Week-End Conference, April 21/23. Westham House, Barford, Warwickshire

Forty-six members attended the Conference and but for illness and/or the rail go-slow, there would have been six more. Rather disappointingly, only six other members and one guest attended the Saturday afternoon session, comprising the Annual General Meeting. But of those who came, all groups except Scotland, Irela nd and overseas were represented.

In the pleasant, relaxed atmosphere of the charming house, set in a bend of the river Avon, the 28 who had been at Grantley Hall in August were soon on happy terms with the newcomers, some of whom were making their first appearance at any of our meetings.

Mr . Ardron began the programme by showing on Friday evening, slides of the heather Project at Harlow Car, Harrogate, from its early stark beginnings up to the present maturing gardens and the promise of the future, the Trial Grounds, a vacant plot set out in readiness. Other slides followed on Saturday evening, with Mr. Prew showing a fine selection from the Slide Library, and Mrs. Bowerman pictures of the beginnings of Champs Hill, Coldwaltham, up to and including what many of us know today as a garden of great beauty. For the rest of the time we enjoyed a talk by Mr. Chapple, advice on propagation, a brains trust and a quiz where many of us showed our ignowance, but not Mr. Platt of Lancashire who won easily.

The Annual General Meeting opened with welcoming speeches by the Chairman, Mr. Bowerman and the Past President Mx. Chapple and continued with the election of 3 new members, Mr.E.R.Turner now installed in the office of Treasurer, and 2 ordinary members, Mr. A.J. Stow and Mr. D.J.Small. Three past members had resigned, Mr. Ellis, Mr. Mills and Mr. Sharland, but the rest of the committee were re-elected en bloc. The Secretary Mrs. MacLeod gave a brief resumé of recent events and the change of policy in hdlding our annual meetings alternately in London and the provinces. After her final audited accounts had been presented and accepted, all other aspects of the running of the Society were dealt with by the members in charge: Mr. Turner, Finance, Mr. London, Adventising, Mr. Ardron, Northern area, Mr. Prew the Slide Library and Mr. McClintock a conference to be held in London jointly with the R。H.So and the Botanical Society of the British Isles, Sept. 2-4. As Mr.Patrick was unable to be present, Mrs. Macleod gave a brief report on the Year Book, regretting certain mistakes and omissions in the membership lists, due to some carelessness on the part of both printer and proof-reader. She stressed the need for someone to relieve Mr. Patrick as sub-editor with a view to assuming full responsibility when required to do so.

Aft ernoon tea proyed an excellent chance for talking and discussion during which Mr. Vickers of Sheffield agreed to come on to the Committee as Northern representative and Mr. Stow volunteered to be sub-editor of the Year Book.

The visit on Sunday afternoon to Hidcote Manor was spoilt by cold winds, and some members left early. But all told, this was a most enjoyable week-end in a lovely part of Warwickshire, and our thanks are due to Mr. Frank Owen, Principal of Westham House and to Mrs. Owen for making it possible.

## Group News:

The South-West Scottish Branch: from Mrs.E. Bezzant.
Our last meeting, April 17th was a very happy one. Mr. Bell gave us a very interesting illustrated account of how he made his garden, and as a result of Mrs. Ivey's talk on "Preparing and potting up plants for show purposes" it was suggested that we run a light-hearted competition on growing heathers in pots .... our own Show in fact. So on March 10th next year the exhibits are to be staged here at my house, and as I have volunteered to put on a Heather Society display at our local Spring Show next March 17th, all the exhibits will be here on the 10 th, ready, I hope, for me to take to the hall the next Saturday.

We visited the garden of new member Mrs. Lunn at Buchanan Castle: tree heaths absolutely marvellous, about 8 ft . high and 6 ft . across, laden with perfect blooms: a wonderful garden.

On June 12th, in the evening, we all meet again at Mr. McFarlane's nursery, and the next meeting will be Sept.9th. at Brig. Montgomery's at Colintraive, Argyll.

The Northern Group: Groups 3, 4 and 5 have been sent a circular telling of the Harlow Car visit on Sunday, July 9th., and this is just to remind them and to tell others who may like to join the party, of the invitation to come in the morning armed with a hand-tool, to help do some weeding.

In the South: As a further note to the RHS/BSBI Conference referred to in the A.G.M. report, a most interesting series of short talks has been arranged for Saturday and Sunday Sept. $2 / 3$ at the RHS Hall, with the Conference dinner on the Saturday evening. It may be possible for our members to join the Field Excursion to Box Hill, Wisley Common and Wisley Gardens on Monday the 4th. On the Tuesday and Wednesday, when we stage our annual Calluna display in conjunction with the RHS Heather Competitions, there will also be a special RHS/BSB1 exhibit of plants and special lectures on Tuesday evening and Wednesday afterncons

As numbers must be limited, anyone who would like to attend any or all of the events, must please send to me at once for details. S.A.E. a ppreciated.

Garden visit: On September 9th, we have been invited to go to Mr. \& Mrs. Cameron's garden, Great Comp, Borough Green, Sevenoaks, Kent. This is a lovely garden, open to the public on Fridays and Sundays, so we are fortunate to have been invited on the intervening Saturday. As the object of the openings is for charity, a charge of 25 p, is made for tea. Again, anyone wishing to accept must please send to me for details.
Advance Notice of a Conference, Summer 1973, in the South-West: we are happy that our Committee member Mrs. Boxall has had a favourable response to her enquiries as to a week-end at Dartington Hall, near Totnes in Devon. As with all Residential Colleges, we can only attend during their recess, so it will be for the week-end of August/7/19 We have said that the numbers will be about $50 / 60$ and we look forward to meeting those members in the South West who so far have been rather out of reach. Preliminary booking with me is essential if we are to avoid the last minute rush which marked both our last conferences. Stamps to the value of 20 p . sent with your application would be welcomed.

The Editor asks for members ${ }^{\text {s }}$ experiences and methods in
(1) Growing heathers as pot plants, in frames or cold greenhouses.
(2) Making a raised heather garden, with or without using peat blocks.
(3) Hints on the use of heather blooms and foliage in flower arrangements and
(4) How to dry heathers correctly as winter floral decorations.

He adds: "Through the years I have been most grateful for the contributions I have had from members ..... most naturally, for my j ob depends on them? Sir John Charrington and Mr . Chapple have sent me something every year, and Mr. David McClintock while still carrying on his profession, writing at least two books on botany and innumerable articles, found time to write ${ }^{\text {² }}$ Notes on British Heathers' for 5 consecutive years, 'A Brief Bibliography of Heathers' in 1970,
 membership and the Editor in particular owe him much."

## WISLEY HEATHER TRIALS 1971

The following results were received too late to be included in the Year Book. Colour references in the descriptions are to the R.H.S.Colour Chart. Awards given were First Class Certificates F.C.C.; Award of Merit, A.M.; Highly Commended, H.C. Twelve plants of each stock were planted in November 1968

## CALLUNA VULGARIS

As a summer flowering plant.
MRS, RONALD GRAY. H.C. (Raised by Dr. Ronald Gray; sent by Messrs. Geo.Jackman \& Son. Itd. Woking, Surrey) Plant $3 \frac{1}{4}$ ins.high, spread 12-19 ins. prostrate, vigorous; foliage bright medium green. Flowers single; a colour near Purple Group 75A touched with white, colour paling with age. Flowering from August 10. 1971.

## ERICA CARNEA

As a summer foliage plant.
ANN SPARKES. A.M. (Raised, introduced and sent by Mr.J.W. Sparkes, Beoley, Worcs.) General description as in Year Book. Summer foliage bright green near base of shoots, changing to light yellow towards tips, which are bright pink or red. AUREA. A.M. (Sent by Mr.J.H. Brummage, Heathwoods Nursery, Taverham, Norfolk.NOR53X) Plant $7 \frac{1}{2}$ ins. high, spread 21-23 ins., spreading, vigorous; foliage bright green and lemon yellow, some shoots flushed pink at tips.

## MEMBERS , FORUM

## REACTIONS.

Over the last couple of years I have barrowed up a steep slope some forty tons of suitable soils and ten tons of sandstone in order to produce something like a heather rockery. The work included uprooting much of my previously pampered and sacred front lawn as well as a larger area of not so sacred back lawn. In case any readers contemplate similar efforts here are some reactions of those involved.

Initially, my wife thought the whole idea quite mad saying that we only had to move a few miles north to gain natural heather country so why inflict on myself so much work in order to grow plants which nature had not intended to flourish in my alkaline soil. Strangely, she was more enthusiastic about the tearing up of the front lawn (I suspect because she was in charge of keeping the edges trimmed) but there were times when she did not take kindly to the muddy trails which my barrow and my wellingtons left behind them. Once the rocks were in place and the raised beds were partly filled with soil she readily admitted her conversion to the genexal scheme which was rated as something different from the usual "lawn and roses "approach.

Jacqueline and Bruce aged seven and four respectively when we started took the opposite view to my wife in that they loved the idea of muddy trails and piles of sandy soil but the nearer the works came to completion the more interest diminished and when anyone asked where I was they always replied in a tone of voice indicating that there was no hope for me "up the garden with his Heathers". Perhaps this is what they will inscribe on my tombstone! I hopethe children have learned from my efforts that you do not achieve anything without working for it a nd from time to time they come out with remarks to show that although they do hot realise it (and certainly wouldn't admit it) they have some appreciation of the beauty and effect of plants in general and Heathers in particular.

My parents, especially my mother, were very pleased with my involvement with gardening and especially with my basic approach which is to make a garden a retreat, a place in which to relax and as informal as possible. They doubtless remember arguments with me as a student when I wanted to make their garden formal, parklike and stuffed full of annuals in ordered rows. At last they have made their point,

Next, the neighbours. I have a great affection for the retired Scots doctor, but on Heathers we do xot agree. To him they will always be wild moorland plants and he cannot understand my pride in growing them. Nor will he ever admit to my cultivars being superior to the wild species even when handed specimens to compare, though, to do him justice, he appreciates rockeries and remarks each year on the fine effect of a group of E. cin. 'Coccinea'. Having grown up with summerflowering Heathers he marvels in the carneas much more and gives them unstinting praise. Last year he returned from holiday with a bundle of "real Scots Heather" for me. It was old and straggly and had spent several days roasting in the boot of his car so I was fighting a losing battle in my efforts, 6
revive a portion of it. As compensation I have planted a few wild calluna from Glencoe. Another neighbour is a very active "Do-it-Yourselfex" and he instinctively likes piles of materials and outward evidence of works of change. He and his wife are about to start on a small Heather rockery themselves. He also wonders if I haven't altered the topography of the region and whether Planning Permission was required!

Others have made kind comments but then after wandering round a garden no-one is likely to say to the host anything other than something kindly $\quad$, at any rate not if they are about to be provided with refreshment.

What do I think of it? I haven't time to consider the point as I am already planning extensions but I cannot help thinking how small forty tons of earth looks when spread out. About another eighty tons is required. Who mentioned relaxation !

Brian R. Malin.

## From Taplow to Yeovil

We moved here from our house and garden in Taplow in November 1970. In Taplow I could grow any species I chose but here we are on blue lias and the soil is very alkaline. This was no doubt responsible for the local fame of the trout stream which runs along two sides of the garden, but as this was polluted by silage the summer before we came, I have been denied even this compensation.

Despite the unfavourable soil we set to work at once to build a new heather garden. We started with Erica carnea and E.darleyensis and planted the first bed in March of last year. While planting this bed I turned round to find three mallard happily nibbling the young shoots of the new plants I had just put in.

Last spring we had a solitary mediterranea 'Superba' in bloom and the history of this plant may be of interest. I moved it from Taplow in September 1970 when it was about 3' high and $5^{\prime} 6^{\prime \prime}$ in circumference. It was in temporary quarters in Somerton till March 1971 when it was finally planted in its new home. It bloomed magnificently last spring and this year, despite its wandering life it is again completely covered with buds which are just beginning to open (20th January). During last summer the E.vagans bloomed here and this gave us special pleasure as they were the result of our first attempt at propagating by cuttings. This winter the carnea have bloomed for the first time, giving us a glimpse of how magnificent they will be after 2 or 3 more years' growing.

Regarding lime and Calluna vulgaris: I find I can grow some of the foliage cultivars such as 'Robert Chapman', 'Orange Queen', and 'Multicolor' quite well, but 'County Wicklow', 'Peter Sparkes' and 'Tib' have so far proved disappointing. I have done well with 'Johnson's Variety' (I cannot bring myself to call this plant 'Hiemalis') but I must reserve my judgment on 'J.H.Hamilton' as I have only grown it for one season.

I found a beautiful Calluna while salmon fishing in Kerry in June 1971. A bush by the river Carragh which was about $3^{3}$ tall carried a few sprigs of foliage which shaded from bright green at the stem, through primrose yel low to coral pink at the tip. The rest of the bush was leggy and an unremarkable dark green. I gave some material to a nurseryman from Dulverton and have managed to strike three good plants myself. I am awaiting the new growth more than the blooms this year to see if it will repeat its spectacular beauty in my soil or whether this was due to an midentified mineral in the poor Kerry soil. If it does, it may well be a valuable garden plant due to the period at which it is at is best.

Firom mixy own prition of supreme inexperience I should like to challenge the opinionsof many acknowledged experts that heathers are best grown in large clumps of a single cultivar. This is so for large gardens, but as Mr. Ardron pointed out in the 1969 Year Book, in a small ganden a bed containing single specimens of a number of different cultivars can be very attractive More people have gardens of less than a tenth of an acre than those who have more. The owners would be unwilling to devote them entively to heathers but would enjoy the plants in a multivariety bed Surely we could do a great deal to increase the al eady considerable popularity of heathers by bringing this method of using them to the notice of more people

A Garden in Bath
We decided a year ago to invite people to visit our 17 th $\& 18$ th century house in June in its acre of garden to see what we had done to save a small part of old Bath, so much of which is being demolished.

I poured 24 bags of peat in April on our heather beds and blessed the heather and the peat for the ir weed smothering properties. Our garden like so many in Bath is on a steep slope and means heavy work carrying peat bags, but my daughter's visiting boy-friends were enlisted to earn their keep to do this for me. How worthwhile this was as scarcely a weed grew between April and June and indeed through the summer where I had poured the peat $2^{\prime \prime}$ deep.

Too busy to read the papers I had my transistor at hand to keep me in touch with the outside world: as the news-reader reported a political demonstration with cries of Heath Out, I was rejoicing that my heath was in.

My husband who was temporarily working in Madagascar wrote that there were heathers there and I regretted not asking him to bring back a root with him. A photo on his return showed heaths 4 ft , to 5 ft . tall - Erica arborea perhaps (cf. Bulletin No.13, p.7, D. McClintock). Rashly on one of his tours abroad he had made me head gardener in our husband/wife team of two, so I bought some climbing roses for our beautiful grey Cotswold stone walls to compensate for the bush roses which I planned to move and replace with heathers. As clematis runs close to heathers as my favourite, I made a happy marriage with Jackmani i superba and trained long fronds of this prolific mauve clematis through my winter carneas.

Our $S_{w}$ iss student a fter several weeks confided in me that she was apprehensive on her arrival to see so much heather in our garden as in her part of Switzerland cultivated heather is confined to cemeteries and in November families put pots of heather on the graves. Poor dear, she imagined that we were a sort of Bluebeard and the undulations of 'Springwood Whitet and "Pink" covered previous students and she feared the would find herself under a mound of 'King George' or 'Arthur Johnson', disappeared beyond trace.

Much interest was shown by the visitors to our unstately home, nearly 500 came to our open week-end and we raised $£ 81$ for our church.

Finally, no wonder I love heathers as a book on the derivation of names reveals that my surname, of Northumbrian origin, means ---- Heather! Perhaps I ought to have been christened Clementine :
R. Hayden

## FROM YOUR LETTERS

From Mr. P. G. Davis, Haslemere In the case of your seedling (Bulletin 15, p.5) and the original 'Lyndon Proudley' I think the easiest explanation is that they are probably (for we can't prove even that) blood-brothers, children of the same two parents .... and like any other brothers there are likely to be differences in height, weight and features although the general similarity is there. If we had only to consider the influence of the parents upon the children (or seedlings) it would be easy; in fact the progeny are influenced by generations of ancestors going back as far as the species has existed, which is why we occasionally get a 'different' plant growing in a thousand acres of 'typical' Calluna.
From Mr. I. E. Metcalfe, Rothbury, Northumberland,
In the normal course of my duties as a forester I walk over thousands of acres of heather. Occasionally I find an unusual sprig of Calluna. Some of these (two enclosed) have flourished. In winter and early spring, foliage varies from almost black to light green. Are these variants all classed as one variety? (Answer: Yes, until or unless cultivar names are given).
From Mr. W. L. Groenendijk, Zuidwolde, Holland. Every year there is a "Floralia-week ${ }^{\text {i" }}$ with a floral parade in cur village. In 1971 we got two First prizes, one in Zuidwolde and also in the competition of Hoogeveen in the group "large gardens". In October 1971 the members of the
boaxd of our "Ericultura" visited our garden, (Mr. H.J v. d. Laar, Boskoop, Mr.L. van Veldhuysen, Driebergen, Mr.J.Bootsman, Hilversum and the "professionals", Zwijnenburg, Boskoop, and Haalboom, Driebergen). Their conclusion was "This is the most splendid amateur heather garden in Holland". That visit meant the crowning touch on our work of two years. On that moment my wife and I could be proud of our doings?
From Prof. A. R. Kruckeberg, Dept. of Botany, Univ. of Washington.
Ido appreciate your sending me the three copies of David McClintock's "A guide to the naming of plants". You may be interested to know that I use them as reference items in a college course on Ornamental Trees and Shrubs.

From Mr. I Rooke, Buxton, Derbys.
Living in a limestone area our choice of heathers is restricted. To some extent I have overcome this by making at one end of the garden a two-tier rockery. This is faced by a limestone wall. I filled the cavity behind the wall with a mixture of leafmould, sand and peat. I dug this from the moors because it seems to suit the heathers better than the more fibrous peat one buys. In all we have about sixty different types of heather growing quite happily together. Most of them are only small plants, but we get a lot of pleasure from them and are learning more each day about these lovely plants.
From Mr. M. L Carpenter, Dartford, Kent
I am now engaged upon a project, namely attempting to grow lime hating heathers on alkaline soils. The examination of my soil by the $\mathrm{R}_{\text {。 }} \mathrm{H}_{3} \mathrm{~S}$, showed a pH of 7.5 with visible traces of lime. They advised me that I might be able to cultivate such heathers if I reated my soil with Flowers of Sulphur forked in at about $4 \frac{1}{2}$ ozs, per square yard. I want to create a border wall of about 30 ft . raised to about 9 or 10 inches with a width of about 1 ft . I have a quantity of Alexpeat Lime-free compost and propose to mix with it a proportion of beech and oak leaf mould. The R, H, S, say I ought to have at least 2 ft . of height to prevent ultimate seepage by capillary action of 1 ime tainted water. As I cannot afford so great a height I am trying my luck with the above dimensions.

From Mrs.A.Farris, Usk
"Sustanum" is the wonderfully appropriate name of a fertiliser of which I was told by the Horticultural Adviser. The mixture is a finely ground organic powder of long and slow action and can be obtained "Lime-free". I did a hasty scattering of it on the surface of an enormous heap of subsoil clay where the wild callunas I was "naturalising" had turned a filthy yellow coloux and looked very unhealthy. I went away for 7 weeks, returning in September to find they had all greened up and were growing well.

The spectacular effect of "Claycure" here: I had about 72 square yards of subsoil clay to cope with which had been dumped down as steep slope. After weed-killing for brambles, Deschampsia and Milium, I treated the area with about $£ 3$ worth of Claycure, spiking and woggling with a garden fork to help a surface application of it, the slope, about 1 in 1 being impossible to dig. A couple of months later the top 6ins, was relatively friable. Heaths and heathers are being planted with success as time permits. 'Springwood Pink' in particular is making good cover.

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Mrs. R.M. Price, 104 Fulwell Park Ave. Twickenham, Middx.
Mr. \& Mrs.A. Richards, 16 Llandegai Village, Bangor, Caerns, N. Wales.
Major D.B.Rolleston, Shernden, Marsh Green, Edenbridge, Kent.
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Thurling, $\mathrm{F}_{\mathrm{o}} \mathrm{H}_{\mathrm{o}}$, Llanelly, Mundesley Rd, North Walsham, Norfolk.
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Wish, Mrs. W., 47 Clarence Rd., Four Oaks, Sutton Coldfield, Warks.
Woodward, J.H., Greenacres, Brookside, Arclid, Sandbach, Chesh.

## Change of Address:

## Scotland:

Mr.A.D.McFarlane, Craigmarloch Nurseries, Mid Barrwood, Kilsyth by Glasgow. Mr.T.P.Seggie, Benallan, Portincaple, Garelochhead, Dunbartonshire .

## Group 3

Mrs L. M. Mackley, Heathers, Standish Grove, Boston, Lincs.
Group 5
Mr. A. Radley, 7 Ashley Close, Stourbridge, Worcs.
Group 6
Mr.H.Darnell, Easthampstead Park Cemetery \& Crematorium, Nine Mile Ride, Wokingham, Berks.

## Group 8

Mrs.W.J. Morgenroth, Alexandra Hotel, Pound Street, Lyme Regis, Dorset
Mr. R.W.Wells, Hotel Riviera, Parkhill Road, Torquay, Devon.
Group 9
Mr. Satoshi Miwa, 240 Gotemba, Japan 412

