

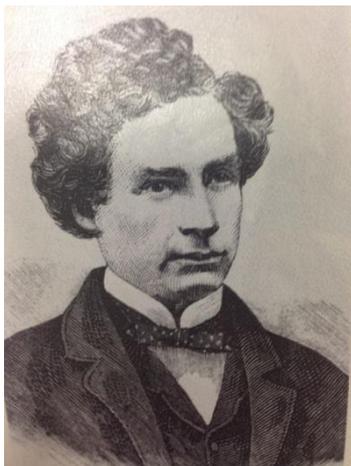
# Plant Hunters

## William Lobb 1809-1864

William Lobb, born in 1809, travelled across the globe multiple times, greatly to the benefit of British horticulture. Whilst few written accounts remain of the man's early life, it is known that he grew up in Egloshayle and was educated at Wadebridge. Eager to travel abroad, William got his chance when his brother suggested his name to James Veitch, a man who was eager himself to hire his own plant hunters to go abroad and send back seeds. Setting sail to Rio de Janeiro on the 7<sup>th</sup> November 1840, his long career as a globetrotting plant hunter began. The greatest achievements of his long career would be the commercial introduction of *Araucaria araucana*, the 'Monkey Puzzle' tree, and *Sequoiadendron giganteum*, the Wellingtonia tree. The introduction of these trees into Veitch's company secured their commercial success. Lobb departed on his final voyage to California in 1854, fulfilling his contract, and decided to remain in California until his death on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1864.

## Thomas Lobb 1817- 1894.

Thomas Lobb, born in 1817, followed in his brother William's footsteps, becoming another talented plant collector. Setting off to the East Indies in 1843 he spent the next 17 years travelling the globe on and off. Some accounts even state that he lost his leg on his final expedition, a noble sacrifice to British horticulture. There is some dispute over the latter anecdote however, which highlights a severe problem of studying any of the plant collectors the Veitch family hired. Unlike other businesses, the Veitch Company did not require diaries to be kept on travels, so records are rare. Dying on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1894, his plant collector career had proved as great as his elder brother's, and the orchid *Phalaenopsis lobbii* was named in his honour.



## Richard Pearce (d. 1868)

Richard Pearce was working as a nurseryman at for Alexander Pontey in Plymouth when James Veitch jnr. heard of his work. Pearce moved to Exeter in 1858, working under Thomas Lobb, to learn the skills of a plant collector. From 1859 he travelled all over South America, including expeditions to Ecuador in 1862 and Peru in 1863. Following James Veitch's death in 1863 Pearce continued to travel, collecting plants 'on his own account' (Heriz-Smith, 1985) and was highly praised by both the Veitch family and the staff at Kew Gardens. Pearce died in 1868 leaving behind a legacy as one of the Veitchs' most successful plant collectors.



### **Charles Maries (1851-1902)**

Charles Maries first acquired his interest in plants while at the Hampton Lucy Grammar School. He began work as a nurseryman in Warwickshire before gaining employment with James Veitch & Sons of Chelsea. In 1876 he was despatched to collect plants from throughout China and Japan, introducing the *Pieris japonica*. He passed away in 1902.



### **John Dominy (1816-1891)**

John Dominy joined Veitch Nursery in 1834 from Lucombe, Prince and Co. He was well-known for his cross-breeding techniques and specialisation in orchids and credited with the creation of the hybrid 'Princess Royal' rhododendron. It was said that 'he was more successful than insects in ensuring fertilisation of plants' (Heriz-Smith, 1985).



### **John Seden (1840-1921)**

John Seden, originally from Dedham in Essex, worked at the Chelsea nursery under John Dominy. He was particularly skilled with orchid horticulture and worked with Dominy in orchid hybridisation. He was awarded the Victoria Medal of Honour in 1897 for services to horticulture before his death in 1921.



### **John Heal**

John Heal was born in Barnstaple and worked for the Veitch family at their Coombe Wood site. He moved to the Chelsea nursery to manage their fen collection and is credited with producing the first white begonia 'Queen of the White'. He received the Victoria Medal of Honour in 1897 with his colleague John Seden.