

From the Secretary:

Those members who received the Autumn 1975 Bulletin will know that a very full Diary of Events was published in it. It covered many of our proposed activities for 1976. The Winter-Flowering Heath Competition at the R.H.S. London on February 17/18 will therefore be known to most of you. We are delighted that a combined effort by a professional nurseryman member and two of our most successful amateurs has been arranged for our own Display.

Three weeks of concentrated "excursions" in Natal in December almost banished thoughts of "heather" from my mind, or would have but for a happy visit to the daughter of one of our Scottish members and a lucky "find" of what was probably the white Erica drakensbergensis near Giant's Castle. Ericas are found mostly in the winter-rainfall areas of the Cape and only very few in mountain areas such as the Drakensberg with its summer rainfall. On this occasion we were drenched but not before I had found many Erica shrubs in the wild and one in full flower in the gardens of the Nature Reserve.

Although this is no place to discuss other wild flowers I cannot resist saying what delight it gave me to see many of those we tenderly nurture in Britain growing so exuberantly, and birds of an exotic brilliance quite unknown here.

While on the question of Cape Heaths I am sure those of you who are keen on trying to grow them will be glad to see that Mr. David Small has issued a catalogue of the species he can offer. This is something we greatly welcome: it should give a fillip to the languishing Cape Heath "Group" we have talked about. Look for the advertisement in the 1976 Year Book.

New 1976 members have already received our very informative new leaflet and the rest of you will find your copies with this bulletin. It will remind you (if you had forgotten or had never known) of the benefits conferred by membership. We are indebted to Mr. G. P. Vickers of Sheffield for the work he put into its compilation. A printer's error in the word 'Treasurer' is regretted.

From the Treasurer:

This is a reminder of the arrangements that have been approved for the revision of subscription rates.

Last spring I recommended that the subscription rate should remain unchanged for this year (1976) but that we should make an increase commencing January 1st 1977. Increases from £1.05 to £1.50 single and from £1.50 to £2. joint were agreed and formally approved at the A.G.M. in August last to take effect next year.

I have been concerned for some time with the difficulty of checking subscriptions paid by banker's order, with our records. Many of the names on the bank statements do not tally, some payments are made direct over the counter and no name is recorded, some orders have been passed direct to the member's bank and are therefore not recorded by the Society and it also appears that quite a number of payments have been terminated without notice. This is now an opportunity to bring our records up to date. New bankers order forms are being sent to members, with this bulletin.

Will all those who are willing to pay by banker's order or who already do so please complete the amended order for 1977 and return them to me for action. The addition of your Zone number after your name will greatly facilitate handling. I am most anxious to complete this task as far as possible before the A.G.M. so your co-operation will be much appreciated.

Overseas members. The charges for remitting or collecting cheques or money orders is excessive for such small amounts. This can be avoided by remitting currency. I do not think international balances will be too much affected by this means.

E.R. Turner, Filma Dene, Burstow, Surrey RH6 9TJ.

Footnote: As you may not know your Zone number this is how we have arranged the membership,

in conformity with the new County Boundaries.

- Zone 1: Scotland. Zone 2: Ireland  
Zone 3: Northern. Cumbria, Cleveland, Merseyside, Cheshire, Lancs, Derbyshire, Durham, Yorkshire, Northumberland, Humberside, Tyne and Wear, I. of Man.  
Zone 4: Wales including Monmouth.  
Zone 5: Midlands. Notts., Lincs., Leics., Staffs., Salop., Hereford & Worcs., West Midlands, Warwicks, Northants, Oxon, Berks.  
Zone 6: Bucks, Beds., Herts., Cambs., Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex. We retain Middx. in Zone 6.  
Zone 7: Greater London, Kent, Surrey, Sussex.  
Zone 8: Hants, I. of Wight, Avon., Glos., Wilts., Dorset, Somerset, Devon, Cornwall.  
Zone 9: Overseas.

### Membership Lists

As you know, new members and changed addresses appear in each of our three bulletins. When you read your 1976 Year Book, "The President Writes" you will see that he regrets the omission since 1974 of the full membership lists that used to be published annually,

The Council gave much consideration to the matter. Initially it was a question of finance. Was it right, in a book of 64 pages, to devote 15½ of them to names, many of which were no longer valid? The lists were compiled in November: by the time they were published in March, many had dropped out and others who had joined would not be known for another year. Better far, we thought, to produce a year book of about 54 pages, to publish annually the names of Heather Nurserymen and those members who showed their interest by inviting others to see their gardens, who were willing to run local groups or who wrote articles which we could all enjoy. We took the compromise further: we agreed that every third year we would publish the full membership lists, not as part of the Year Book but of a size that would enable them to be kept alongside the bulletins. Once members have the full list all they will need to do will be to keep subsequent bulletin lists until the next three yearly full publication comes along

This resolution was carried by the Council on February 19th, 1974, so next year, 1977 will see the publication of all paid-up members. We shall of course remind you before then.

### THE PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

Mr. London asks me to remind you that the last date for entries is JUNE 30th. Entry forms may be obtained from Mr. H. J. Fulcher, 30 Mousehold Lane, Norwich. (S.A.E. please!)

New members who joined this year will not have had the Autumn Bulletin in which the schedule is set out. Some of them may indeed want to enter. To them I would say, please send me a stamped addressed 9" x 4" envelope and I will send you a copy of that Bulletin of which I still have a small number left.

### CONFERENCE, August 20-22, 1976

As reported in the Autumn 1975 Bulletin and in the Chairman's Greetings in the 1976 Year Book, this year's Conference will be held in Wales, at the Snowdonia National Park Study Centre, Plas Tan Y Bwlch, Maentwrog, Gwynedd. We know that there will be a keen demand for accommodation and those who wish to attend should book early. Mr. & Mrs. H. Scantlin, The Heathers, Downside Common Road, Cobham, Surrey, have kindly agreed to take the bookings. The price will be £9.00 plus a booking fee of 50p. to cover postage and duplication.

The programme has yet to be arranged, but as before, will be sent as soon as available to all who have paid the full agreed amount.

C.I.M.

## LOCAL GROUP NEWS

### NORFOLK BRANCH

At the Annual General Meeting of the Norfolk Branch, held on Thursday, September 19th, 1975, Mr. J. A. Marshall of Taverham was elected Branch Chairman in place of Mr. B. G. London, but at the request of the members, the latter agreed to carry on with publicity and displays. Mr. H. J. Fulcher of Norwich was elected Branch Secretary in place of Mr. A. F. Poole who was thanked for his past services.

A suggestion was made to hold an extra winter meeting. This was arranged for December 11th and took the form of a social evening and "get together". About 20 were expected but 30 arrived. Fortunately five wives had cooked and catered for more so there was enough and to spare, at the splendid Buffet Christmas Supper enjoyed by all.

Starting with sherry on arrival, Mr. London showed about 80 slides of Conferences, people and gardens. Mr. Marshall and Mr. London organised three "quiz" games which teased their brains and tested their knowledge. Anne Small in the heather quiz guessed 18 out of 20, but neither her husband David nor Neil Brummage entered that one. The prizes were heathers donated by Neil from his nurseries.

That lasted till 10 p.m. when it was time to wish one another "A Happy Christmas" and to go home. Everyone enjoyed the party and would like another some time.

H. J. F. & B. G. L.

### WEALD & THANET GROUP

The 1976 programme has not been drawn up at the time of writing. A party of New Zealand gardeners on a tour of the United Kingdom will be visiting Tunbridge Wells on July 18th and 19th (as reported in a recent issue of "Garden News"). A meeting with them is planned at Crowborough.

Suggestions on other activities, dates and places and offers of gardens to visit will be most welcome.

Details of our "notelets" will be included with the next Group newsletter which you should soon receive. If you do not get one please let us know.

(The "notelets" referred to are a most enterprising effort, having been produced entirely from the Group's own funds, and depict Calluna vulgaris and Daboecia cantabrica sketched by Margaret Woods, of Hadlow Down, Uckfield. Samples of the notelets will be sent to other Groups).

E. Godbolt.

### THE MIDLANDS GROUP

On 28th November 1975 Mr. H. G. Hutcherson presented a slide show at a meeting of the Group in Friends Meeting House, Birmingham. Many of us had visited his garden at Corley near Coventry in 1974 when it was only two years old. It extends over two acres of gently sloping ground overlooking open countryside and is devoted almost entirely to heathers and conifers in great variety. Mr. Hutcherson has taken slides showing the gradual development of the garden through all seasons of the year and members much enjoyed the opportunity of seeing this colourful record.

In the discussion which followed, notes were compared of the effects of the long hot summer and its aftermath. One member made the surprising announcement that his E. carnea 'King George' was already (in November) in full bloom. On the other hand two people said that with them, 'Eileen Porter' looked like being much later than usual.

Harold Street.

### NORTHERN NEWS

Following the very busy week-end 27/28 September when we displayed our Heathers to the public at the Sheffield Botanical Gardens there was a most interesting meeting of the Harlow Car Group on 4th October. This was an illustrated talk on "Plants to associate with Heathers and Peat Walls" given by Mr. J. D. Main N.D.H. Superintendent of the Garden.

Mr. Main was closely associated with the Heather Section of the Royal Botanical Garden,

Edinburgh - where we first met him - so he knows his Ericacea e.

On 16th October The Sheffield Group enjoyed an illustrated talk by Peter Vickers, comparing some of the newer varieties and Kenneth Wright gave us a practical demonstration of various propagation methods on 18th December.

Other activities (seldom reported) are connected with the Harlow Car project, as can be gleaned from the current Year Book. Three more lectures have been given to local clubs and thereby we sold more Pocket Guides. We have sold about 1,800 during the past two years, which has contributed materially to the growth of membership in Zone 3.

#### Details of Northern Visits.

20 March. Harlow Car Group visit 2 gardens.

1. 2 p.m. onwards, at Mr. Blackburn's garden, Hazelbrae, Calverley. Approached from A6120, Leeds Ring Road. Then A657 Shipley Road. After  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile sharp L at 30 sign. Then turn R almost  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile on for Hazelbrae on the left.
2. Visit to Group Secretary, Mrs. Haley at The Croft, Brackenthwaite Lane, Pannal, Harrogate for tea.

May 15/16 Lakeland week-end Zones 3, 4 & 5 and invitation to others.

For a Spring Holiday, members will be staying at Greenbank House, Hawkshead, Ambleside (Hawkshead 497) Bed & Breakfast £3.50 plus VAT. An entertaining evening on Saturday.

Sunday leave for Lakeland Hort. Soc. Garden at HOLEHIRD on A. 592 (Troutbeck) arriving 10 a.m. Then back to A 591 to arrive at noon at BROCKHOLE, 2 miles south of Ambleside. In afternoon to WHITE CRAGGS Garden, Clappersgate (A 593) Return to Hawkshead to meet in the Council Hall at about 4 p.m. Meals can be obtained at both Brockhole and Hawkshead. Late travellers can join in for part of the itinerary if more convenient. We hope to meet members from the North East with a view to forming a local group there. Further information (sending a stamped addressed envelope) about a caravan site etc. can be obtained from Mr. F.N. Culley, 10 Jefferson Drive, Ulverston, Cumbria LA12 9LU, to whom our thanks are due for organising these Lakeland trips.

J.P. Ardron

#### MEMBERS' FORUM

##### Two Aspects of Heather - Growing in the U. S. A.

##### 1. In Hanover, Massachusetts

Heather Growing in the north eastern United States is really not too common despite our excellent acid soil conditions and temperate climate. In my limited gardening experience I have noticed that the average American gardener is only interested in raising annuals and tomatoes. Interestingly the type of American that grows heather is usually a grower of alpine and a member of the American Rock Garden Society. In this connection a seven month old cutting of C.v. 'David Eason' that was in full bloom and was well bushed out in a six inch diameter sized pot won the "Best Plant in the Show" award of the Annual Flower Show of the New England Region of the American Rock Garden Society held in June 1975. The plant was started as a one-inch cutting in early October 1974 and had been raised under fluorescent lights indoors for the entire winter. During the first eight months growth this cutting came into bloom on four separate occasions. This is not an unusual situation as I have noticed approximately thirty different cultivars of Calluna vulgaris that have performed with similar results during the past five years.

I enclose a few photos of young heaths in my yard.

Donald L. Hughes

Comment: Three superb pictures show a pool round which are growing many of the favourites but with two unknown to me, 'Westphalia' and 'Black Beauty'; a group of "young heathers" offset by artemisia, thyme and dwarf Scots pine; and a view of a nursery bed with two-year olds in the foreground. The pictures were taken in August 1975.



1. In Angwin, California, December 31, 1975

This has been a good year for my heathers. This morning a dry freezing wind has turned the bird bath to ice and threatens to pull the moisture out of every leaf and bud, but good old Erica x darleyensis goes right on blooming as if nothing could stop it. Mine come into full bloom about the middle of December and continue through January. We have little bouquets of blossom scattered through the house for our enjoyment as well as to catch the attention of visitors. I also keep a sprig of blossoms on my office desk and I work diligently at convincing people that they can grow heather here. I have propagated more than 500 E x darleyensis plants over the past several years and have given them to friends, traded them to the local nurseries and sold them to landscape contractors. This is the one heather I can be confident that most people can grow successfully here. I'm certain there are others and am testing a number of Ericas and Callunas to find out which are most suitable for this climate. Our long dry summer and fall is the greatest hazard but I am growing Erica carnea cultivars and quite a number of Calluna vulgaris cultivars in partial shade with generous watering. Of the 25 or so cultivars that I am growing besides E x darleyensis the ones that appear to be doing particularly well are E x darleyensis 'Arthur Johnson', C.v. 'Sister Anne', C.v. 'Aureifolia' and C.v. 'Nana Compacta'.

I enjoy reading about the activities of The Heather Society even though I cannot attend the meetings. I enjoy an occasional visit to the Mannings' Heather Farm which is about 50 miles closer to the ocean than I am, and they are able to grow a much wider variety of cultivars in that mild climate, even some beautiful Cape Heaths. I am determined to find a series of cultivars that do well in my climate and then promote them for others to enjoy also.

Lloyd E. Eighme.

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Calluna vulgaris 'Bransdale White'

Success has followed my appeal in the Summer Bulletin for help in getting a plant of this variety! A note from our indefatigable Secretary told me that the Earl of Feversham's home was Nawton Towers near Helmsley and that The Northern Gardener had listed it among the "Open Gardens". What better excuse for a trip from Midlands to the North Yorkshire moors with a good map-reading navigator? All the lanes are lovely, even the one that did NOT lead to the right place. Enquiries for the Head Gardener sent me back to Helmsley Garden Centre (visible from the A170 --- and passed many times) open on Saturday afternoons. Another look at Bransdale itself and those lovely villages and a picnic over a thousand feet up surrounded by miles of heather (purple) and back to Helmsley to meet the late Earl of Feversham's original Head Gardener, Mr. Mitchell, who had encouraged the beaters and gamekeepers to look for a white heather and bring him some! Mr. Mitchell himself had propagated the original cuttings and had brought them on every year since --- a real heather enthusiast with the sort of plants that can only have been grown with dedication! The least I can do is to exhort fellow members never to pass Helmsley Garden Centre on Saturday afternoons or Nawton Towers Gardens on weekdays without going in - if you love your heathers!

Des Oliver, Leicester.

FROM HAROLD TO PAT

Although they never met, a deep friendship grew up between two of our Vice-Presidents, Mr. Harold Copeland of Chatham, Massachusetts and Mr. P. S. Patrick. The friendship continued to the end of their lives, for Mr. Copeland died within two months of "Pat".

This I would not have known but for the good fortune that brought to our Society a new member, Mrs. Eleanor Finlayson of Chatham, Massachusetts, who wrote that she wished to join as a tribute to "the late Harold Copeland as his friend and student".

I wrote at once and received the news that he had died on December 17th 1974, and had left her all his Heather Society Year Books which she treasured. Looking through the Index to

the Year Books 1963-72, I saw that she would have found in 1966, 1967 and 1971 an article and two extracts from Mr. Copeland's letters which Mr. Patrick had published. She spoke of his most beautiful garden on Cape Cod and grieved that after his death it had been put up for sale.

As keeper of many of our Society's records (and this includes some invaluable letters) I have one which Mr. Copeland wrote to Pat in September 1972. He writes pleasantly of Pamela Harper who was finding Virginia "the wettest and hottest place she has ever lived in --- an awful combination for growing heathers" but against this he adds "I know the locality must be ideal in many ways -- the country is truly beautiful as I know from having been there years ago."

He speaks of the value of the permanence of a home and garden. "When Mrs. Copeland and I began life together and purchased a house, we had the supreme satisfaction of knowing that all we did on the house or the grounds would be ours to enjoy for ever if we wished. It was the same story here when we retired. We set out for example a hundred holly plants and knew we would see them grow each year, just as long as we lived.

"Peonies comprised one of my first loves. I recall a pretty story concerning peonies. A plant of about 30 pure white blooms was near the street. A little lad of about 6 years was walking by. He stopped, approached the plant and took off his cap and stood to gaze. Lucky is the grown man who can retain the child's awe."

I have no letters from "Pat" to "Harold", but this reference to Pat's new (and last) home shows what Pat must have written to him.

"We are most happy for you in your new location. A pretty Sussex village with pond and common and land for a garden. Truly, you've come into your own again".

A last tribute was to his own heathers:

"The heather garden always has beauty and interest. The foliage cultivars like 'Orange Queen' are like lanterns midst the many hues of green. Calluna v. 'Hibernica' and 'Hiemalis' are smothered with flowers and Daboecia cantabrica 'Globosa' is a white drift. A word in praise of it. Since first set out as small plants this cultivar has excelled and has been remarked upon by all visitors. Not only are the flowers larger and rounder than Dab.c 'Alba' but the plants are literally smothered in bloom. Moreover, it has been our experience in the past 6 years that 'Globosa' is the hardier."

He ends:- "It's been nice talking with you. All good things attend thee.

Harold."

C.I. MacLeod.

#### From your Letters.

Z1: Mr. D. Lounsgair, Edinburgh

As a recent new member I have derived great pleasure from the Year Book and the Bulletins. Being a Scot, heathers mean a lot to me and are a constant reminder of my youthful days spent camping in the Cairngorms.

Z3: Mr. R. Harrison of Scarborough, also a new member, sent two beautiful pictures of the Lakeland Horticultural Society's garden, Holehird, Windermere. "This is the work of a few dedicated amateurs", he says.

(N.B. See Northern Group Programme for A Lakeland Weekend, May 15/16)

Z7: "We never let a member go". This is how I have endorsed a letter from Mrs. MacRostie (Kent) whose husband she enrolled as a birthday present in 1968. As he was in the RAF abroad, his membership lapsed. Seven years to the very day of his first joining, came a request from his wife for another application form. Instead, I sent his Year Book knowing it was for his birthday. His wife replied: "Fine marks for initiative. I was so grateful to you and so delighted you'd remembered. At last we've a small house of our own and John has started another heather garden."

To get a letter like that does much to make up for one from another whose name I won't mention. "I wish to resign membership and therefore return the Bulletin. I'm afraid I do not find it contains much that I want." But let us be cheerful!

- Z7: Mrs. Wendy Mende, Lamberhurst, Kent. "The Bulletins are a great delight to me -- and most helpful to more active friends."
- Z7: Mr. T.W. Giles, London. "I am not able to get to meetings and shows but I still feel that membership of the Heather Society is very worth while if only for the Year Book and Bulletins."
- Z8: Mr. Wm. Birchell of Weston-Super-Mare, writing his annual letter, says "Your help and suggestions have been very much appreciated - (and acted upon). I make a pilgrimage to the North York moors every early September. I worship there because it is my idea of heaven."
- Z8: The next extract amused me. Mrs. E. T. Jones (whose article on the Benjamin Maund Botanic Garden we published last autumn) wrote to give the correct pronunciation of our next Conference Centre: Maentwrog as "Mine Turog". Better still, she gave me an anecdote of her small son who years ago while motoring past a bakery with the solitary word "TUROG" on it, asked "Is that Welsh for HOVIS?" (Now I'm wondering what TUROG actually means!)
- Z8: Mr. H.J. Cole taking note of the invitation to members who were willing to have visitors to let me know, wrote to say that Furzey Gardens, Minstead, Near Lyndhurst, Hants is open to the public every day except Christmas. The brochure he sent is very attractive. I have always thought that a visit arranged by the Society would be well worth-while. The ball is now in the court of the local group! A visit has been planned for April.
- Z6: Another thing mentioned in the last Bulletin was that the Editor was asking for members' three favourite heathers. Sad to say, Dr. G.E. Turfitt sent his choice to me, too late to be included. But I give them to you now:
1. E. x darleyensis 'Arthur Johnson'
  2. C. v. 'Sunset'
  3. E. vagans 'Mrs. D. F. Maxwell'
- It will be interesting to see whether he has "picked a winner".
- Z9: Finally, besides the two USA letters set out in full in the Members' Forum, it was good to have a note from Mr. B.G. Dent of Tasmania (and how we wish we could interest more people living in New Zealand and Australia). He repeats what so many of those quoted above have said: "I am finding the Bulletins and last year's Year Book very interesting indeed and am glad I have become a member of the Society".

#### ----- OBITUARY

It is with deep regret that we record the death of one of our Founder members, Mr. Wm. S. Dobson (senior) of Colinton, Edinburgh.

His son writes:

"One of his greatest joys was his heather garden and he spread his tremendous enthusiasm amongst so many of his neighbours and friends". He speaks of his father's "beloved Pentland Hills" and the heather banks there where he first discovered Cal. v. 'Murielle Dobson' which he named after his wife.

Others of his finds that we call to mind are the cinereas 'Hailstones' and 'Morning Glow', both found in Lewis, and the fantastic double-coloured Cal. v. 'Joseph's Coat'..

Our Slide Library is fortunate in having several pictures of his garden.

# DIARY OF EVENTS

- March 18: Norfolk Branch Meeting, Taverham Village Hall, 7.30 p.m.
- March 20: Harlow Car Group 2 garden visits.
- March 21: Norfolk Branch visit Heathwood Nurseries (Neil Brummage)
- March 21: Mid Southern visit Mr. Malin's garden, Worthing 3 p.m.
- March 22: West of Scotland AGM, Glasgow College of Technology, 7.30 p.m.
- April 3: South West Group to Furzey Gardens, Minstead, Lyndhurst
- April 22: Sheffield Group, Friends Meeting House, Hartshead, 7.30 p.m.
- May 15/16: Northern Group, Lakeland Week-end.
- May 22: Mid Southern visit Yew Trees, Orchardlea and Flima Dene, 2.30 p.m.
- May 23: Midlands Group to Leicester Univ. Bot. Gdn. (see below)
- May 26/28: Chelsea Flower Show. 4 tickets still available, see Mrs. MacLeod.
- June 12: S.W. Group to Wansdyke Conifers, Devizes, Wilts.
- June 14: West of Scotland to Mr. & Mrs. Bezzant's garden, Bearsden, evening.
- June 17: Norfolk Branch Meeting, Taverham 7.30 p.m.
- July 13: HEATHER SOCIETY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 3 p.m. RHS COMMITTEE ROOM.
- August 20/22: HEATHER SOCIETY CONFERENCE, Snowdonia.
- August 29: West of Scotland visit to a nursery.
- Sept. 7/8: RHS Heather Competitions, schedules from RHS Secretary, Vincent Square.
- Sept. 11/12: Sheffield Group Display of Heathers, Sheffield Botanic Garden
- Sept. 28/30: RHS Great Autumn Show, 6 tickets available, see to Mrs. MacLeod.

## MIDLANDS VISIT, 3 pm. Sunday, May 23

On May 23rd, invitation to a guided tour of the extensive heather collection of Leicester University Botanical Gardens at Oadby, just outside Leicester. Meet at the main entrance of Beaumont Hall in Stoughton Drive South, a turning to the East off the South-bound lane of the A6 opposite to the race course. Afterwards we shall visit the garden of our member Mr. D. B. Oliver at 27 Valentine Road, Leicester.

New members will be particularly welcome. PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS IS THE ONLY NOTICE.

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The Winter Flowering Heath Competition was held on Tuesday & Wednesday February 17/18 at the RHS. Hall.

The Heather Society's stand this year showed an innovation in that Windlesham Court Nurseries whose displays during 1975 won high praise, kindly agreed to furnish six large bowls with an assortment of plants of ericas and callunas, while two of our non-nurseryman members, Major General Turpin and Mr. Alan Taylor supplied cut bloom for vases.

We hope to include a full account in the next bulletin.