

THE HEATHER SOCIETY BULLETIN

Vol.3 No.4

AUTUMN 1981

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

We have been fortunate this autumn to have had two short 'breaks' away, the first at our Society's Annual Conference at Loughborough and the second at the beginning of October on the Lizard peninsula in Cornwall.

The Annual Conference this year was the 8th conference we have attended, and what an enjoyable and informative weekend it was. We met 'old' friends and made new ones and talked about heathers at breakfast, lunch and dinner - as always we came away refreshed by the friendly atmosphere.

Our four days on the Lizard were equally enjoyable and had a surprise in store. We spent one day with our Chairman Pat Turpin and his wife Cherry tramping the heathland above Kynance Cove and on Goonhilly Downs to see the wild plants of E.x williamsii and E.x watsonii known to be on the Lizard peninsula. Our Chairman's careful navigation with the aid of a compass found examples of both these hybrids which was exciting; but then at the end of the afternoon when we had moved to another site to see an unusually dark-coloured E.vagans, Cherry Turpin suddenly saw at her feet a plant which looked suspiciously like the only known wild specimen of E.x williamsii. Closer examination showed that it was indeed the rare hybrid. The plant is about 15 inches across and the flowers are a pale pink (H8), rather paler than those of the cultivar 'Gwasas'. What excitement! Maybe there are others too waiting to be found. (See SCRAP BOWL item on this hybrid for some background information) At the end of the day we also realised that we had seen on the Lizard within a few square miles all 5 species of heather native to the mainland of Great Britain i.e. E.vagans, E.tetralix, E.ciliaris, E.cinerea, and Calluna vulgaris including the two naturally occurring hybrids.

Diane Jones

A.G.M. - Loughborough University, 13th September, 1981

The President, Vice-President, Officers and the Auditor of the Society were all re-elected, as were the three Council members retiring by rotation, Mr. D.B. Oliver, Mr. F. Culley and Mr. A.W. Jones. The Chairman reluctantly accepted the resignation of Mrs. M. Boxall from the Council and thanked her for her energetic services to the Society. The Chairman then welcomed two new members to the Council Mr. D. Small and Mr. D.H.E. Rope. He reported on the very encouraging increase in our membership to nearly 1,400, and the continuing work on the Heather Collections at Wisley and Plymouth.

In her report the Hon. Secretary paid tribute to the tireless work of our Chairman Pat Turpin, and the efficiency of our Administrator Ken Farrah who has relieved the Officers of so much work and worry since his appointment. Entries for the Heather Competitions at the R.H.S. Shows have continued to increase, and the work of the local Groups is flourishing with the addition of 3 new Groups in Newcastle, Home Counties North, and North Devon.

The Hon. Treasurer, Des Oliver, presented the Society's Accounts for the year ending 31st December 1980 and below is a summary of these accounts. If any member would like a full copy please write to the Treasurer with SAE.

Accounts for the year 1980

| | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| INCOME | Subscriptions and donations | £ 3,111 |
| | Profit on publications etc. | 538 |
| | Credit Balance from 1980 Conference | 239 |
| | Investment and bank interest | 606 |
| | Miscellaneous | 20 |
| | | <u>4,514</u> |
| EXPENDITURE | Year Book and Bulletins inc. postage | 1,115 |
| | Administration | 1,067 |
| | Miscellaneous | 293 |
| | | <u>2,475</u> |
| EXCESS INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE | | <u>2,039</u> |
| | | £ 4,514 |

The Balance Sheet shows a credit balance in the accumulated funds at 31st Dec. 1980 of £6,362

12th ANNUAL CONFERENCE 1982

As announced in the Summer Bulletin, arrangements are being made to hold the 1982 Conference at the Conference Centre of the University of Lancaster for the weekend of Friday, 3rd September to Monday, 6th September. A provisional price for Friday/Monday will be in the region of £50. Extra holiday accommodation at the University can be booked for an extended stay - details from Mr. Frank Culley, "Fairfield", 10 Jefferson Drive, Ulverston, Cumbria, LA12 9LU. enclosing a SAE.

Reserve these dates now in your 1982 diary. Further details will be published in the Spring Bulletin, but bookings may now be sent to Mr. Culley (£2 per mailing). The booking charge is to cover administrative costs and is not a deposit on the conference fee, cheques to be made payable to "Heather Society Conference".

1982 SUBSCRIPTIONS

All subscriptions are due on 1st January. These are at the same rate as last year - £3 for an individual membership and £4 for a family joint membership. We cannot, in the interests of economy, send out individual reminders that subscriptions are due, nor can we (as we would wish to do) acknowledge receipt of subscriptions paid unless those members requesting a receipt send SAE. Would members therefore please accept that the arrival of their Spring mailing is an acknowledgement of their continuing membership?

The Society greatly appreciates the help given to its finances by those members who sign the Covenant Form (see Editorial in the Spring Bulletin).

ALL ABOUT THE HEATHER SOCIETY

The leaflet which is available for potential new members has just been revised and all prices brought up to date. It contains a brief summary of the aims of the Society, the benefits of membership, literature available and an application form for membership. Printing costs make random distribution uneconomic but a copy should be given to anybody who might reasonably be expected to join us! We should be particularly glad of the help of Group organisers and nursery-men members in distributing these. A stamped (19p) self-addressed envelope to 7 Rossley Close, Highcliffe, Christchurch, BH23 4RR will bring you a supply - and the thanks of the Society.

R.H.S.SHOW - AUGUST 11TH & 12TH 1981

Daphne and Maurice Everett of Greenacres Nursery, Stourport-on-Severn, staged a splendid exhibit of heathers for the Heather Society Stand, which deservedly awarded a Banksian Silver Medal. The exhibit, which measured 12 by 8 feet, contained between 1,000 and 2,000 heathers of some 32 different cultivars with a few dwarf conifers to help set them off. These were chosen with great care and created a delightful effect. Very great interest was shown in the exhibit during the two days of the Show.

We are also grateful to Beryl and David Mayne, Denis Whisker, Jack London and Eric Wiseman who helped the Chairman and Mrs. Turpin man the Stand. A record number of 12 new members joined the Society during the two days.

The R.H.S. Competition for heathers from the open had been modified to include more Classes for vases and bowls of cut heathers in place of some of the Classes for plants, which have in the past tended to discourage some would-be exhibitors. In the 12 Classes there were 81 entries from 9 exhibitors.

- Class 1. Three distinct heathers in bloom, one vase/bowl of each. 4 Entries.
1st. Maj.Gen. P.G. Turpin. Calluna vulgaris 'Mair's Variety'
E.vagans 'St. Keverne'
E.cinerea 'Purpurea'
2nd. R. Foden. Calluna vulgaris 'Beoley Gold', 'Silver Queen' and 'Sir John Charrington'
- Class 2. Erica vagans, one vase/bowl. 9 Entries.
1st. Maj.Gen. P.G. Turpin. 'Mrs. D.F. Maxwell'
2nd. Maj.Gen. P.G. Turpin. Unnamed.
3rd. Mrs. D. Everett. 'Mrs. D.F. Maxwell'
- Class 3. Calluna vulgaris, a single flowered coloured cultivar, one vase/bowl. 7 Entries.
1st. Maj.Gen.P.G. Turpin. 'Fred J. Chapple'
2nd. B.G. London. 'Tenuis'
3rd. D. McClintock. Seedling - unnamed.
- Class 4. Calluna vulgaris, a double flowered coloured cultivar, one vase/bowl. 4 Entries.
1st. Maj.Gen. P.G. Turpin. 'Tib'
2nd. B.G. London. 'Tib'
3rd. Maj.Gen. P.G. Turpin. 'County Wicklow'
- Class 5. Calluna vulgaris, a single or double flowered white cultivar, one vase/bowl. 7 Entries.
1st. Maj.Gen. P.G. Turpin. 'Hammondii'
2nd. Maj.Gen. P.G. Turpin. 'Alba Plena'
3rd. Dr. V.H. Gray. 'Alba Rigida'
- Class 6. Erica cinerea, any cultivar, one vase/bowl. 19 Entries.
1st. B.G. London. 'Harry Fulcher'
2nd. Maj.Gen. P.G. Turpin. 'White Dale'
3rd. Maj.Gen. P.G. Turpin. 'Smith's Lawn'
4th. Maj.Gen. P.G. Turpin. 'Frances'
H.C. Maj.Gen. P.G. Turpin. 'Duncan Fraser'
- Class 7. Daboecia, any species, hybrid or cultivar, one vase/bowl. 8 Entries.
1st. Maj.Gen. P.G. Turpin. Unnamed
2nd. Dr. V.H. Gray. 'Alba'
3rd. B.G. London. 'Bicolor'
- Class 8. Any heather species or hybrid not specified above, one plant. 2 Entries.
1st. Maj.Gen. P.G. Turpin. E.x stuartii ECN 30
2nd. Maj.Gen. P.G. Turpin. E.x watsonii

Class 9. Any heather species or hybrid not specified above, one vase/bowl.
7 Entries.

- 1st. Maj.Gen. P.G. Turpin. E.mackaiana 'Plena'
2nd. Maj.Gen. P.G. Turpin. E.ciliaris
3rd. Maj.Gen. P.G. Turpin. E.x watsonii 'H. Maxwell'

Class 10. Any heather, one vase/bowl, to be judged for foliage effect.
9 Entries.

- 1st. Maj.Gen. P.G. Turpin. Calluna vulgaris 'Silver Queen'
2nd. Maj.Gen. P.G. Turpin. E.carnea 'Altaadena'
3rd. B.C. London. E.ciliaris 'Aurea'

Class 11. Any heather, one plant, to be judged for foliage effect. 3 Entries.

- 1st. Maj.Gen. P.G. Turpin. E.lusitanica 'George Hunt'

Class 12. Decorative Class - An arrangement of heathers suitable for a dressing table. (Other foliage may be used but heathers must predominate). 2 Entries.

- 1st. Mrs. P.G. Turpin.
2nd. Mrs. M. Boxall.

GROUP NEWS

NORTH EAST (NEWCASTLE)

In extremely good weather on May 30th we enjoyed a visit to the Lake District via Ullswater, reaching Holehird (the Lakeland R.H.S. Gardens) near Windermere in time to partake of a packed lunch. The wonderful assortment of established trees, ericas, azaleas and rhododendrons - many in flower - presented an ideal opportunity for many members to use their photographic skills. It was evident from the lush growth that the situation of the garden on a west facing slope, with an acid soil and good rainfall, accounted for some exceptional specimens. Members of the Lakeland R.H.S. were on hand to answer and discuss various aspects of the gardens, which can be thoroughly recommended for any other members of our Society to visit.

Our next call across the ferry on Lake Windermere was to Mr. Geoff Yates nursery at Far Sawrey where we were conducted around the area. We cannot but be impressed by Geoff Yates' enthusiasm and determination to overcome various soil and other difficulties, and we all wished him well in his efforts.

Our return via Ambleside enabled the party to take refreshment, and some members toured the Hayes gardens and nursery. We arrived back on Tyneside about 8.30 p.m. after a very enjoyable day.

On 19th September, by the kind invitation of one of our members Dr. R. Nichols, some 20 members visited his garden at Hamsterley Mill, Rowlands Gill. In this garden which Dr. Nichols has created it was interesting to observe how heathers and conifers can be planted to good effect in a mixed garden. Members were shown around and judging from the many questions to our host, it was obviously an interesting and informative visit. We were then welcomed by Mrs. Nichols to enjoy tea and samples of her good home baking. A vote of thanks was accorded our hosts and we look forward to our next get-together.

Next Meeting - This will be on Monday, 23rd November at 7.30 p.m. in the Methodist Church Hall, Ponteland. An interesting evening is promised with slides and a quiz, also a discussion about future events.

Edna Courtney

MIDLANDS

Two meetings have been held this summer. The first was at "Winterbourne" on May 16th when 28 members enjoyed a conducted walk round the Botanic Garden, followed by an excellent buffet supper provided by the ladies of the Group. The weather though not ideal, was much better than last year and the evening was a great success.

On 23rd August we were fortunate to have a lovely summer day for our visit to Crail Nursery at Newstead Abbey near Nottingham. We were also privileged to visit Mr. and Mrs. Groom's magnificent garden adjacent to the nursery. After this we moved on to Ravenshead to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Bob Rope, where we enjoyed seeing their garden, and were provided with a welcome cup of tea and cakes. This was a very successful event which attracted 28 members from places as far afield as Barnet, Stourbridge and Sheffield. Our sincere thanks to Bob and Joan Rope who had arranged the programme for us.

Future events - Our next meeting will be on November 20th at 7.30 p.m. at "Winterbourne" when Mr. Julian Swain will give a talk and demonstration on propagation.

Programme for 1982 - Please note the following dates. Also please note that any of the Society's members are always welcome at our meetings, but prior notice would be appreciated for catering purposes.

Friday, February 26th - 7.30 p.m. at "Winterbourne" when Des Oliver will show the Heather Society's slides.

Thursday, May 20th - An evening's entertainment will be arranged by Mr. Peter Lyons at his office and garden in Edgbaston.

Saturday, August 21st - We will be visiting the garden and "Heatherscaping" nursery of Mr. and Mrs. Leighton Jones.

Friday, November 19th - 7.30 p.m. at "Winterbourne". A talk by Mr. Stewart Warner of Barncroft Nursery (son of Ray and Olwen)

Any enquiries to Alan Dudley, The Spinney, Little Hay, Lichfield, Staffs.

Tel. Shenstone (0543) 481183

Alan Dudley

SOUTHERN

On August 9th we visited two contrasting gardens, both perfect in their own style, one large and the other small. The morning was spent at Claremont Landscape Garden at Esher which after many years of neglect, has been restored recently by the National Trust with the help of others who shared a mutual interest. Our tour with excellent guides started at the lake, and then they began to refresh our memories on 18th and 19th century history which is very much in evidence in this garden dating from the reign of Queen Anne - one of the earliest of its kind to have survived. The present Claremont House built for Clive of India is now a school separated from the garden, and it can also be visited on certain specified days.

The garden and restoration work took over 5 years and this is not surprising when laurels and rhododendrons were allowed to invade the whole area and, in some places, for over 200 years. The lake too received no attention for a very long time and it was necessary to carry out dredging operations in the great clean-up. It would have been a most expensive exercise if the dredgings were transported to a tip, so instead they were brought to the sides, levelled and grassed over to produce the effect of a bank which is very pleasing to the eye. The timbers of the many dead elm trees were used to help shore up the sides of the lake.

We learned that many great names in the history of garden design are associated with Claremont and evidence of work by Vanburgh, Bridgeman, Kent and Capability Brown survives there today.

Following the path around the lake we came upon the Grotto - a characteristic feature of 18th century landscape gardens, and then proceeded to a small area where the laurels and ponicums had been left untouched to enable visitors to visualise how the garden looked before work had commenced. Tree heaths had been planted recently in a small area and already one casualty was apparent.

It is not possible in a short report to comment on the many other features we saw, but one which warrants mention is the Camellia Terrace. The Camellias were housed until 1959 in a large heated greenhouse built in 1824. Now, with no protection, all but two of the originals survive. It is from

this terrace, looking across the amphitheatre that a fine panoramic view of the area is obtained and at the same time looking down, one can appreciate the scale of the impressive grass amphitheatre which covers three acres. (This garden is approximately 6 miles north of Wisley on the A307 to Esher, so it would be possible to combine a trip to Claremont and Wisley on the same day.)

After a picnic lunch we proceeded to Oxshott to be welcomed by Brigadier and Mrs. Lucas Phillips in their garden at Danes Cottage. Our numbers had now reached 30 and we were pleased to welcome several new members. Those who visited this garden four years previously will recall our host telling us he re-thinks and re-plans his garden every decade, and as that time was approaching, he had decided to make further heather plantings to minimise routine maintenance. This visit enabled us to see the changes, which proved the objective had been achieved in a most pleasing and eye-catching manner. After tea kindly provided by his wife and daughter, we gathered to listen to Brigadier Lucas Phillips' sensible answers to our often eager questions. It was a most enjoyable afternoon and at the close Group Organiser, Pamela Lee, thanked our hosts on our behalf.

Next Meeting : The 1982 season will begin on Saturday, March 27th with an Open Forum, 2.30, at King George's Hall, Esher, preceded by a morning visit to Wisley, meeting at 10.30 a.m. in the carpark, or joining us later in the Heather Garden. Send SAE to Mrs. Pamela Lee, Birches, Kingswood Firs, Grayshott, Hindhead, for further details.

Eric Wiseman

SOUTH WEST

On Saturday, 18th July we visited the Somerset College of Agriculture and Horticulture at Cannington near Bridgewater. Douglas Chalk is a Society member and a part time lecturer at the College and he gave us an informative 2 hour tour of the amenity gardens and glasshouses. The College is situated on either side of the A39 Bridgewater to Minehead road and consists of lecturing facilities, residential accommodation, amenity gardens and glasshouses. Douglas showed us the many projects the horticultural students are concerned with, such as summer bedding displays, tree planting, shrub borders and golf tees. The large glasshouses were full of further projects which included interesting and unusual plants amongst which were a variety of the insect eating types. Two Cape Heaths were among the profusion of plants on the benches.

The College has a small heather garden in a partly walled area and several new plantings had been made.

After the tour of Cannington, we made our way to Polden Acres Gardens, the home of Douglas and Diana Chalk and also their nursery. We were welcomed with a cup of tea by Diana and her mother and then we had a conducted tour of the garden and nursery. Although heathers are Douglas' "bread and butter", he has a great interest in Hebes and we saw several new seedlings.

We were extremely grateful to Douglas and Diana for their work and time in organising the afternoon and for their generous hospitality.

Saturday the 5th September was a beautiful fine day for our trip to Brownsea Island in Poole Harbour. We were met on Brownsea Quay by Mr. and Mrs. Parkyn who are Society members and part-time wardens for the National Trust. Two other wardens also joined the party so we were expertly escorted around the National Trust section with a stop for a picnic lunch in the seclusion of the warden's cottage garden.

The Island consists mainly of woodland with the occasional area of heath, and in one particular spot the heath and bracken have been burnt deliberately to encourage the growth of young heather plants. The North-Western end of the Island has beautiful views over the harbour and to the West the Arne peninsula, famous for its Erica ciliaris, seemed so close that we wondered why that heather species had never spread to the Island itself.

An interesting feature exhibited by the Calluna was the large proportion of plants showing flowers much darker than those usually found on heathland. A great attraction of the Island is the frequent sightings of red squirrels but unfortunately we had to make do with peafowl!

I wish to extend my thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Parkyn and their friends for not only making our guided tour possible but also for their invaluable work in the conservation of this peaceful area of Dorset.

Next Meeting : This will be at Lytchett Matravers Village Hall on March 27th at 2.0 p.m. On this occasion John Kelly the Curator of the Abbotsbury Sub-Tropical Gardens will give us a talk with slides on the Gardens; and then on May 8th we will visit and enjoy the subject of his talk.

I look forward to meeting members again next year, and please remember to send me two SAE's in the New Year if you require additional details of the planned visits.

Phil Joyner

NORTH DEVON

During the past twelve months we have formed a Group of members in North Devon mainly in and around Barnstaple. Our local heather nurseryman Clifford Bell who has a stand in Barnstaple's historic Pannier Market for the sale of his conifers and heathers, produced a list of heather enthusiasts who might be interested in joining the Society. These were contacted and invited to a preliminary meeting and they all joined.

We have had a happy year visiting members' gardens and having coffee or tea and getting to know each other. Our meetings have included a slide show using the Society's slides, and a practical lesson one evening on taking heather cuttings - the results showed that we still have much to learn in that field!

At our first Annual Meeting on September 29th when 20 members were present including 4 new members, we agreed to continue with our informal get togethers during 1982. All those interested in heathers and conifers are invited to join us. For further information concerning the Group please contact me at Orchard House, Mill Lane, Wrafton, Braunton, N. Devon, EX33 2DF. Tel. Braunton (0271) 814376.

Joyce Collins

FAR WEST

On Tuesday, 18th August, 13 members met at the County Demonstration Ground of Probus near Truro and were delighted to find that their able and interesting guide for the visit was to be Mr. Andrew Tressader of the famous Cornish nursery. Many aspects of growing were discussed, and in particular heathers together with some unusual shrubs undergoing various trials. The problem of phytophthora cinnamoni was discussed at some length, and the possibility of it becoming more widespread was acknowledged.

The Superintendent of Parks in Plymouth, Mr. Waterhouse, kindly joined us, and was able to explain the future plans for the 3 acre heather garden at Mt. Edgecombe near Plymouth. During our welcome tea break we briefly discussed business. We were all glad to hear of the success being experienced by the Barnstaple Group formed by Mr. Bell and Mrs. Collins, who have gathered together some 24 members who live near enough to meet more frequently than the rest of us. They would of course be happy to welcome any member who finds that they can travel to any of their meetings.

I should be grateful if a volunteer would be willing to take on the 'secretary's' job for the Group next year - please contact me as soon as possible.

Next Meeting - This will be at Dr. Smart's Marwood Hill Garden near Barnstaple on 6th April, 1982 at 2 p.m. This is a 20 year old garden expertly kept with many interesting and varied plants including camellias, alpines and an Australian plant collection. Plants will be on sale.

Bankers' Orders: Incredibly, there are still some Bankers' Orders in operation at the old subscription rate of £1.50 or £2.00. Would members please check to see whether they have a second Bankers' Order in existence which should be cancelled or perhaps have not yet increased their current subscription to the new rate.

Ken Farrah

SCRAP BOWL

- Titbits of news from members

Erica x williamsii The note in the Summer Bulletin about the plant of E.x williamsii which was exhibited at the Chelsea Flower Show has elicited one or two enquiries as to why this plant should be considered to be rare when it is so easy to obtain plants of E.x williamsii 'P.D. Williams'.

The answer is, that the original plants of this hybrid (E.tetralix x E.vagans) from which the two named cultivars were derived ('P.D. Williams' and 'Gwavas'), both of which were found on Goonhilly Downs, were long since destroyed. For 50 years no wild plant of the hybrid was known to exist. Then between 1974 and 1976 three more examples of the hybrid were found at separate sites on the Lizard peninsula. Two of these were destroyed - one by fire and one by the plough - and only the third remains. This is the clone from which the plant exhibited at Chelsea was derived. As far as is known, this is the only surviving specimen of E.x williamsii growing wild anywhere in the whole world.

Pat Turpin

(This item was written prior to October 5th when another plant was discovered - See Editorial)

(Thankyou: to those members who have sent items for the Scrap Bowl - these will be included in the Spring Bulletin when there will be more space available. Ed.)

DIARY OF EVENTS

- Nov. 20th Midlands Group - Talk/Demonstration on Propagation - See Group News.
- Nov. 23rd North East Group - Slides and Quiz evening - See Group News.
- Nov. 24th COUNCIL MEETING, R.H.S. New Hall, Westminster.
- Nov. 24/25th R.H.S. Show, New Hall, Westminster - Class for foliage heathers.
- Jan. 9th CLOSING DATE for material for the Spring Bulletin.
- Feb. 16th COUNCIL MEETING, R.H.S. New Hall, Westminster.
- Feb. 16/17th R.H.S. Winter Flower Show and Heather Competition.
- Feb. 26th Midlands Group - Meeting with slides - See Group News.
- Mar. 20th South West Group - Talk with slides on Abbotsbury - See Group News.
- Mar. 27th Southern Group - meet at Wisley and Esher - See Group News.
- Apr. 6th Far West Group - Visit to Marwood Hill Garden - See Group News.
- May 19/21st Chelsea Flower Show - SAE to Hon. Sec. for tickets.
- May 23rd Southern Group - Meeting, details in Spring Bulletin.

WANTED A copy of "Calluna. A Monograph on the Scottish Heather" by W. Beijerinck. A.W. Jones, Zone 12.