

THE HEATHER SOCIETY BULLETIN

Vol. 3. No. 14

SPRING 1985

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

I do wish all our members a happy New Year, and hope that you and your gardens are coping with the wintry weather. The snow and frost have certainly affected the bloom on our winter heathers. Their colours were gradually showing through before Christmas, but since the New Year they have "stopped in their tracks" and who can blame them. Some sunny days during the next few weeks would encourage them into full bloom, and then on the brightest days (around the middle of the day) the bees will start to visit them.

Looking ahead to our activities for 1985, many of us will be pleased when the group events begin again. An afternoon or a whole day out to meet friends on a garden visit or at a meeting in a hall is an opportunity to exchange ideas and learn something new. Members who have not previously attended a group gathering will be most welcome to do so, and if you don't know who to contact, I will gladly be of assistance.

Diane Jones.

N.B. My apologies for the autumn Bulletin being wrongly numbered, it should have been Vol. 3. No. 13 (Not No. 11).

The Heather Society 1963-1984

In 1984 The Heather Society celebrated its 21st Anniversary. A correspondent has suggested that we should publish the names of those members who joined the Society in 1963 and who are still members today. The list includes thirty names (thirty-seven, if account is taken of joint membership), thirteen of whom were founder members.

Mr. P. Bessent Zone 11	Mrs. C. I. MacLeod, Zone 11 (F)
Mrs. M. A. Bowerman Zone 11 (F)	Mr. and Mrs. C. F. Martin, Zone 11
Mr. J. E. Crewe-Brown Zone 14	Mr. and Mrs. F. L. Mills Zone 13
Miss J. Burfitt Zone 12 (F)	Mrs. J. N. Milsum Zone 11 (F)
Mr. J. F. Chattaway Zone 7	Mr. E. R. Mounsey Zone 1 (F)
Mr. H. C. Delves Zone 11	Miss V. M. Newsham Zone 5
Miss K. M. Fell Zone 12 (F)	Mr. and Mrs. H. L. Nicholson Zone 11
Miss E. E. F. Filmore Zone 11 (F)	Mr. C. Puddle, Zone 8
Dr. V. H. Gray Zone 11	Mr. J. M. Roughan Zone 7
Mrs. P. Harper Zone 14	Miss I. M. N. Ryan Zone 13
Sir Derek P. Hilton Zone 4	Brig. and Mrs. C. H. R. Smith Zone 11
Mrs. E. G. Kleinwort Zone 11 (F)	Mr. and Mrs. F. J. Stevens Zone 12 (F)
Mr. and Mrs. B. G. London Zone 9	Mr. T. Underhill Zone 13 (F)
Mrs. B. D. Maginess Zone 12 (F)	Mr. and Mrs. G. Williams Zone 8
Mr. D. McClintock Zone 11 (F)	Mrs. J. E. Youle Zone 11 (F)

Those marked (F) were founder members.

**R.H.S. Competition for Ornamental Trees & Shrubs from the Open
November 20th and 21st 1984**

Class 11. A Heath or Heather judged for foliage effect, one vase/bowl. 4 exhibitors, 11 entries.

1st Mrs. P. B. Lee

2nd Maj. Gen. & Mrs. P.G.Turpin.

3rd Maj. Gen. & Mrs. P.G.Turpin

4th Maj. Gen. & Mrs. P.G. Turpin

Erica Lusitanica 'George Hunt'

Erica erigena 'Golden Lady'

Calluna vulgaris 'Cottswood Gold'

Calluna vulgaris 'Grey Carpet'

15th ANNUAL CONFERENCE, 6th - 9th September 1985

As previously announced, this year's Annual Conference will be held at Lodge Hill Residential Centre, Watersfield, Near Pulborough, West Sussex. Advance bookings should now be made by sending £2 per mailing to Mrs. P. B. Lee, Birches, Kingswood Firs, Grayshott, Hindhead, Surrey GU26 6EX. The booking charge, payable by all those intending to come to the Conference, is to cover administrative costs incurred in the organisation of the Conference, the preparation of the programme, mailing expenses etc. and is not a deposit on the residential charges. Cheques should be made payable to: "Heather Society Conference".

Conference charges are as follows:

Residents	Friday evening to Monday morning	£52.00
	Friday evening to Sunday afternoon	£42.00
Non-residents	Coffee, lunch & dinner, per day	£12.00
Sunday coach trip, including entry to Nymans gardens		£5.00

Payment for the Conference charges should be sent to Mrs. P. B. Lee by the 15th July.

Outline Programme

Friday, afternoon	4 p.m. — 6 p.m. Reception.
Friday evening	Mrs. M. Bowerman, "The making of a Heather Garden at Champs Hill"
Saturday morning	Heather Quiz Mr. D. Donald, "The Chelsea Physic Garden" Mr. J. D. Bond, "The Heather Garden and Conifer Collection in Windsor Great Park" Group Photograph
Saturday afternoon	Visit to Champs Hill
Saturday evening	Open Forum
Sunday morning	ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Talk by Mr. O. J. Clayton Coach excursion to Nymans. Picnic lunch.
Sunday afternoon.	Short talk by Mr. Masters, followed by a tour of Nymans Gardens
Sunday evening	Open Forum (continued)
Monday morning	Disperse

SLIDE LIBRARY

Remember the slide library is only as good as **you** make it, so when you are taking slides remember to take an extra one and donate it to the Society. We are in great need of slides of named cultivars, particularly winter flowering heathers. In order that the slides are reasonably consistent, when you take a slide, try to fill the picture with one mature plant and avoid photographing labels if possible. After all, we want photographs of heathers rather than labels.

To use the slide library, all you need to do is write to me as far ahead as you can, giving me the date when you require the slides, and stating the modules you want or the subject of the talk you are giving. Generally you will receive the slides about 10 days before the date you specify. The loan of the slides is free, but you pay for the postage both ways (you do this when you return the slides)

There are nine modules and one or more may be borrowed at once.

1. Wild heathers including some of the more unusual species in their natural habitat.

2. A diversity of heathers, generally un-named cultivars but giving the spectrum of heather colours etc.

3. Heather garden design, slides helpful in explaining this topic.

4. Callunas and named cultivar close-ups.

5. Summer flowering heaths, plus close-ups.

6. Winter flowering heaths, plus close-ups.

7. Cape heaths.

8. Botanical slides, often including sports which subsequently became famous cultivars.

9. Miscellaneous, some slides in this module are useful when using Module 3.

Please write to: Denbeigh, All Saints Road, Creting St. Mary, Ipswich. IP6 8PJ.

David Small

Notes from our Administrator

Subscriptions for 1985 were due on the 1st January. £3 for an individual membership and £4 for a family joint membership. Prompt payment is appreciated as reminders are costly in time and postage. Bankers order forms and covenant forms are available on request. The Society greatly appreciates the response by so many members who have signed covenants for the payment of subscriptions. If there are other members who would like the Society to benefit by this concession, would they please write to me for the appropriate forms.

The Heather Trials 1971-75 Report is now out of print, but the Society has retained a small number of copies which may be borrowed for short periods. Please write to Phil Joyner, 84 Kinross Road, Rushington, Totton, Southampton SO4 4BN enclosing 60p to cover the cost of postage and packing.

Beryl Farrah

GROUP NEWS

NORTHEAST (NEWCASTLE)

Our Group activities have been varied and well supported and included a slide show and address by our member Dr. R. Nichols on alpiners and small conifers within the heather garden. It was obvious that our member was never quite satisfied with the performance of some conifers, which prompted him to move them to various positions to give the desired effect and improve the performance of each variety. His enthusiasm for a varied garden has consequently extended his range of both alpiners and small conifers. It was obvious from the many questions that many members gained much information.

Our next function was a delightful visit to the heather nurseries of our member Mr. Kane at Woolner in Northumberland. It was interesting and educative to see the intensive propagation of both heathers and conifers being undertaken by Mr. Kane, who was in the process of installing some automation. It was gratifying to learn that his business in supplying various nurseries and garden centres now extends north of the Border, also down into the Midlands. Leaving the nurseries, after most of our members had bought various plants, we made our way by coach over delightful moorland to Howick Hall near Craster, the former home of Earl Grey.

The grounds of Howick Hall are set in and surrounded by a massive tree belt, which no doubt gives shelter from the winds from the near-by north-east coast. Apart from heather beds, all our members were impressed with the range of colours of the hybrid rhododendrons and azaleas, which together with *Pieris* often some 10 feet high, gave an eye-catching colour display. A high tea at a local restaurant gave many members an opportunity to sample freshly caught fish.

Members were circulated regarding the Flower Show which took place by kind arrangement with our members Mr. and Mrs. David Goodchild in their garden and greenhouse in Ponteland. Despite heavy showers, we were fortunate for a brief time to enjoy blue skies. Altogether there were 12 classes, and a trophy for the best exhibit was won by Mrs. D. McArthur from Morpeth with a superb entry of 'Elsie Purnell'. In all there were 78 entries and it was obvious from the comments of many people who attended that we can look forward to even more support for this event in 1985. Tea and refreshments, together with a Bring and Buy plant stall were well supported, and needless to say the whole event including cash prizes for 1st, 2nd and 3rd, was a financial success. Will members please note that the Flower Show 1985 will be at the same venue on Saturday 21st September.

Our final event in 1984 was an interesting and informative visit by 24 members to the Durham College of Horticulture, where we were received and guided around by the Principal Mr. I. Webster. The gardens comprise many and varied subjects as well as the heather and alpine section, and the methods of propagation etc. were much appreciated.

Our next get-together will be in the Methodist Church Hall, Ponteland, on Monday 4th March 1985 at 7.30 p.m. when various members will show slides. The evening will be comprehensive including talks on propagation, colour in the garden, garden lay-out and favourite heathers. Will members please note this event to save further correspondence.

Future plans — our visit to the Northumbria Police Headquarters at North Road, Ponteland, to see the extensive gardens and glass houses will be on Wednesday, 10th July, 7 p.m. prompt.

Syd Courtney

MIDLANDS

On November 23rd our meeting was well attended for an evening of films. The first was a rather ancient (but nonetheless interesting) film about peat production for the horticulture industry. You can tell how old it was, the tomatoes on show were priced in 'old money'. The second film took us around Wisley Gardens and made many of us resolve to visit Wisley more often.

Future Plans. Our next meeting is at Winterbourne on March 1st at 7.30 p.m. Our speaker will be Mr. Peter Hutchinson who will give an illustrated talk on heathers and other ericaceous subjects. We hope he will be accompanied by his wife Josephine, after whom the *E. cinerea* 'Josephine Ross' was named.

At 7.0 p.m. on May 18th we are holding a social evening and buffet supper. Having experienced the cooking skills of our members at previous socials, I think I can confidently predict a very good evening. We shall also have the opportunity to walk round Winterbourne's lovely gardens, which are also the Botanic Gardens of the University of Birmingham.

Daphne Everett

THAMES VALLEY

Members in the Reading, Maidenhead and High Wycombe area who are interested in a local group should contact Arnold Stow who has recently moved from Flackwell Heather to 'Widmour', Limmer Lane, High Wycombe, Bucks. HP12 4QR.

SOUTHERN

Since news of the Group's October visit to Wakehurst Place was included in the Autumn Bulletin, I would simply like to use this space to encourage new members, particularly those in the London area who may especially appreciate a day out in the country, to join us at one of the meetings we are planning this spring. Full details have already been published, but I will repeat them in case this is your first Bulletin, or perhaps you may have mislaid the last one.

On March 23rd we have booked the Friends Meeting House, Butterhill, off South Street, Dorking, for a social afternoon from 2.0 p.m. when you are invited to seek advice on any problems you may have on the subject of heather gardening, and to meet members from a wide area. There will be a showing of slides by our Chairman Maj. Gen. Turpin, followed by tea and biscuits. I regret that parking here is a little difficult, so if you don't mind the walk, or arrive late, perhaps the town car park would be safer.

The next visit on May 19th will be to a small and intriguing plantsman's garden called "Calluna" (wrongly named as there are few heathers, but you won't be disappointed). Mr. and Mrs. Phil Knox will be expecting us shortly after 2.30 p.m. They have plants for sale, particularly alpinists, and tea and biscuits will be available. From the Hindhead traffic lights take the Farnham road: shortly before the village of Churt, the house is on the left at the junction with Whitmore Vale.

If however you would like to come out for the day, you are welcome to arrive at my house "Birches" from 11.30 a.m. (Later if wet or cold) and we will have a simple buffet lunch (please book in writing). A collection will be made for Society funds, and I look forward to seeing you. (Directions: 1 mile south of the Hindhead crossroads, turn right off the A3 into Crossways Road (to Grayshott). Take the second left "Mowatt Road leading to Kingswood Firs". The house is a few hundred yards on left opposite a lamp-post.

Pamela Lee

SOUTH WEST

As I write these notes, we have just had our first snow of the winter and although just a light dusting, it is sufficient to prompt me to look forward to warmer spring days ahead. However, various **Erica x darleyensis** and **Erica carnea** cultivars are providing colour at the moment and hence some warmth. The Cape heath hybrid **Erica x hyemalis** 'Dusky Maid' and the Cape heath species **Erica cruenta** have also been flowering well in the garden, but now the low temperatures will probably take their toll.

Returning to the spring days ahead, the first meeting of the year will be on March 30th at Lytchett Matravers Village Hall, when Maj. Gen. Pat Turpin our Chairman will give a talk on heaths and heathers. There will also be a new venture, a one class table show of a vase of six stems of at least three different cultivars of winter flowering *Ericas*. There will be prizes for the first three, and each member is restricted to one entry. The meeting starts at 2.0 p.m. Lytchett Matravers is situated approximately 6 miles from Poole, and 1 mile west of the A350 Poole to Blandford road. The village hall is on the west side of the High Street just north of the Rose and Crown Inn. There will be a small charge for refreshments and the hire of the hall.

Later in the spring, on the 27th April at 2.0 p.m. we will be visiting the garden of Stowell Hill near Templecombe in Somerset. This garden belongs to Mr. and Mrs. Robert McCreery and is mentioned in the publication "Gardens of England and Wales Open to the Public". It is described as having a collection of spring flowering shrubs. Members may reach Stowell Hill by turning west off the A357 road ½ mile north of Templecombe.

Our summer visit will be at 2.0 p.m. on June 29th to The Cobbles owned by Mr. and Mrs. A. P. Baker near Blandford in Dorset. This garden is also in the aforementioned publication. This is a garden on chalk and will give members the opportunity to observe a different type of gardening. It is situated in Shillingstone, 5 miles N.W. of Blandford opposite the Old Ox Inn.

Future Plans: It is hoped that the Group could represent the Society with a display of heathers at the Southampton Show on the 12th-14th July. If there are members willing to help with this event would they please contact me.

Also another date for your diary — we will be visiting Heatherwood Nursery near Wimborne on August 31st — more details later.

And finally, would members please send me two SAE's if you require further details of the above meetings. I would also be pleased to hear from members willing to open their gardens to the Group in 1986.

Phil Joyner.

OVERSEAS — NORTH AMERICAN HEATHER SOCIETY

We have an enterprising new member Joyce Descloux in Dover, NJ, who is interested in starting an Eastern division of our North American Heather Society. East Coast members are invited to get in touch with her at 32 Longridge Road, Dover, NJ 07801.

Dorothy Metheny

SCRAP BOWL — Titbits of news from members.

A visit to Denmark? Members are 'most welcome' to visit a new nurseryman member Mr. Emil Lutken of Ulvergaarden, Roedhusvej 358, 9440 Aabybro, Denmark, who grows well over 250 cultivars of heather.

The Correct Naming of Heathers. Our Chairman offered some wise words on this subject in the 1979 Summer Bulletin and, in the Autumn following, Mr. David McClintock provided amusing and interesting examples of how mistakes in naming have arisen. Most nurserymen are responsible enough to correct their errors but a few either do not care — or do not act fast enough. The resulting misnomers can often be quite intriguing and even attractive. Would you not have been tempted to buy a specimen of *Calluna vulgaris* 'Charmington'? A pleasant name I thought. Of course, it should have been 'Sir John Charrington'. Would you not have been pleased to make the acquaintance of 'Ann Marks'? In fact, she was a fraud; her real name was *Erica carnea* 'Ann Sparkes'. 'Rubyfolia' I didn't fancy, and was relieved when it turned out to be *Calluna vulgaris* 'Hammondii Rubrifolia'. A great puzzle was *Calluna vulgaris* 'Verona' — a very plausible name which over-excited me; I was sure I had made a discovery. Fortunately, the grower of this, Mr. Clive Benson of Preston, saved me from error; he sensibly suggested that the retailer had probably lost the original label and had then resorted to copying from a smudged and well-nigh illegible substitute, thus managing to evolve 'Verona' from '**Silver Rose**' — and so it turned out to be! And finally, I wonder whether the Editor of our Bulletin knows that she has a relative called 'Euan Jones'? (A seedling *Erica erigena* with lime green foliage was named after our elder son Ewan. If this description fits the plant, then the correct name is *Erica erigena* 'Euan Jones'. Ed.)

R. C. D. Kingsford, Zone 4.

Heather Superstitions. There exists in some parts of Sweden an old idea that a ling decoration in the house would bring bad luck to someone in the family, or even death. When hearing that old nonsense, one can hardly believe oneself living in 1984, but as a matter of fact, many people in Sweden are afraid of dealing with heather. I think there is quite another opinion in England, as I recently learned from an English TV film that to you the ling brings luck.

Brita Johansson, Sweden.

Heather in Newfoundland. Mr. Bernard S. Jackson, Curator of the Memorial University Botanical Garden at Oxen Pond, Newfoundland, writes about the heather plantings in that windy part of Eastern Canada. — "You may be interested to know that the wild ling or Scottish heather *Calluna vulgaris* has become naturalized in at least three areas of Newfoundland. One site, a number of acres in extent, originated from the heather used as packing for trees sent over to landscape a private estate. Apparently the packing was thrown over the boundary fence onto the side of a railway track and eventually became established. For decades there was only a fairly small amount, but over the past fifteen years it has spread dramatically. Maybe something to do with a changing climate? There is some on Signal Hill in St. John's which is said to have originated from the mattresses of the soldiers in the garrison there, in the days when we were still fighting the French. Whether or not this is correct, I

couldn't say. The other site is said to have originated from the mattress stuffing brought ashore from shipwrecks. This is a story one runs into quite a lot and could be correct. Certainly our southern shore is one of the main graveyards of the Atlantic."

(This item was in the North American H.S. 'Heather News' of December 1984, Ed.)

Erica lusitanica for Ever. What a wonderful heather is **E. lusitanica**, the Portuguese Heath! It is in flower from late autumn to late spring. What other shrub is continuously in bloom for seven months? My plants are always in flower in time for the R.H.S. late autumn show and this year provided ample supplies of the "lucky white heather" for a family wedding bouquet on the 1st December. There was plenty for Burns Night on the 25th January too, untouched by more than a fortnight of snow and frost (down to 13 degrees F). I expect that there will still be some in flower for the Chelsea Flower Show next May. Its pink buds, opening to pure white flowers, make a brave show throughout our winter months. It is a pity that it is not more widely grown by heather enthusiasts.

Pat Turpin, Zone 11.

DIARY OF EVENTS

- Mar. 1st Midlands Group — meeting at Winterbourne 7.30 p.m. See Group News
- Mar. 4th N.E. Group — Ponteland Methodist Church Hall, 7.30 p.m. Members slides/discussion.
- Mar. 23rd Southern Group — Meeting at Dorking, 2.0 p.m. See Group News
- Mar. 30th South West Group — Talk at Lytchett Matravers, See Group News
- Apr. 27th CLOSING DATE — Material for the Summer Bulletin
- Apr. 27th South West Group — Visit to Stowell Hill garden, See Group News
- May 18th Midlands Group — Social evening and buffet supper at Winterbourne 7 p.m. See Group News
- May 19th Southern Group — Meeting at Hindhead 11.30 a.m. or 2.30 p.m. See Group News.
- May 21/24 CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW — Limited tickets available. SAE to Hon. Sec.
- June 29th South West Group — Visit to Shillingstone Nr. Blandford See Group News
- July 10th N.E. Group — Visit to Northumbria Police H.Q. Ponteland, 7.0 p.m.
- July 12/14 South West Group — Exhibit at Southampton Show
- Aug. 6th COUNCIL MEETING, RHS Halls, Westminster
- Aug. 6/7th RHS SUMMER FLOWER SHOW AND HEATHER COMPETITIONS, RHS Halls, Westminster.
- Aug. 31st South West Group — Visit to Heatherwood Nursery, Nr. Wimborne.
- Sept. 6/9th ANNUAL CONFERENCE, Pulborough, West Sussex.
- Sept. 8th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, Lodge Hill Residential Centre, Watersfield, Nr. Pulborough, West Sussex.
- Sept. 21st N.E. Group — Flower Show, Darras Road, Ponteland.
- Nov. 26th COUNCIL MEETING, R.H.S., Halls, Westminster.
- Nov. 26/27th R.H.S. Show, and Ornamental Tree and Shrub Competition and Class for Heathers. R.H.S. Halls, Westminster.