

Editor: Mrs. Diane H. Jones, Otters' Court, West Camel, Nr. Yeovil, Som., BA22 7QF.

As I sit preparing this bulletin for the printer I am fortunate to be able to look out at the garden and derive 'inspiration' from the contrasting colours of the winter heathers which are coming into bloom; and there is comfort in the fact that whatever the weather, our heather garden will gradually become more colourful during the next couple of months. The arrival of spring also means a resumption of group activities when members can visit each other's gardens, talk about heathers and exchange knowledge and ideas. It was therefore a real pleasure to hear that a new group in the North East is being formed and we wish them every success.

For those members who live in the more remote parts of the country and are unable to join a local group, perhaps you would welcome visits from fellow members on holiday in your area? One member at St. Erth in Cornwall certainly would (see Scrap Bowl).

I do wish you all a very happy 1980, and promise you a warm welcome if you call in at West Camel whilst on your travels.

Diane Jones.

10th ANNUAL CONFERENCE - 12th-15th September 1980

The following outline programme has been arranged:-

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| Friday evening | Illustrated talk "The Scenery & Mountain Flora of Scotland"
by Mr. J.R. Aitken, Orchardbank Nursery, Perth. |
| Saturday a.m. | Illustrated talk "The Gardens of the National Trust for Scotland"
by Mr. J.E. Robson, Gardens Advisor to the National Trust for Scotland. |
| | Annual General Meeting |
| Saturday p.m. | Choice of Visits |
| Evening | Open Forum |
| Sunday a.m. | Illustrated talk on "Ericaceae" by Mr. Alfred Evans, assistant curator of
the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh & author of "The Peat Garden and its
Plants". |
| | Illustrated talk on "Heathers at Edinburgh" by Mr. Ronald
McBeath of the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh. |
| Sunday p.m. | Escorted tour of the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh with Mr. Evans
and Mr. McBeath, the above speakers. |
| Monday a.m. | Disperse. |

The estimated all-inclusive cost of the weekend is likely to be in the region of:-

Friday afternoon to Monday morning £37.00

Friday afternoon to Sunday afternoon £27.00

Bookings should be made by sending £2.00 per mailing whether for one person or for several at the same address to the following address: Mrs. A.C. Duvall, Sandacre, Pine Ridge Drive, Lower Bourne, Farnham, Surrey. This sum is to cover administrative costs and is not a deposit on the Conference fee (cheques to be made payable to "The Heather Society Conference"). (There are no ground floor rooms available).

Further details and the exact scale of charges will be published in the Summer Bulletin.

SUBSCRIPTIONS by COVENANT

In last year's Summer Bulletin we explained how the Society (a registered charity) can benefit from Covenanted subscriptions. In real terms your £4. subscription becomes £5.71 to the Society (or £3. becomes £4.29) quite legally. If you pay tax at the standard rate and wish to pay your subscription by covenant, you simply fill in a form agreeing to pay your subscription annually for 7 years and the Treasurer does the rest. The Income Tax Authorities then pay back to the Society that part of your tax payment which left you with the money to pay your subscription. I have just received a cheque for £131. from the Income Tax office for covenanted subscriptions in the last tax year. Completing that tax form was one of the pleasures of life!

If you would like to help the Society's funds in this way, then write to me requesting a Covenant Form - my address is on the enclosed order form. I look forward to hearing from you.

Des Oliver.

SECRETARY'S NOTES

Our administrative office in Reading, Harvest House, was the unfortunate victim of mindless vandalism when hooligans broke in shortly before daybreak on January 12th. They ransacked the room shared by our Society and two others and, after stealing radio & cassette players belonging to the girls, started fires which eventually completely gutted this room and severely damaged two others. Large typewriters and telephones were reduced to blobs of melted plastic and much of the three storey building was affected by smoke. Happily for us, none of the Heather Society records were lost - (although the metal filing cabinets which held them were charred) - and, being a Saturday, all cheques had been banked and correspondence dealt with to date. Our sympathy goes to all members of the staff and thanks especially to 20 year old Karyn Lambie who looks after our Society and who worked in extremely unpleasant conditions transferring documents and records from the cabinets to temporary accommodation. It is not thought that members will have been affected by this disaster, and, with the help of a big team of builders, decorators and suppliers, everything was very quickly returned to normal. However, we are now rather short of the 1978 Year Book and would appreciate the return of any spare copy to Harvest House, particularly if anyone resigns and feels they will have no further need for it.

I understand that some members have not yet cancelled their old Bankers' Order with Barclays and that others are still paying at the old rate. These problems add unnecessarily to our administrative work, so please do remember that the present subscription is £3.00 single and £4.00 joint, and that our account is with the National Westminster Bank in Reading.

Knowing how difficult it is for members living far from London to enter their plants in the Heather Competitions held at the RHS, I would like to hear from anyone willing to organise similar competitions in provincial towns in conjunction with local shows. I hear, for instance, that there is a special "Society" marquee at the Southport Show, where space is offered free to any group with the initiative to mount an exhibit. In Harrogate too at the Spring & Autumn Shows, both space and prizes are offered, if local members would get together to plan a competition, giving, I hope, plenty of publicity to our Society!

I am sure that many of you attending the Edinburgh Conference will be taking the opportunity of seeing the splendours of Scotland and will make a real holiday of it by visiting as many places as possible en route - I know I shall!

Pamela Lee

NORTH EAST

With a view to stimulating interest in this area we held two slide show evenings. These were fairly well attended and much enjoyed.

As a follow up to these evenings, Mr. & Mrs. Jim Shipp of Corbridge (long standing members of the Society) invited us to visit their garden in September. Some 14 heather enthusiasts went along and had an enjoyable afternoon. Refreshments were kindly provided by Marion Shipp and this was followed by some of Jim's slides showing their garden through the seasons. As a direct result several new members joined the Society and it is hoped further outings will be arranged in 1980. Suggestions from members in the North East would be welcome. Please write to us at 27 Cresswell Drive, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne, or telephone Gosforth 853760.

David & Doris McArthur,

NORTHERN

Our autumn meeting of the Group was held in the gardens of The Northern Horticultural Society at Harlow Car on Saturday September 12th. David Small was our guest speaker and chose 'Cape Heaths' as his subject. He is one of the few specialist growers of Cape Heaths in this country. His delightful and authoritative illustrated talk on these little known South African species held the close attention of his audience and his enthusiasm did much to encourage members with greenhouse facilities to start collecting. An attractive representative collection was on display.

The 'bring and buy' sale which is a regular feature of our Harlow Car meetings was well supported. David generously donated the display plants.

At the close of the proceedings, members took the opportunity to explore the gardens and to inspect the weed-free heather trials plot where *E. cinerea* plantings provided large areas of vivid colour in spite of the effects of the severe 78/9 winter conditions.

The Spring 1980 meeting will be held at Harlow Car on March 22nd when Maj.Gen. Turpin will be the guest. A good attendance is anticipated for what should be an outstanding occasion.

Albert Julian.

MIDLANDS

For our meeting on 15th September, we were fortunate to be favoured by a beautiful sunny day when we enjoyed a picnic and walk in Sutton Park and for our two garden visits at Four Oaks, Sutton Coldfield.

Unfortunately, there were many rival functions being held on that day so only eleven members were able to join us. Those who did were able to enjoy their picnic in the pleasant surroundings of Sutton Park. Afterwards we strolled through the heather which grows wild in the Park, and which consists mainly of *Calluna vulgaris*, but we also found a number of examples of *E. tetralix*.

After leaving the Park, we paid a most enjoyable visit to the gardens of Mr. & Mrs. Lamont. This is a formal garden in a quiet setting where good use has been made of heathers and conifers.

Then, at the invitation of Miss Sheila Bailey, one of our own members, we were entertained to tea in her lovely old-world garden containing many mature trees, shrubs and heathers. Our most sincere thanks go to Miss Bailey for her hospitality.

This report would be incomplete without a mention of an incident which occurred in Sutton Park. The Manager of the Park introduced himself to us after seeing our "Heather Society" notice. He was interested to learn that such a Society existed as the Park Authority is considering replanting an area with heather which was ploughed up during World War II for agricultural purposes and is seeking advice. We are arranging to provide the necessary advice through the Society and hope to keep in touch with this project which has such a worthy aim.

Winter Meeting It was gratifying to have such a good attendance for this first meeting at our new venue Winterbourne House on the 23rd November. This meeting proved to be a great success and the general atmosphere was comfortable and relaxed. Twenty six members attended but unfortunately our Group Organiser Harold Street and his wife Margaret, were unable to be with us as they had not returned from their travels abroad.

We had a most interesting and informative talk by Philip Brown who discussed in detail the many specimens of shrubs which he had brought to illustrate his subject "Shrubs for growing with heathers". At this meeting, time was given for a full discussion of our 1980 programme and the resulting dates and venues are set out below:-

Friday 21st March - 7.30 p.m. at Winterbourne House, 56 Edgbaston Park Rd., Edgbaston, B'ham. We are hoping to obtain the loan of a film produced by the Bank of Scotland showing the Edinburgh Botanic Gardens. This has a duration of approx. 30 mins., the remainder of the evening being taken up by a panel of heather enthusiasts answering your questions. Please come prepared with questions.

Saturday 31st May - 6 p.m. at Winterbourne. This will be a social evening including a tour of the University Botanic Garden conducted by David Radley, the Curator, followed by a buffet supper in the House. Anyone is welcome but prior notice would be helpful.

Sunday 28th September - A visit to a heather garden near Upton-on-Severn is planned followed by tea with Mr. & Mrs. Everett at Crossway Green. Further details later.

Friday 21st November - 7.30 p.m. at Winterbourne. The subject has yet to be arranged. Copies of this programme are available - S.A.E. to me at The Spinney, Little Hay, Lichfield, Staffs. WS14 0QD. TEL: 0543 481183.

Alan Dudley.

MID-SOUTHERN

I look forward to meeting members again when we open the season at Dorking on March 29th, with a showing of slides by our Chairman. After tea at the hall (see Diary), Mr. & Mrs. Nicholson have kindly invited us to see their garden close by on the Westcott Road (not in the neighbouring village as wrongly stated earlier).

The second gathering of the year will be especially attractive to Group 7 members living in East Sussex, Kent and East Surrey, as we will be visiting David McClintock at "Bracken Hill", Platt Kent on May 3rd (particularly to view his complete collection of E x darleyensis) - all the named ones and all Mrs. Parris' and Mr. Woolner's too. You are recommended to bring past Year Books with Mrs. Parris' articles in and the 1980 edition. After a picnic lunch in the garden (please bring food - drinks will be provided), we will proceed to Mr. & Mrs. R. Cameron's "Great Comp" on the first day that this large garden - further developed and improved each year - is open to the public.

Pamela Lee.

SOUTH WEST

As reported in the Autumn Bulletin, our first meeting of the year is at Lytchett Matravers Village Hall on the 22nd March at 2 p.m., when we shall hear Mrs. R. Tanner (Rachel Maxwell) talk about her father D.F. Maxwell. Refreshments will be available. Members from other Groups will be most welcome.

A coach trip to Wisley is being planned for Saturday August 30th, departing from Poole and calling at Wimbourne, Ringwood and Southampton. Will all those interested contact me as soon as possible. The cost of the coach trip plus entry to Wisley will be approx. £3. per head. Members from other Groups will be welcome to join us for the journey and/or at Wisley. Final arrangements will be in the Summer Bulletin.

There are other meetings/visits being planned for 1980 but they have not yet been finalised. Local members will be informed by the usual circular.

Finally, I have had several requests to give talks on heathers in the New Forest area. If members feel that they may be available to talk on this subject, then perhaps they would let me know so that I may compile a list of speakers. May I wish you all the best for 1980.

Phil Joyner.

OVERSEAS - PACIFIC NORTHWEST (USA/CANADA)

Our membership in November '79 stands at 78 including 19 joint husband and wife memberships bringing the total to 97. These are in British Columbia, California, Oregon and Washington, with 7 members on the East Coast of the U.S.A. and one in Alaska. Mrs. Ada Turner, one of our members in Oregon, whose long life devoted to horticulture began with her training at the Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh, has recently celebrated her 100th birthday. Congratulations and best wishes from all of us.

Dorothy Metheny.

COUNTERACTING LIME

The 1967 Year Book included an article by Mr. C.H. Prew on the use of Epsom Salts (magnesium Sulphate) to counteract lime in the soil. He had found that this did much to prevent chlorosis and considered that it was beneficial for three reasons. Firstly, it is an essential element in the constitution of chlorophyll; secondly, there is evidence to suggest that for a soil to have a high nutritional value the ratio of magnesium to calcium needs to be above a certain level; and thirdly, the magnesium sulphate slowly converts calcium carbonate to calcium sulphate which does not produce alkalinity nor react with iron.

Mr. Van de Laar the Dutch heather grower, in his recent book 'The Heather Garden', suggests the use of Kieserite which is apparently a form of magnesium sulphate and is stronger than Epsom Salts.

Last Spring I had to move my heathers from Devon (where the soil was pH5.5) to a garden near Cirencester in the Cotswolds. A test with a cheap testing kit showed a pH of about 6.75 which was not as high as I had expected since the soil contains much broken yellow Cotswold stone and the surrounding lanes abound with the lime-loving scabious and Travellers Joy. The local nurserymen say that they cannot grow lime-hating heathers and rhododendrons.

Many of my heathers had suffered quite badly in the winter of 78/79, and, having been uprooted and transported in April, they were not at all in the best of condition. In planting them I mixed in no more peat than one would normally use when planting any shrubs, followed by a watering with a weak solution of Sequestrene. However, I forked in a fair amount of Kieserite powder and watered twice with it during the summer. As a result, after eight months all the heathers (14 species plus several summer and winter hybrids) have flourished and look better than they ever did in Devon. The foliage is a rich green with no sign of chlorosis, and even E. cinerea and E. ciliaris have made good growth and look really healthy. I am now experimenting with rhododendrons.

I do not wish to make exaggerated claims for Kieserite on the strength of my experience over less than one year, but I think it would be well worth a trial by those who wish to grow the lime-hating heathers on soil which is not suitably acid. Not the least attractive aspect of Kieserite, compared with Sequestrene, is its cheapness. It can be obtained from Chempack Products of Brewhouse Lane, Hertford, SG14 1JS and quite recently was only £1.20 for 7lbs. plus carriage. I fork in the powder at the rate of one handful to a square yard and for watering use the same amount in 2 gallons of water.

Lionel R. Woolner.

SCRAP BOWL - Titbits of news from members

Similar seedlings - Gen. Turpin is of course quite right in his reply in the Autumn Bulletin to my original note, except that it never entered my head to be provocative! I have endlessly laboured the point that the position of a seedling is no proof of its parentage, notably perhaps with E. carnea 'Pink Spangles'. Nor of course can there be any proof that apparently identical seedlings nestling beneath mats of Calluna Vulgaris 'Alba Plena' derive from that plant, although the chances that they do must be considerable. 'Isobel Hughes' is the only one I know that was actually named, and it is a distinct creation and NOT 'Alba Plena'. But until a detectable difference appears, for practical purposes it must yield to 'Alba Plena'. To add to my tally E. cinerea 'C.G. Best' has done it again; var. schizopetala has now produced three seedlings; and Daboecia cantabrica var bicolor, three. Indeed when more than one plant appears of such close similarity, a botanical classification, varietal name, should be used to cover them all - and both these names have been formally published and are valid.

David McClintock.

Calluna vulgaris 'Isobel Frye' - An interesting colour foliage seedling was seen in my garden in a bed of 'Sister Anne' in 1975 and my wife and I decided to take cuttings to see how it would grow and develop. The cuttings grew rapidly after potting-on, covering the tops of 3" pots in four months. The plants continued to grow rapidly after planting out, reaching 12" across in two years and forming a dense mat of orange/yellow foliage 4" high which retains its good looks throughout the winter and summer and is an ideal ground cover. The cultivar is very similar in growth to 'Sister Anne' but does not have downy foliage. The foliage is yellow/green overlaid with greyed orange changing gradually to a red/brown overlay in winter. The flower spikes are numerous, averaging 1½" in length, with a few longer spikes. The flower colour is in the red/purple group RHS 65a (equivalent to Heather Society Colour Chart H8.Ed.), the flower period August/September, height approx. 4".

M.G. Frye Zone 6.

Heathers on the Lizard peninsula - At the Annual Conference at Weymouth at the end of August Dr. S. Chapman mentioned that Erica ciliaris grows wild on the Lizard peninsula, in addition to other well-known localities in Cornwall.

Near the end of September, when we were staying at Cadgwith near the Lizard, we spent some time looking for unusual heathers on Goonhilly Downs, and, with the help of Dr. D.E. Coombe of Cambridge, who has recently become a member of the Heather Society, we managed to find both E. ciliaris and E.x watsonii. And so within an area of less than three miles radius no less than seven different heathers are growing wild: Calluna vulgaris, E. ciliaris, E. cinerea, E. tetralix, E. vagans, E.x watsonii, and E. williamsii. There is probably nowhere else in the British Isles, except Connemara in Western Ireland, where so many different heathers can be found growing so close together in the wild.

Pat Turpin.

Extending a heather garden - For some years now I have been hoping to extend my small collection of heathers and having cleared some ground to lay mains water I think I have found the sunniest site in my otherwise wooded and somewhat neglected garden. I have brought in local stone from the moor to give the area some additional character. Although there is still some considerable landscaping to do to this 1500 sq.yd. area, I am hoping to start planting in the Autumn. With this in mind I have a growing nursery bed of over 50 varieties of heather including some Cape Heaths which I think might well survive, between 20 and 40 plants in each variety brought on from rooted cuttings.

I would welcome the advice of any member on holiday in this part of Cornwall (St. Erth, Near Hayle) on how to obtain the maximum interest from the site and also their ideas on the most harmonious plant associations. (A telephone call prior to a visit would be appreciated - Tel: Hayle 752062).

Roger Thomas Zone 8.

Propagation of Heathers - On Sunday 6th January 1980 the Gardeners' Question Time team of Fred Loads, Bill Sowerbutts and Professor Alan Gemmell were asked by Mrs. Campbell of Norwich (not I believe a member) about propagating heathers. The team gave her some useful advice on the best times to take cuttings of winter and summer-flowering heathers, stressed the importance of a close atmosphere until the cuttings have rooted, and pointed out the value of using soil in which heathers have been growing in order to ensure that mycorrhiza are present in the rooting compost.

What's happened to L.E. Underwood? - In Terry Underhill's book "Heaths & Heathers" (1971) p.182 E. tetralix 'L.E. Underwood's' flower is quoted as apricot in colour, and it is stated - "from the leaves emerge terra cotta buds which open into apricot flowers." There is no mention of pink. I have also seen plants at a garden centre with flowers of this colour. In Brian & Valerie Proudley's book "Heathers in Colour" (1974) p.156 the flower description is "light salmon-pink from apricot buds." In the "Pocket Guide to Heather Gardening" (1977) it is said on p.24 "in bud the colour is apricot, opening to shell pink." Also in a recent nurseryman's catalogue the flowers are described as "salmon buds opening to bright plum red" and plants from this nursery in my garden produced flowers so described. There was no sign of apricot in bud or later. How is it that the apricot has disappeared and pink appeared instead?

A.P.Livingstone, Newcastle.

To G.P. Baker, who practices the doctrine here preached.

Hast thou plants in plenty say of a species rich and rare?

Don't forget to give away those thine affluence can spare.

Gardening friends delight will feel when the gracious flower they greet

As its opening buds reveal dainty blossoms shyly sweet.

Then gratitude takes up the pen to thank you; and with shining eyes

You read, your treasure blooms again 'neath other's care and other skies.

And then should any evil chance your garden of its pets bereave

You are no slave of circumstance. A thought will bid you cease to grieve.

For if you gave you will be given the plant you lost. And you'll perceive

It is the rule approved of Heaven that he who giveth shall receive.

G. Yeld 1856-1951.

Plant catalogues - Few people appreciate the historical value of catalogues of auctions, bookshops...and nurserymen. There are collections of the latter at for example Kew, the Botany Library of the British Museum, the RHS Lindley Library, Edinburgh Botanic Garden, Cambridge Botanic Garden, Bath (I believe) and no doubt in other establishments. But all could do with more of all ages and naturally need a regular supply of current lists. So, seek out a suitable home for what you might otherwise have waste-basketed. The RHS also has an unpublicised service for Fellows of trying to find places where wanted plants can be obtained. For this it keeps a range of all catalogues it can get, which are later passed to the Lindley Library. The Registrar of Heathers, c/o Harvest Hse. is always saying how hampered he is by being practically never sent a catalogue (which he in turn passes to the Lindley). Nurserymen who do not send theirs to the RHS are likely to be missing orders. If two such recipients is too much to put on their regular mailing lists, one copy to the Registrar could serve both purposes. - David McClintock.

WANTED please! A source of supply for *Calluna vulgaris* 'Minty' (St. Kilda) for myself and some German friends.

Hugh Nicholson, Zone 7.

DIARY OF EVENTS

- Mar. 1st South West - Spring Flower Show, Cannington, Nr. Bridgwater, 2 p.m.
(NB. Not a Group visit but members may find this show of interest).
- Mar. 21st Midlands Group meeting, 7.30 p.m. (See Group News).
- Mar. 22nd Northern Group meeting at Harlow Car.
- Mar. " South West Group - Talk on 'The life and work of D.F. Maxwell' (See Group News).
- Mar. 29th Mid Southern Group, Friends Meeting House, South St. Dorking, 2pm. (See Group News).
- Apr. 27th South West Group. Visit to Hilliers Arboretum, 2 p.m.
- May 3rd Mid Southern Group - Visit two gardens at Platt, Kent (See Group News).
- May 21st South West - Mrs. Maginess' garden at Broadstone open in aid of RUKBA - Royal United Kingdom Beneficent Association, 2 pm - 5.30 pm.
- May 21/23. Chelsea Flower Show - (S.A.E. for tickets to Pamela Lee, "Birches", Kingswood Firs, Grayshott, Hindhead, Surrey).
- May 31st Midlands Group Social evening 6 p.m. (See Group News).
- June 7th South West Group - Visit to Wansdyke Nursery, Devizes. 2 p.m.
- June 29th South West Group - Visit to Showerings garden, Shepton Mallet.