, 1887.

It is also implied in this article that there was little knowledge of the camellias at Chiswick until 1994. As mentioned previously, our research suggests that up until 1994 there had been no academic study of the camellia planting and we have yet to locate reliable research or writing on the topic from before this date. Callander notes that some varieties were already labelled in 1994 ('Variegata Vera', 'Imbricata', 'Woodsii', 'Chanderli', 'Elegans' (p,45), the start of the ICS involvement, but no information is available about the origins of the pre-existing labels. They go on to state that 'We have been able to confirm that several of the camellias are correctly labelled and have identified a few others' (p.47). At this stage, they do not confirm which of the already labelled camellias are believed to be correctly labelled, but over the coming years they provide more information on this.

The process of identifying these camellias has mostly taken place by comparing images of the flowers with those available in the 1825 (Chandler and Buckingham) and 1931 (Chandler and Booth) catalogues, also incorporating the wealth of knowledge amassed by the ICS over the years. This process is ongoing as there are still six camellias that remain unidentified in the present-day planting, and two that are likely

identified, but not certain. There have, however, been no scientific attempts at identifying the varieties made to date.

THE CHISWICK HOUSE CAMELLIAS, International Camellia Society Journal, 1997 - Herb Short

Following on from their article of 1995, the ICS published further information regarding the identification of the camellias in 1997. A section of this article is included here.

'When we began our work at Chiswick House, we already believed that the camellias might be an important part of camellia history. It has taken quite a bit longer to realise just how important.

'They are certainly not the oldest camellias growing outside China and Japan. The oldest of the camellias at Chiswick House probably were purchased for the owner, the Sixth Duke of Devonshire, in 1828. Records tell us that the head gardener, William Lindsay, purchased camellias for the conservatory in that year from Chandler and Buckingham of Vauxhall in London.' (P.117)

'For one thing, the date of the first purchases from Chandler's Vauxhall nursery, in 1828, place the earliest camellias in the conservatory's collection smack between the publication of "Camellia Britannica" by Alfred Chandler and Edward B. Buckingham in 1825, and "Illustrations and Descriptions of the Plants Which Compose the Natural Order Camellieae and of the Varieties of Camellia Japonica Cultivated in the Gardens of Great Britain" by Alfred Chandler and William Beattie Booth in 1831.

'The 1825 publication, which has eight colour plates, is really one of the earliest nursery catalogues, with prices ranging from 3 Pounds 3 Shillings (3 Guineas) to 5 Pounds 5 Shillings (5 Guineas). The camellias illustrated are Chandlerii, Aitonia, Althea Flora, Corallina, Insignis, Florida and Anemone Flora Alba - all as spelled in the volume.

'The 1831 publication includes 40 plates in colour - five of species and the others of varieties. Among the varieties: 'Alba Plena' and 'Variegata' (the two oldest named varieties, which arrived from China in 1792), 'Incarnata' or 'Lady Hume's Blush' (imported from China in 1806) and 'Elegans' (or Mr. Chandler's Elegant Camellia), raised from seed from 'Waratah' ('Anemoniflora') in the early 1820s.' (p.118)

This article includes a plan of the Conservatory with camellias labelled, which is covered in further detail later in the report in addition to further information on the cost of camellias, discussed in Section 4.

The Camellia Collection: Proposals for Development of the Existing Conservatory, Collection and Creation of an Outdoor Gallery, 1999, by Gillian Mobbs, Landscape Architect (English Heritage)

Mobbs' paper was put together in preparation for a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for funds to restore the gardens at Chiswick. Therefore, her research field is much wider than just the camellias. However, the paper does go into some detail on the camellia plants themselves and makes use of a number of references.

Mobbs states the following:

'From a bill receipt we know that the 'original' collection was ordered by William Lindsay, the 6th Duke's Head Gardener, from Alfred Chandler's Vauxhall nursery in 1828. Unfortunately, the number and name of the varieties were not detailed.' (p.10)

The Nurseries at Vauxhall has proved somewhat elusive, with very little written on them. They have already been mentioned by the ICS and here are referred to as Alfred Chandler's Vauxhall Nursery, appearing under slightly different names in different papers.

'Ornamental camellias were shipped to Europe by English, Dutch and Portuguese traders, horticulturists and missionaries throughout the 18th and 19th century, no doubt as part of the ongoing fascination for all things Chinese from the mid-17th century until the early 19th century. These early camellias were all single reds known as 'Rubra'. The arrival in 1792 of two particular varieties created a sensation which started the Victorian passion for camellias. The two varieties were the double white 'Alba Plena' brought back by Captain Connor, and the bicoloured 'Variegata' brought back on the 'Carnatic' for John Salter of India House. Two years later a double red was introduced and called Rubra Plena. Large examples of all of these exist in the Conservatory today, the Chiswick 'Rubra Plena' may be the only one of its kind in the world.' (p. 24)

Mobbs does not provide a direct reference for this information. However, it does appear that these three varieties ('Alba Plena', 'Variegata' and 'Rubra Plena') would have been available during the early 19th Century.

'Alba Plena', 'Variegata', 'Rubra Plena' are singled out by Mobbs but are not mentioned in the *Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener*, April 28 1887. However, the Journal does state that the Conservatory contained 'many others that were famous in their day' (p. 328).

Further detail provided on Mobbs's observations in Section 3.

Ring-width Study of Camellia Japonica 'Anemoniflora' from Chiswick House, in International Camellia Society Journal, 2003, Dr Martin Bridge

Over the winter of 2000/2001, one of the camellias in the Conservatory died. This was a *Camellia japonica* 'Anemoneflora'. Dr Martin Bridge was employed to carry out a dendrochronological survey of

this plant.

Dr Bridge writes that, as far as is known, there has only been one previous study of growth rings of a camellia published. This was a specimen from Claremont Landscape Garden ('Princess Charlotte'), surveyed in 1998, also by Dr Bridge. He notes that *'In the Claremont camellia report it was pointed out that whilst those of us from temperate regions are used to the notion that rings are formed annually, this is a great oversimplification, and more than one apparent ring may be formed in an interrupted growing season, or rings may be missing, at least from part of the trunk, in harsh growing conditions. Whilst with a single specimen it is not possible to be certain of the year of formation of the rings found on the sample because of the problems outlined above, the study of the Claremont camellia did give some indication that the rings were most likely to closely resemble annual rings.'* (p.84)

Bridge provides the following introduction to his work;

'Chandler and Booth (1831) reported on the history of the earliest known imports of camellias to Britain, and lists amongst these specimens' Anemoniflora', imported in 1806 for the Royal Botanic Garden, Kew. Also listed are 'Chandleri' and 'Elegans', which were grown from the seed of 'Anemoniflora' in 1819 and 1823 respectively.

'There are also records of the Chiswick House head gardener, William Lindsey, purchasing camellias from the Vauxhall (London) nursery of Chandler and Buckingham in 1828, although by then the camellia house would have been well established and must surely have had several examples in it.

'As one of the larger specimens existing in the conservatory in recent years, it seemed likely that the 'Anemoniflora' could well be a survivor of these earliest plantings - although it is well known that girth does not necessarily equate with age.' (p.82)

The statement that the camellia house 'would have been well established' by 1828 is not substantiated, however, it is presumed he is referring to the period of 15 years between the completion of its construction in 1813 and 1828, the date of the ledger entry. However, Historic England states; *'an early free-standing fruit house with a heating and irrigation system that was converted into an important showhouse for flowers from around 1828, following the importation of camellias from China'* (Historic England, 2022). A reference for this statement is not provided. Edward Kemp, in 1851, records its original use as a range of 'forcing houses', except for the central compartment. (Woudstra, 2010, p.117).

Comparing Gillian Mobbs' report, 1999, with the varieties that Bridge has specifically mentioned, Mobbs lists 'Chandleri' and 'Anemoniflora' as part of the 'original planting' (p. 11) and 'Elegans' as planted from 1831 onwards. 'Elegans' is also mentioned in the 1887 Journal of Horticulture. The present-day information provided for visitors states that number 10 - 'Elegans' was probably planted in the Conservatory in the early 1830s, but this information is also not referenced.

On the specifics of the 'Anemoniflora' ring count, Dr Bridge concludes;

'The ring width series on the clearest radius was measured on three separate occasions. Twice the total number of rings was determined as 141, whereas on the other occasion only 137 rings were

determined. There is some evidence of trauma affecting this individual about fifty rings in from the bark. This can be seen in the dark cells in one particular ring around about one third of the circumference.

'Given the previous study (at Claremont) where the ring numbers were shown to approximate to growth seasons (years), the implication is that the Chiswick House 'Anemoniflora' is probably not as old as first thought - being more likely to date from around 1860.' (p.86)

Dr Bridge does not include the circumference of the stem of 'Anemoneflora' in this article. More detail on the circumferences of the current camellias is provided in Section 3.

The following information is provided by the Journal Editor, thought to be Herb Short, in response to Dr Bridge's article:

'Having worked with the Chiswick House camellias for a number of years, we were disappointed that 'Anemoniflora' was not as old as we had hoped. But the ring count does seem to tell us some things' (2003, p.87)

'The trauma suffered by 'Anemoniflora' fits the German rocket that hit just outside the Chiswick House grounds in 1944.' (2003, p.87)

Here, it is reported that in 1944 a bomb landed nearby to the Conservatory. However, across the sources we have viewed, there appears some discrepancy over the exact date and nature of the bomb damage. Historic England states in the Official List Entry that *'In 1941, the rear service range and north entrance porch (of the Conservatory) suffered some damage during Second World War bombing and repairs were subsequently carried out'* (Historic England, 2022). The Chiswick House website states that the Conservatory *'was then damaged by bombs during World War II (including having one fall through the roof, which luckily did not explode)'* (Chiswick House and Garden Trust, no date). For the purposes of this report, this has not been clarified.

'In 1855 there were rhododendrons, magnolias and other plants now no longer in the conservatory. 'Anemoniflora' was planted in an area crowded with other camellias. This might indicate that 'Anemoniflora' was planted about 1860 to help fill space when some of the rhododendrons, magnolias and other plants were removed.' (2003, p.87)

This does appear to fit with information provided in the Journal entries of 1855, 1874 and 1887. However, we cannot be certain that the authors of these Journals did not omit information about other plants in favour of writing about the camellias.

'And, while Dr. Bridge points out that girth does not necessarily equate with age, he does say the difference in circumference between 'Anemoniflora' at Chiswick and 'Princess Charlotte' at Claremont seems to be in line with their difference in age. This would seem to indicate that the largest camellias at Chiswick date from an earlier time. 'Chandleri', in particular, could possibly date from 1825, the time of its commercial introduction, or 1828, the date of Lindsey's camellia purchase order that remains in the records of the Duke of Devonshire.' (2003, p.87)

Again, this feels a logical assumption to make if, at the time, there were other plants (including 'Chandleri') larger than 'Anemoniflora'. However, as stated by Dr Bridge, there is no certainty to this assumption.

The Italian Garden at Chiswick House by Jan Woudstra. Featured in English Heritage Historical Review, Volume 5, 2010

Woudstra's paper focusses on the Italian Garden, which includes the Conservatory, created at Chiswick between 1811 and 1814. He makes several references to descriptions of the camellias in the 19th Century.

'A much fuller description was made by Edward Kemp in 1851. (...) The two-tiered stone stage was covered by pelargoniums and azaleas when in flower, 'with chrysanthemums late in the autumn' and a more mixed collection of flowering plants during the rest of the year. The earth bed between the gravel walk and the back wall was largely filled with various sorts of camellias 'and a few varieties of Rhododendron arboreum'.' (Woudstra, 2010, p.117)

'There were also camellias trained against the back wall. A number of light pillars along the walk were covered with 'Acacias, Passion-flowers, Tacsonia, and a variety of climbing plants'. A wisteria and Banksian rose were trained inside around the dome. In the beds below there were some Camellia reticulata and 'Rhododendron metropolitanum'.' (Woudstra, 2010, p.119)

Edward Kemp's book *Gardens, Parks, etc., of London and its Vicinity*, 1851 has not been seen by the authors but is available in the British Library.

Woudstra has used this information, along with two other sources (MacIntosh, 1853 and Appleby, 1855) to annotate a plan of the garden as it was in 1853.

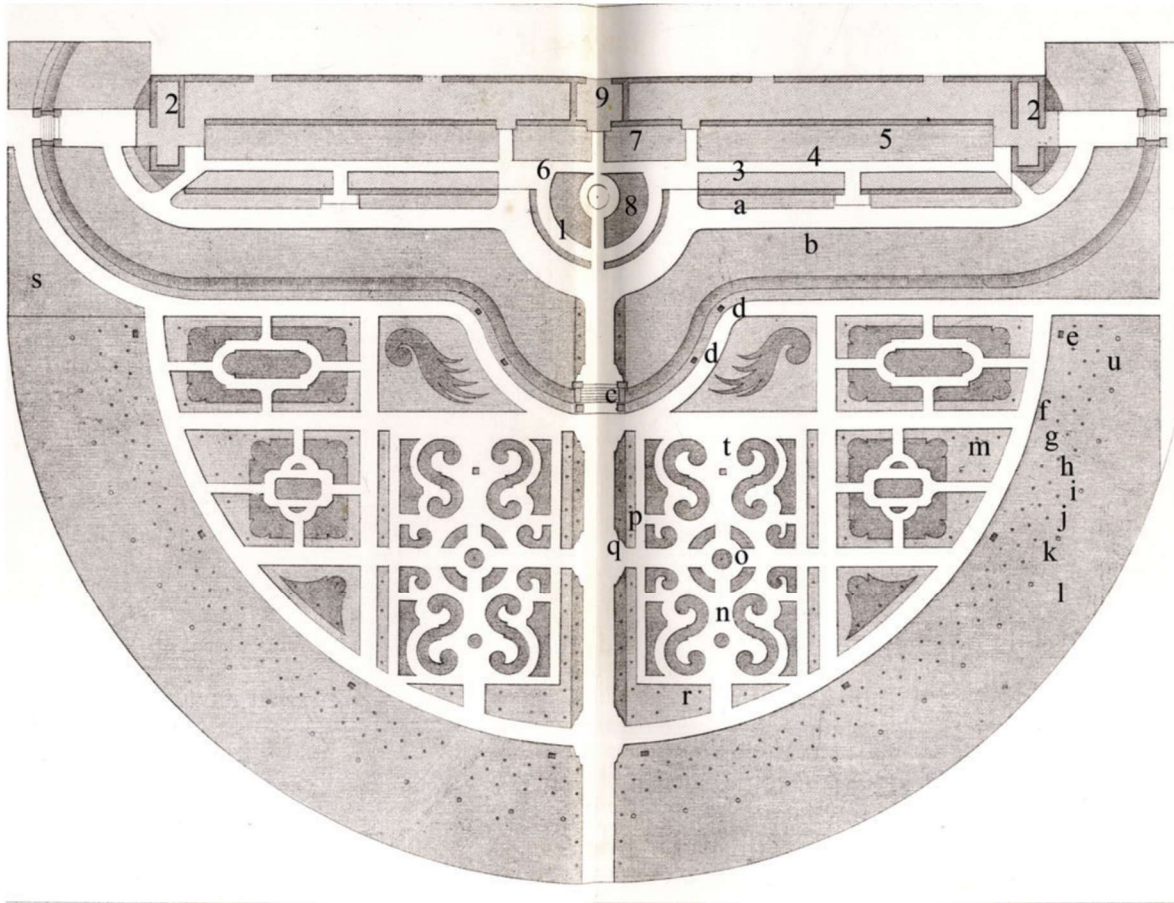


Fig. 14. Charles M'Intosh's survey of the Italian Garden at Chiswick House, as it was in 1853 [from Charles M'Intosh. *The Book of the Garden*, London, 1853, I, plate 26, annotated with comments by Edward Kemp (1851), pp. 107–109, and Thomas Appleby (1855), pp. 69–70] (numbering by author). (Woudstra, 2010, p.120)

KEY

Conservatory:

- 1 conservatory 310 ft 621ft, with glazed dome and gilt ornament;
- 2 porch end for stove plants and orchids: east: one of earliest 'Clerodendron splendens' introduced;
- 3 stone stage in two steps; plants changed seasonally, with pelargoniums and azaleas/chrysanthemum/mixed flowering plants;
- 4 gravel walk; pillars alongside covered with 'Acacias' Passion flowers, Tacsonia, and a variety of climbing plants';
- 5 bed of earth with camellias and '*Rhododendron arboreum*';
- 6 wisteria and Banksian rose trained round dome;
- 7 beds with *Camellia reticulata*;
- 8 cluster of rarer plants: e.g. Mr Smith's yellow rhododendrons;

9 room with drawing of *Victoria regia* in wild by Bartholemew; (Woudstra, 2010, p. 120)

Here it is suggested that the camellias were positioned where the numbers 5 and 7 indicate. It is not clear whether this was repeated on the opposite side of the central dome as well.

In the current Conservatory layout, Woudstra's number 5 could refer to current camellias labelled 5 - 'Corallina', 4 - 'Rubra Plena', 3 - Unknown or 2 - 'Rubra' or 'Single Red'.

The location of Woudstra's number 7 does not translate accurately to the current conservatory plans, and the description as 'beds with *C. reticulata*', does not relate to the current planting. The present-day camellias closest to this location would be numbers 12 - 'Aitona', 11 - 'Gray's Invincible' and 10 - 'Elegans'. All of which are fairly large. Further detail provided below.

It is not clear whether the plan provided by Woudstra, from Charles MacIntosh's book, is drawn accurately to scale, or whether the current plan provided to visitors (which the author is working from) is either. It may be that further clarification from Jan Woudstra on this matter would be beneficial.

MacIntosh's book does not appear to mention the camellia varieties directly, so has not been included in this report. Woudstra goes on to note three other historic references to the camellias, the Journal entries of 1855 and 1874 and the Country Life Illustrated article of 1898.

Chiswick House Gardens, 2022, David Jacques

Jacques makes multiple references to the Conservatory and the camellias (p.111 - 114); but does not provide any information not already covered in this report. He also quotes from the *Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener*, April 23rd, 1887.

Section 2 - Camellia Timeline

A timeline of key references and events in the history of the Conservatory and the camellias.

- 1813 Conservatory construction completed
- 1828 Record of a purchase of camellias from Chandler and Buckingham in 1928, kept in the archive at Chatsworth. Quantity and varieties are not noted
- 1845 Thomas Faulkner mentions that there are camellias in the Conservatory in his book, *The History and Antiquities of Brentford, Ealing & Chiswick, 1845*. He does not provide names of varieties or a quantity.
- 1851 Edward Kemp, describing the conservatory, mentions the location of camellias (Woudstra, 2010, p. 117).
- 1855 Mr Thomas Appleby mentions the camellias in *The Cottage Gardener and Country Gentleman's Companion*.
- Significant upgrades to the heating system of the Conservatory (Historic England, 2022 & Appleby, 1855).
- 1860 *Anemoneflora* thought to have been planted (Bridge, 2003, p.86).
- 1874 In the spring of 1874, *The Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener* described camellias from end to end of the conservatory. It is presumed that between 1845 and 1874, other plants (such as Rhododendrons) were removed in favour of camellias.
- 1887 *The Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener*, April 28th, 1887, the Camellias in the Conservatory are described as 'the chief plants to arrest attention'.
- The Gardening World*, May 7th 1887 also describes a 'massive bank of Camellias that line the greater part of the length of the large conservatory' and 'a magnificent and aged specimen in the central and domed part of the conservatory'.
- 1892 Chiswick House vacated by the 9th Duke of Devonshire in favour of Chatsworth, and the property becomes a private mental health facility (Callander et al, 1995, p.44).
- 1895 The Conservatory undergoes renovations (WSA, 2021).
- 1898 The 'camellia house' is described in *Country Life* (IV, 1898, 464–67) as 'unique', and with a 'splendid collection' (Woudstra, 2010 p.125).
- 1928 Property purchased by Middlesex Council (Callander et al, 1995, p.45).
- 1932 The glazed superstructure of the Conservatory was replaced in 1932 to 1933 by Messenger and Co. (Historic England, 2022).
- 33

- Early 1940s It is reported that a bomb landed in/nearby the Conservatory, causing damage.
- 1948 Ownership of the house passed to the Ministry of Works (Chiswick House and Gardens Trust, no date).
- 1994 The International Camellia Society began a new programme of care for the camellias.
- 2005 Hounslow Council and English Heritage formed the Chiswick House and Gardens Trust to unify the management of the villa and gardens. The trust took over the administration for the villa and gardens in July 2010, following the completion of the restoration works.
- 2008-2010 The glazing of the Conservatory was replaced, closely matching the 1930s glazing pattern (Historic England, 2022).
- 2010 Completion of a major restoration project of the villa and gardens, with £12m support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The Chiswick House and Gardens Trust took over administration (Chiswick House and Gardens Trust, no date).

Section 3 - Camellia Detail

The table on the following page shows the circumferences of all the camellias in the Conservatory, taken on 7th August 2023 by Iris Brember and George Sydenham, CHGT Gardener.

Section I of this report referred to the article 'Ring-width Study of *Camellia Japonica* 'Anemoniflora' from Chiswick House', in the International Camellia Society Journal, 2003 by Dr Martin Bridge. In his paper, Bridge discusses various challenges in assessing the age of '*Anemoniflora*' but concluded that it dated from around 1860. We have not been able to locate the original report.

It is important to note that, aside from mentioning whether the camellia trunks were single or multi-stemmed, the article does not record the exact location on the trunks that the camellias were measured by Dr. Bridge, therefore, the measurements taken on 7th August 2023 cannot be taken as an exact comparison to the measurements taken in 2002. In addition, the article does not provide an exact date of when the measurements were taken.

Several of the trunks are multi-stemmed (noted by Dr Bridge as well). Where they are connected, we have measured as one whole, and where they were entirely separate, we have measured the largest stem. The measurements were taken as near as possible to the base of the trunk, where it meets the soil.

Because of these challenges, the measurements cannot be taken as exact but can be used to determine their sizes in relation to each other.

It is recommended that Dr Bridge, or another Dendrochronologist, is further consulted if more accurate assessment is desired at a later date.

Photographs of all the camellias, taken in August 2023 are available in CGHT files:
[Camellia Photographs - taken August 2023](#)

Present day Label Number	Name	Approx. width (Aug 2023) - cm	Width in 2002/2003 (measured by Dr Martin Bridge) - cm	Background (From ICS Journal 1997) *a different numbering system was used - numbers noted here do not refer to current day numbering system.	Additional references (from throughout the report)
1	Camellia japonica 'Angel'	30		36. 'Angel'. A large semi-double white that dates from 1955. It was identified by Ian Webster, gardener at Chatsworth.	
2	Camellia japonica 'Rubra' or 'Single Red'	71		35. Single Red ('Rubra'). It appears to be the famous single red that originated from Lord Petre at Thorndon Hall and the Mile End Nursery in London. It also appears to be the same old single red as the famous Pillnitz Castle camellia near Dresden that dates from the late 1700s and is probably the same as the ones in Caserta, Italy, and in Campo Bello near Oporto. Circumference is 23 in (58.5 cm).	Approximate difference in measurements: 12.5cm Using stem girth as an approximate guide, this camellia was listed by G. Mobbs (1999) as part of the 'original planting'. In 2010, Jan Woudstra compiled a plan of the conservatory as it was in 1851-55, using historical observations recorded in different journals. One bed is noted as containing camellias, the location of this bed could refer to four camellias including 2 - 'Rubra' or 'Single Red'.
3	Unknown	51		34. Unknown. A rose-pink formal double. It is a bit small to have been in the original planting at 16 in (40.5 cm) circumference.	Approximate difference in measurements: 10.5cm In 2010, Jan Woudstra compiled a plan of the conservatory as it was in 1851-55, using historical observations recorded in

					different journals. One bed is noted as containing camellias, the location of this bed could refer to four camellias including 3 - Unknown.
4	Camellia japonica ' <i>Rubra Plena</i> '	105	90	33. Perhaps 'Rubra Plena'. 1802. This has one of the largest single trunks in the planting - circumference: 35.5 in (90 cm). It seems to fit the illustration in Chandler & Booth.	<p>Approximate difference in measurements: 15cm</p> <p>G. Mobbs (1999) - These early camellias were all single reds known as '<i>Rubra</i>'. The arrival in 1792 of two particular varieties created a sensation which started the Victorian passion for camellias. The two varieties were the double white '<i>Alba Plena</i>' brought back by Captain Connor, and the bicoloured '<i>Variiegata</i>' brought back on the '<i>Carnatic</i>' for John Salter of India House. Two years later a double red was introduced and called <i>Rubra Plena</i>. Large examples of all of these exist in the Conservatory today, the Chiswick '<i>Rubra Plena</i>' may be the only one of its kind in the world. (p. 24)</p> <p>Using stem girth as an approximate guide, this camellia was listed by G. Mobbs (1999) as part of the 'original planting'.</p> <p>In 2010, Jan Woudstra compiled a plan of the conservatory as it was in 1851-55, using historical observations recorded in different journals. One bed is noted as containing camellias, the location of this bed could refer to four camellias including 4 - '<i>Rubra Plena</i>'.</p>

5	Camellia japonica 'Corallina'	68		31. Perhaps 'Corallina'. 1825. This is probably from the original 1828 planting. Charles Puddle remembers this variety being there when he visited in the 1950s. It seems to fit the illustrations in Chandler & Buckingham and Chandler & Booth. Circumference: 24 in (61 cm).	<p>Approximate difference in measurements: 7cm</p> <p>In 2010, Jan Woudstra compiled a plan of the conservatory as it was in 1851-55, using historical observations recorded in different journals. One bed is noted as containing camellias, the location of this bed could refer to four camellias including 5 - 'Corallina'.</p> <p>Available in <i>Camellia Britannica</i>, 1825.</p> <p>Using stem girth as an approximate guide, this camellia was listed by G. Mobbs (1999) as part of the 'original planting'.</p>
6	Camellia japonica 'Parksii'	79.5		30. Unknown. This double red with a slight fragrance is also probably from the original planting. Circumference: 30 in (76 cm). At first we thought this might be 'Myrtifolia'. It could perhaps fit the illustration by Clara Maria Pope in the 1819 Samuel Curtis monograph. But it does not fit the illustration of 'Myrtifolia' in Chandler & Booth. It also does not fit descriptions and illustrations of the other old fragrant camellia 'Parksii'. Late this spring, we came to the conclusion that No. 5 was probably propagated from this plant.	Approximate difference in measurements: 3.5cm
7	Camellia japonica 'Chandleri'	92		29 (and 7). 'Althaeiflora' or 'Chandleri'. Both 1819. Believed to be in the original planting; probably the oldest of either variety alive today. Multi-trunks; circumference: 46.5 in (118 cm).	Stated by ICS in 1995 as already being labelled.

8	Unknown	90		28. Unknown. This formal double pink with white blotches is also probably from the original 1828 planting. Circumference: 29.5 in (75 cm).	Approximate difference in measurements: 15cm
9	Camellia japonica 'Welbankiana'	54		27. 'Welbankiana'. 1816. Neither of the two (inc. no. 3) is large enough to have been in the original planting; perhaps propagated from an original that died.	
10	Camellia japonica 'Elegans'	83	77.5	26. 'Elegans'. 1823. No. 26 may have been in the original planting and may be one of the original seedlings raised by Chandler from 'Anemoniflora'. No.9 is probably not as old and may have been propagated from No. 26. Circumference: No.9 is 19in (48cm), No.26 is 30.5in (77.5 cm).	Approximate difference in measurements: 5.5cm A plant of this variety is listed as present in Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener, April 28th, 1887. Stated as being offered for sale from 1831 onwards (International Camellia Register, no date). Stated by ICS in 1995 as already being labelled. Chandler and Booth (1831) reported on the history of the earliest known imports of camellias to Britain, and lists amongst these specimens 'Anemoniflora', imported in 1806 for the Royal Botanic Garden, Kew. Also listed are 'Chandleri' and 'Elegans'. - implies he believes this is one from the early plantings (Bridge, 2003, p.82)
11	Camellia japonica 'Gray's Invincible'	88.5		25. Unknown. This formal double pink variegated is probably from the original	Approximate difference in measurements: 9.5cm

				planting. Circumference: 31 in (79 cm).	
12	Camellia japonica 'Aitonia'	84		23. Probably 'Aitonia'. 1819. This one does not match the illustration in Chandler & Buckingham very well. However, it does fit the illustration in the book on 19th century camellias in the gardens at Lucca, published in Italy in 1992. It also seems to fit the written description in "The International Camellia Register". It would have been available in 1828 for planting at Chiswick House. It was planted tight against the wall and may have been an espalier at one time. Circumference: 32 in (81 cm).	Approximate difference in measurements: 3cm Available in <i>Camellia Britannica</i> , 1825. Using stem girth as an approximate guide, this camellia was listed by G. Mobbs (1999) as part of the 'original planting'.
13	Camellia japonica 'Middlemist's Red'	84	73.5	22. 'Rosea' (Chandler & Booth). This rose-pink formal double probably was in the original planting. Circumference: 29 in (73.5 cm). It was identified from the illustration in Chandler & Booth (1831). It is not the open peony form 'Rosea' brought from China in 1821 by Captain Le Blanc and listed in "The International Camellia Register". The Register records another Rosea listed in Andrews "Botanical Repository" (1812) as 'Flore Pleno Rosea' and says The Magazine of Botany and Gardening (1837) stated that the 'Rosea' of Chandler and Booth, the 'Rosea Plena' of Bollweiler and 'Middlemist's Red' are all the same variety. 'Rosea' (Chandler & Booth) does not fit the description of 'Middlemist's Red' in the Register. Further investigation of nomenclature is needed.	Approximate difference in measurements: 10.5cm Under the name 'Rosea' - using stem girth as an approximate guide, this camellia was listed by G. Mobbs (1999) as part of the 'original planting'.
14	Unknown	22.2		21. Unknown. Formal double red, not in the original planting. Its shape varies; outer petals often turn back and under.	

15	Camellia japonica ' <i>Incarnata</i> '	54		20. 'Incarnata' ('Lady Hume's Blush'). 1806. Although the Chiswick House tree is quite large, its trunk is only 12.5 in (32 cm) in circumference. It seems impossible that it is an 1828 original. But it produces such perfect blooms that we would like to believe that it was propagated from an original bush that died.	Approximate difference in measurements: 22cm A plant of this variety is listed, under the synonym 'Lady Hume's Blush', as being present in the Conservatory in the Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener, April 28th, 1887.
16	Camellia japonica ' <i>Woodsii</i> '	83.5		18. Probably 'Woodsii'. 1819. Possibly 'Atrorubens' 1809. Possibly 'Florida'. 1819. Both No. 13 and No. 18 are planted tight against the wall and may have been espaliered at one time. No. 13 is the larger, circumference: 27 in (68.5 cm).	A plant of this variety is listed, 'Woodsii', as being present in the Conservatory in the Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener, April 28th, 1887. Stated by ICS in 1995 as already being labelled.
17	Camellia japonica ' <i>Nitida</i> '	56		17. 'Nitida de Chandler'. First reference is 1848 in Belgium but was originated earlier by Chandler. The one at Chiswick House, 22 in (56 cm) in circumference, may be the oldest alive. But was it an original 1828 purchase?	
18	Camellia japonica ' <i>Pomponne</i> '	80	84 (multi stemmed)	16. 'Pomponne'. 1811. Believed to be in original planting and may be the oldest of this variety still alive. Part of the trunk is rotting, but it still is hanging in there. Its main trunk is 33 in (84 cm). There is an additional trunk considerably separated from the main trunk at the ground and two additional trunks beyond that have been cut off slightly below ground level.	Present day measurements cannot be compared. Using stem girth as an approximate guide, this camellia was listed by G. Mobbs (1999) as part of the 'original planting'.
19	Probably Camellia japonica ' <i>Due de Bretagne</i> '	72.5		15. Perhaps 'Duc de Bretagne'. 1846- 1847. This one, at 19 in (48 cm) is a bit small to be in the original planting.	Approximate difference in measurements: 24.5cm

20	Probably Camellia japonica 'Woodsii'	86		13 (and 18) Probably 'Woodsii'. 1819. Possibly 'Atrorubens' 1809. Possibly 'Florida'. 1819. Both No. 13 and No. 18 are planted tight against the wall and may have been espaliered at one time. No. 13 is the larger circumference: 27 in (68.5 cm).	Approximate difference in measurements: 17.5cm A plant of this variety is listed, 'Woodsii', as being present in the Conservatory in the Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener, April 28th, 1887. Stated by ICS in 1995 as already being labelled.
21	Camellia japonica 'Alba Plena'	75		*ICS plan and CHGT plans indicate Alba Plena in different locations 6, 14 and 19. 'Alba Plena'. 1792. In the 1995 Journal, we said there was no 'Alba Plena' in the collection and we could not understand why. But No. 14 did not flower until November 1995, No. 19 did not flower until January 1996 and No.6 was later. Charles Puddle, an ICS founding director, remembered from a 1950s visit that there were "four very large plants in the centre of the conservatory planted in large stone vases or tubs." No. 14, which has a circumference of 23 in (58.5 cm), and No. 19, which is a bit smaller, are undoubtedly two of them. No 6, which is smaller than the other two, may be a third of the four. Planting in tubs probably restricted the growth of this variety, which can be rather slow-growing anyway. It would seem logical to assume that the largest of the three was in the original planting, but we cannot be certain.	Approximate difference in measurements: 16.5cm A plant of this variety is listed as present in Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener, April 28th, 1887. G. Mobbs (1999) - These early camellias were all single reds known as 'Rubra'. The arrival in 1792 of two particular varieties created a sensation which started the Victorian passion for camellias. The two varieties were the double white 'Alba Plena' brought back by Captain Connor, and the bicoloured 'Variegata' brought back on the 'Carnatic' for John Salter of India House. Large examples of all of these exist in the Conservatory today (p. 24) Using stem girth as an approximate guide, this camellia was listed by G. Mobbs (1999) as part of the 'original planting'.
22	Unknown	77		12. Unknown. Small formal double light red with some white variegation. May be a bit small to have been in the original planting.	Approximate difference in measurements: 24cm

				Circumference: 21 in (53 cm).	
23	Unknown	52.25		10. Unknown. Formal double red. Not believed to be in the original planting. Circumference: 18 in (46 cm).	Approximate difference in measurements: 6.25cm
24	Camellia japonica 'Elegans'	55		9. Elegans'. 1823. No. 26 may have been in the original planting and may be one of the original seedlings raised by Chandler from 'Anemoniflora'. No.9 is probably not as old and may have been propagated from No. 26. Circumference: No.9 is 19in (48cm), No.26 is 30.5in (77.5 cm).	Approximate difference in measurements: 7cm A plant of this variety is listed as present in Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener, April 28th, 1887. Stated by ICS in 1995 as already being labelled.
25	Camellia japonica 'Imbricata Alba'	45		8. 'Imbricata Alba'. 1834. Circumference: 18.5 in (47 cm).	Present day measurements cannot be compared.
26	Camellia japonica 'Chandleri'	121 (multi stemmed)	118 (multi stemmed)	7. 'Althaeiflora' or 'Chandleri'. Both 1819. Believed to be in the original planting; probably the oldest of either variety alive today. Multi-trunks; circumference: 46.5 in (118 cm).	Approximate difference in measurements: 3cm Stated by ICS in 1995 as already being labelled. 'Chandler and Booth (1831) reported on the history of the earliest known imports of camellias to Britain, and lists amongst these specimens' Anemoniflora', imported in 1806 for the Royal Botanic Garden, Kew. Also listed are 'Chandleri' and 'Elegans'. - implies he believes this is one from the early plantings' (Bridge, 2003, p.82) Herb Short in response to the ring-width study: 'And, while Dr. Bridge points out that

					<p><i>girth does not necessarily equate with age, he does say the difference in circumference between 'Anemoniflora' at Chiswick and 'Princess Charlotte' at Claremont seems to be in line with their difference in age. This would seem to indicate that the largest camellias at Chiswick date from an earlier time.</i></p> <p><i>'Chandleri', in particular, could possibly date from 1825, the time of its commercial introduction, or 1828, the date of Lindsey's camellia purchase order that remains in the records of the Duke of Devonshire' (2003, p.87)</i></p> <p>Using stem girth as an approximate guide, this camellia was listed by G. Mobbs (1999) as part of the 'original planting'.</p> <p>Included in <i>Camellia Britannica</i>, 1825.</p>
27	Removed			6. Was 'Alba Plena'	
28	Camellia japonica 'Parksii'	34		5. Unknown. Double red, slightly fragrant. Probably propagated from No. 30.	
29	Camellia japonica 'Imbricata'	95	86 (multi stemmed)	4. 'Imbricata'. 1824. Believed to be in the original planting. Circumference: 34 in (86 cm).	<p>Approximate difference in measurements: 9cm</p> <p>A plant of this variety is listed as present in <i>Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener</i>, April 28th, 1887.</p> <p>Stated by ICS in 1995 as already being labelled.</p>

					Using stem girth as an approximate guide, this camellia was listed by G. Mobbs (1999) as part of the 'original planting'.
30	Camellia japonica 'Welbankiana'	35		3. 'Welbankiana'. 1816. Neither of the two is large enough to have been in the original planting; perhaps propagated from an original that died.	
31	Camellia japonica 'Variegata'	78 (multi stemmed)	76 (multi stemmed)	2. 'Variegata'. 1792. Believed to be in the original planting and may be the oldest known in the world. Because it is multi-trunked, it is difficult to get an exact measurement; circumference: approximately 30 in (76 cm).	Approximate difference in measurements: 2cm Stated by ICS in 1995 as already being labelled as 'Variegata Vera' G. Mobbs (1999) - These early camellias were all single reds known as ' <i>Rubra</i> '. The arrival in 1792 of two particular varieties created a sensation which started the Victorian passion for camellias. The two varieties were the double white ' <i>Alba Plena</i> ' brought back by Captain Connor, and the bicoloured ' <i>Variegata</i> ' brought back on the ' <i>Carnatic</i> ' for John Salter of India House. Large examples of all of these exist in the Conservatory today (p. 24) Using stem girth as an approximate guide, this camellia was listed by G. Mobbs (1999) as part of the 'original planting'.
32	Unknown	28 (multi stemmed - measurement is of the larger of the		1. Unknown. Semi-double pink, slightly fragrant. Not in the original planting.	

		two)			
	Camellia japonica 'Anemoniflora' (died 2000/2001)	NA	76 (multi stemmed)	11. 'Anemoniflora'. 1806. Believed to be in the original planting and may be the oldest known in the world. Sections of the trunk have rotted; many branches are brittle and are dying off; new growth is listless and of poor colour. It appears to be near its end. Multi-trunks; circumference: 30 in (76 cm).	<p>'Chandler and Booth (1831) reported on the history of the earliest known imports of camellias to Britain, and lists amongst these specimens' Anemoniflora', imported in 1806 for the Royal Botanic Garden, Kew. Also listed are 'Chandleri' and 'Elegans'. As one of the larger specimens existing in the conservatory in recent years, it seemed likely that the 'Anemoniflora' could well be a survivor of these earliest plantings.' (Bridge, 2003, p.82)</p> <p>Herb Short writes in response to the ring width study - <i>'In 1855 there were rhododendrons, magnolias and other plants now no longer in the conservatory. 'Anemoniflora' was planted in an area crowded with other camellias. This might indicate that 'Anemoniflora' was planted about 1860 to help fill space when some of the rhododendrons, magnolias and other plants were removed'</i> (Bridge, 2003, p.87).</p> <p>Using stem girth as an approximate guide, this camellia was listed by G. Mobbs (1999) as part of the 'original planting'.</p>

	Camellia japonica 'Fimbriata'	NA	NA		<p>A plant of this variety is listed as present in Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener, April 28th, 1887. <i>'this plant having grown so big that the house had to be enlarged to accommodate it, but it has almost seen its day.'</i></p> <p>Not known to be represented in the present-day planting. The International Camellia Register states <i>'In the foliage it is scarcely, if at all, distinguishable from the double white.'</i> (Alba Plena) Originated in China as a sport of Alba Plena. Brought to England in 1816.'</p>
	Camellia japonica 'Lady Grafton'	NA	NA		<p>A plant of this variety is listed as present in Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener, April 28th, 1887.</p>

	Camellia japonica 'Beali'	NA	NA		A plant of this variety is listed as present in Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener, April 28th, 1887. Not known to be represented in the present-day planting. Synonyms are; 'Bealii Rosea' 'Beali Rosea'.
	Camellia japonica 'Nobilissima'	NA	NA		A plant of this variety is listed as present in Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener, April 28th, 1887. Not known to be represented in the present-day planting. The International Camellia Register states: 'in appearance like <i>Pomponne</i> . (...) given as introduced from Belgium in 1834.'
	C. reticulata	NA	NA		'Several fine specimens of <i>C. reticulata</i> are grown against the wall or in the border; but a magnificent and aged specimen in the central and domed part of the conservatory particularly took our attention by the thickness of its stem.' The Gardening World, May 7th 1887 'In the beds below there were some <i>Camellia reticulata</i> and <i>Rhododendron</i>

					<p>'metropolitan'.' (Edward Kept quoted in Woudstra, 2010, p.119)</p> <p>Camellia reticulata 'Captain Rawes' - International Camellia Register.</p>
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From these measurements, we can determine that in order of size, the largest camellias are as follows:

- 26 - Chandleri (121cm)
- 4 - Rubra Plena (105cm)
- 29 - Imbricata (95cm)
- 7 - Chandleri (92cm)
- 8 - Unknown (90cm)
- 11 - Gray's Invincible (88.5cm)
- 20 - Probably Camellia japonica 'Woodsii' (86cm)
- 12 - Camellia japonica 'Aitonia' (84cm)
- 13 - Camellia japonica 'Middlemist's Red' (84cm)
- 16 - 'Woodsii' (83.5cm)
- 10 - 'Elegans' (83cm)
- 18 - 'Pompone' (80cm)

Dr Bridge is keen to emphasise that it is well known that girth does not necessarily equate with age (Bridge, 2003, p.82), and in his paper (2003) he cites several reasons why growth could be limited at different stages of the plant's life. These include neglect, pests, damage and overcrowding. Whilst it is our view that we can infer from Dr Bridge's paper that the larger camellias are generally older than smaller camellias, there are many other factors that mean that stem circumference alone cannot determine their age with a close enough degree of certainty for the purpose of this report.

Comparison between the views of G. Mobbs and the ICS, on the 'original' plants:

G.Mobbs	ICS Journal
31. 'Variegata' 29. 'Imbricata' 26. 'Chandleri' (and 7 - 26 is larger) 5. 'Corallina' 21. 'Alba Plena' 18. 'Pompone' 13. 'Rosea'/'Middlemist's Red' 4. 'Rubra Plena' a pink formal double (number 11 or 8?) unidentified double pink (number 11 or 8?) a pink anemone form (unidentified) 12. 'Aitonia' 2. 'Rubra' 'Anemoniflora' (died 2001) 'Elegans' planted shortly after.	31. 'Variegata' 29. 'Imbricata' 26. 'Chandleri' (and 7 - 26 is larger) 5. 'Corallina' 21. 'Alba Plena' (likely originally in container) 18. 'Pompone' 13. 'Rosea'/'Middlemist's Red' 4. 'Rubra Plena' 11. 'Gray's Invincible' (Unknown in 1997 'formal double pink variegated') 6. 'Parksii' (Unknown in 1997, number 6, 'double red with a slight fragrance') 8. Unknown (formal double pink with white blotches) 'Anemoniflora' (died 2001) Possibly 'Elegans'

Section 4 – Summary

Chandlers of Vauxhall

It is considered relevant to include notes on the Nurseries in Vauxhall from which some camellias were purchased in 1828.

Throughout the research conducted for the purposes of this report, it has been challenging to find anything written about the Nurseries in Vauxhall, or the Nurserymen who ran it, despite the important role they appear to have played in the history of the camellia in Britain.

The two catalogues discussed in Section 1 *Camellia Britannica* 1825, by Chandler and Buckingham and *Illustrations and Descriptions of the Plants which compose the natural order Camellieæ, and of the varieties of Camellia Japonica, cultivated in the gardens of Great Britain*; drawings by Alfred Chandler and descriptions by W. B. Booth in 1831, are acknowledged to have been produced by the Nurseries. They provide information on camellia varieties available at the time, and some guidance on their care but do not include background on the Nurseries themselves.

The Nurseries has been referred to by several names, albeit very similar, throughout our research. They are referred to as *Chandler & Buckingham* in the 1828 ledger held at Chatsworth and *Alfred Chandler's Vauxhall Nursery* in Gillian Mobbs' 1999 report on the Chiswick House Gardens. The ICS refer to the nurseries as *Chandler & Buckingham of Vauxhall* in their articles, but Herb Short, of the ICS, separately refers to them as *Chandler & Sons of Vauxhall*.

In Post Office records held at the Sir John Soane Museum for 1822 and 1828, the name was listed as *Chandler & Buckingham*, Nurserymen, Vauxhall. These were viewed in September 2023 by Cluny Wells, CHGT Volunteer Archivist.

Charles MacIntosh in *The Book of the Garden* mentions Chandlers; 'The Messrs Chandlers, the most extensive growers of the camellia round London...' (1855).

From the below notice found in the *Gardeners' Chronicle and Agricultural Gazette*, Volume 18, 1858, we believe that they were in operation until 1858.

V A U X H A L L N U R S E R Y, L O N D O N.
(ESTABLISHED UPWARDS OF SIXTY YEARS.)

MESSRS. CHANDLER AND SONS beg to announce to their patrons and the public that they have retired from their business at the above Nursery, in favour of

M E S S R S. M I L N E, A R N O T T, & C O.,

and in returning their most cordial thanks for the support they have themselves experienced for so long a period, they respectfully solicit a continuance of the same to their successors.—July 3.

M I L N E, A R N O T T, A N D C O.,
N U R S E R Y M E N, S E E D S M E N, A N D F L O R I S T S,
SUCCESSORS TO MESSRS. CHANDLER AND SONS,
V A U X H A L L N U R S E R Y, W A N D S W O R T H R O A D, L O N D O N.

IN succeeding to the old established Business of Messrs. CHANDLER & SONS, MILNE, ARNOTT, & Co. respectfully solicit a continuance of the support their predecessors have so long experienced, with an assurance that all orders they may be favoured with will receive their prompt personal attention.
A Catalogue now in course of preparation will be published shortly, and forwarded free upon application.—July 3.

'Vauxhall Nursery, London. (Established upward of sixty years.) Messrs. Chandler and Sons beg to announce to their patrons and the public that they have retired from their business at the above Nursery in favour of Messrs. Milne, Arnott and Co., and in returning their most cordial thanks for the support they have themselves experienced for so long a period, they respectfully solicit a continuance of the same to their successors - July 3. (...) Vauxhall Nursery, Wandsworth Road, London'

In a document titled *Why are the Chiswick Camellias so Important?* by Herb Short of the ICS, undated, the following is provided on Chandlers of Vauxhall.

'In 1831, Alfred Chandler and William Beattie Booth published Illustrations and Descriptions of the Plants Which Compose the Natural Order Camellieæ, and of the Varieties of Camellia Japonica, Cultivated in the Gardens of Great Britain. Chandler, who illustrated the book, was the son of Chandler & Son, the Vauxhall (London) nursery. Booth had presented a paper in 1829 to the Horticultural Society of London (which became the RHS) on the subject of camellia species and the varieties of Camellia japonica imported from China.' (Short, no date)

Unfortunately, no references are included for this information in our version of the document.

Sotheby's website lists *Illustrations and Descriptions* for sale with the following information; *'Alfred Chandler was a nurseryman in Vauxhall who bred camellias and Booth was a gardener and member of the Horticultural Society. Booth wrote the text, describing each variety and giving advice for the cultivation and maintenance, and the illustrations were based on Chandler's drawings. Chandler supplied camellias for the conservatory at Chiswick House'* (Sothebys, no date).

It seems possible that Alfred Chandler, Nurseryman, ran the Nurseries in Vauxhall with his son, also possibly named Alfred. We have gathered little further information of significance on Buckingham (Edward Bourne) or Booth (William Beattie). The Nurseries may have operated under the name Chandler & Buckingham for a period and then later operated under the name Chandler and Sons, but this is not confirmed.

This thread has not been explored extensively and it may be that further information could be available with further investigation. Census records do return results for Chandler in South London, but again, this has not been explored in detail.

The ICS has not been contacted directly during the writing of this report, but an initial search for variations of 'Chandlers of Vauxhall' using their online catalogue has not returned any additional results. It may be that they hold further information not yet catalogued or available online.

It is the view of the authors that further information on the Nurseries in Vauxhall would contribute to the wider story of the camellias at Chiswick and in the UK, although it is considered unlikely it would yield definitive information on the provenance of the current plants in the Conservatory.

The 'Original Planting'

It is unlikely that planting records dating from the early 19th Century for the Chiswick Conservatory exist and are yet to be found. As noted in the ICS Journal in 1997 - Wardour Castle in Wiltshire, Eaton Hall estate near Chester, and Chatsworth House had hot-houses built in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, planted with camellias. However, no planting records appear to exist for any of these 'hot-houses' from this period (Short, 1997, p.118).

However, it is confirmed that some camellias were purchased in 1828 from Chandler and Buckingham for the price of 12 Pounds, 11 Shillings 6 Pence for the gardens of Chiswick House. As the camellias are unnamed on this record, it is challenging to use it to prove that any of the camellias in the Conservatory today are those that are recorded as part of this purchase.

In addition, we cannot say for certain that these camellias were planted in the Conservatory, as no planting record is available. But, given the belief that at the time that camellias would only thrive under glass, it is reasonable to presume that they were destined for the Conservatory.

It is the view of the authors that the term 'original planting' that is so often used, is not necessarily a helpful one. As is known, there were two catalogues produced by Chandlers; *Camellia Britannica* in 1825 and *The Natural Order of Camelliae* in 1831. There were new camellia varieties available in 1831 that were not available in 1825, such as '*Elegans*'. It is therefore the view of the authors that there were multiple plantings that could be seen as 'original', and that these took place as new varieties became commercially available. It appears that one of these took place in 1828, as per the Chatsworth ledger entry, and another likely shortly after the 1831 catalogue was produced. It is also possible that another planting took place around 1860, around the time that upgrades to the Conservatory, underway in 1855, were completed and plants of other varieties were removed.

At this stage, it is not known in great detail whether other Nurseries were supplying camellias during the early 19th Century, although it is understood that some were. From our research, we have found no references to other Nurseries when discussing the Chiswick camellias. The age of the Chiswick plants when they were purchased is also not known, but given the price, it would be reasonable to

assume that the plants were already established when purchased. It has not been implied in any of the documents that have been viewed for this research that they were purchased as seed.

It is possible that there could have been camellias planted before 1828, as discussed by Dr Martin Bridge in his report (of 2003), as the conservatory was completed in 1813. However, it is understood to have originally been used for fruits (Historic England, 2022) and there are no recorded observations of camellias before 1845.

It is also likely that some camellias planted in the Conservatory have died in the years since, more detail on this is provided in Section 3. These could have been replaced with the same or different varieties.

The Cost of Camellias

The authors of this report have attempted to calculate how many camellias could be purchased for the cost paid in 1828 of 12 Pounds 11 Shillings 6 Pence. Unfortunately, the copy of *Camellia Britannica* that we have been able to access, at the RHS Lindley Library, does not have prices listed. The prices provided by Short (1997, p.119) for camellias around 1825 are therefore unverified. It may be that the ICS has access to this information from elsewhere.

If we are to take the costs of camellias noted by Short to be correct, as ranging from 3 Pounds 3 Shillings to 5 Pounds 5 Shillings, it is possible that a quantity of 2 - 4 camellias were purchased for the sum of 12 Pounds 11 Shillings 6 Pence noted in the 1828 ledger.

From the list provided of camellias illustrated in *Camellia Britannica*, 1825, '*Chandleri*', '*Aitona*' and '*Corallina*' are represented in the present-day planting.

'*Althea Flora*' ('*Althaeiflora*'), '*Insignis*', '*Florida*' and '*Anemone Flora Alba*' ('*Anemoniflora Alba*'), the others listed in the catalogue, are not identified in the present-day planting under the names given here or their synonyms. They are also not named in any other source relating to historic plantings that we have viewed. It may be possible that the currently 'Unknown' varieties could be matched to some of these, but as these other varieties are well-known by the ICS, it is likely that this has been considered.

If the total sum in 1828 could pay for around 3 camellias, it is puzzling that the ICS indicates at least 11 camellias in the present-day planting are 'original' and Mobbs believed that at least 13 are. It is possible that the costs given are wrong, or that they did not attempt these calculations. It is also possible that they had not seen the ledger entry directly and only knew of its existence from other sources and therefore may not have been aware of the total sum spent.

Volunteer archivist Cluny Wells has gathered some information on the cost of camellias in the 1860s; ranging from between 1 shilling and 3 shillings 6 pence. It is presumed the cheaper refers to seed and that possibly the higher price refers to plants. These prices came from Carter & Co's catalogues at the RHS Lindley Library. They are significantly cheaper than the cost as noted by the ICS in 1828 from Chandler & Buckingham but at this stage, this has not been followed up further.

Stem Circumference

It would be convenient if the three camellias that were listed for sale in *Camellia Britannica* 1825 and are represented in the present-day planting, 'Chandleri', 'Aitona' and 'Corallina' also had the largest stem circumferences. Unfortunately, this is not the case.

As Dr Bridge has not provided the circumference of the stem of 'Anemoniflora' in his article (although the stem circumference is given for a different date by the ICS) we cannot use this for a comparison with others that may have measured the same or larger. However, it seems reasonable to trust that there were some plants larger than 'Anemoniflora' at the time of its death, as stated by the ICS, who had taken their own measurements (albeit inaccurate).

It is important to note that both Mobbs and the ICS made their assessments on the 'original planting' prior to the 2003 ring width study. Both Mobbs and the ICS listed 'Anemoniflora' as from the 'original planting', however it was later determined to have been planted around 1860. This sheds some doubt over the reliability of their initial selections, and to our knowledge, neither have provided any reviewed opinions.

As Dr Bridge is keen to stress, there are many factors affecting the reliability of stem circumference and ring counting when determining the ages of camellias, so even with accurate measurements, this would not provide any concrete evidence. This can be seen in the 'Camellia Detail' table in Section 3. The (albeit approximate) measurements vary greatly between the late 1990s and the present day; some have increased by 25 cm whereas others by only 3 cm. Without the input of an expert on this matter, the authors have been unable to determine a pattern or average rate of growth from this data.

It is the view of the authors that the best chance at determining the dates of planting would involve further consultation with a dendrochronologist, invasive procedures to determine age and DNA testing to confirm the varieties. The latter two options have, understandably, been ruled out in the past for fear of introducing bacteria/disease to the stems. It is not known to what extent a database of camellia DNA for comparison exists at present.

A number of camellias, even if not the oldest, may still be rare varieties which are no longer commercially available. At this stage, this has not been researched further. This could mean that some, irrespective of age, have a level of significance yet to be determined.

Conclusion

It has become clear throughout the course of this research that there are significant gaps and areas of unreliability in the available data and given the period we are looking at, it seems unlikely that some of these gaps can be filled.

Our approach has been to combine the following three factors to assess the significance of the individual plants:

- the name of the camellia variety (and some information on the history of different varieties provided by the ICS);
- the stem circumference; and
- historical references to Chiswick's camellias.

This has proved challenging for several reasons. Camellias are very difficult to identify due to the similarities in appearance between different varieties, their relatively short flowering period, and the many synonyms or orthographic variants attributed to each. Additionally, there have been many orthographic errors when referring to different varieties throughout history, further complicating the process. This means that some of the Chiswick camellia varieties are presently unidentified and that it is possible (but not necessarily suspected) that some may have been erroneously identified. Similarly, we have found stem-circumference to be very imprecise and unreliable as an indicator for age. In addition to this, there are very few historical references to the camellias at Chiswick that mention varieties directly and as noted, no planting records at all. To further complicate matters, the camellias at Chiswick have been renumbered in the past and some have been removed, meaning that it has at times been challenging to match up the records that do exist with the present-day planting.

It is therefore the view of the author that the only camellia which we can say, with a degree of confidence, survives from the purchase made in 1828 is '*Chandleri*' (number 26) as it is the largest of the camellias and was available from the 1825 catalogue *Camellia Britannica*.

Following on from this, there is a significant grey-area surrounding a lot of the camellias that all have some points of interest and are of significant size, but lack evidence concrete enough to confidently state their age/significance. This second group is as follows:

'*Woodsii*' (20 and 16)

'*Rubra Plena*' (4)

'*Chandleri*' (7)

Unknown (8)

'*Gray's Invincible*' (11)

'*Middlemist's Red*' (13)

'*Alba Plena*' (21)

'*Variiegata*' (31)

'*Pomphone*' (18)

'*Imbricata*' (29)

'*Parksii*' (6)

'*Rubra*' (2)
'*Due de Bretagne*' (19)

Some of the evidence suggests that '*Elegans*' (number 10) was planted in or shortly after 1831.

'*Corallina*' (number 5) and '*Aitona*' (number 12) were also available from the 1825 catalogue *Camellia Britannica*. If the prices given by the ICS for camellias from Chandler and Buckingham are correct, these could be the other camellias purchased for the total amount but are relatively small compared to '*Chandleri*' (26).

A third group also have some points of interest but do not, at this stage, have enough known about them, outside of speculation, or a stem circumference of great enough size to suggest significant age. They are:

'*Nitida*' (17)
'*Incarnata*' (15)
'*Elegans*' (24)
'*Imbricata Alba*' (25)
Unknown (22)
Unknown (23)
'*Welbankiana*' (9 and 35)
'*Parksii*' (28)

A fourth group are of a comparatively small size and have nothing known about them. They are as follows:

Unknown (3)
Unknown (32)
Unknown (14)
'*Angel*' (1)

In addition to this, '*Anemoniflora*', which died in 2001 would be included in the second group.

There is also evidence that several named varieties have existed in the Conservatory in the past and were observed in 1887, these are:

'*Fimbriata*'
'*Lady Grafton*'
'*Beali*'
'*Nobilissima*'
C. *reticulata* '*Captain Rawes*'

It is clear from our research that the current planting contains a range of camellias of differing significance, the earliest thought to have been planted in 1828. It then seems that the planting has

continued to be added to, up until at least the early-mid 20th century. At this stage, it appears almost impossible to ascertain the exact dates of any of the plantings.

The nature of this exercise has made it very difficult to carry out exhaustive research. It is important to note the following areas for follow up research.

- It is possible that more documents exist in the Chatsworth archive that have not been located by Chiswick staff or other researchers over the years.
- Local archives have not been explored for further material.
- Involving the ICS may help to fill some of the gaps. Further, more in-depth research on individual camellia varieties may also prove beneficial.
- Further research into Chandler's of Vauxhall would contribute positively to the wider knowledge base.
- Consultation with a Dendrochronologist would be likely to add an additional layer of confidence to the findings of this report.

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