

THE HEATHER SOCIETY BULLETIN

Vol. 3. No. 18.

SUMMER 1986

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

When sitting down to begin each Bulletin my thoughts inevitably seem to be concentrated round the season of the year and the recent weather conditions. After a very cold and wet few months everything seems to be about three weeks later than normal. The 'Blackthorn Winter' has just ended for us with slightly warmer temperatures, and as I look out across our garden there is blossom on the pear and apple trees and young lambs playing in the orchard opposite - so it must be spring after all - and in the third week of May it is none too soon. There is so much to be done in the garden now - thank goodness for the lighter evenings.

Diane Jones.

16th ANNUAL CONFERENCE, 5th-8th September 1986

Details of this year's Conference at Tetley Hall, Leeds University, were published in the Spring Bulletin. If you wish to attend and haven't yet made a booking, please send £2 per mailing to Dr. Kenneth Barraclough, 19 Park Avenue, Chapeltown, Sheffield. S30 4WH. Final payment of the full Conference fee should be sent to Dr. Barraclough by July 19th. Cheques should be made payable to "Heather Society Conference".

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1986

The Annual General Meeting of the Heather Society will be held during the Conference at Tetley Hall, Leeds University on Sunday 7th September at 9.0 a.m. The Agenda for the meeting is enclosed with this issue of the Bulletin.

17th ANNUAL CONFERENCE 1987.

The 17th Annual Conference of the Heather Society will be held at Hadlow College, Hadlow, near Maidstone, Kent from Friday 4th September to Monday 7th September 1987. Mrs. Tessa Forbes has kindly agreed to be responsible for the organisation of the Conference.

ROYAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY'S SHOW, 25/26th February 1986.

Competition for Ornamental Plants from the Open.

In spite of the very cold and frosty weather in February the Heather Classes were well supported. There was a particularly fine exhibit of *Erica canaliculata* from Tresco Abbey Gardens, which received an Award of Merit.

Results :-

- Class 5. A Tree Heath, in bloom, one vase. Two entries.
1st Tresco Abbey Gardens. *Erica canaliculata*.
- Class 6. A Heath or Heather, in bloom, one plant. Two entries.
1st Mrs T. N. Forbes. *E. x darleyensis* 'White Perfection'
2nd Mrs. T. N. Forbes. *E. carnea* 'Lake Garda'
- Class 7. A Heath or Heather other than those eligible for Class 5, in bloom, one vase/bowl. Seventeen entries. Five exhibitors.

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| 1st Maj.Gen. and Mrs. P.G. Turpin | <u>E. carnea</u> 'Myretoun Ruby' |
| 2nd Maj.Gen. and Mrs. P.G. Turpin | <u>E. x. darleyensis</u> 'Silberschmelze' |
| 3rd Mr. B.G. London | <u>E. x. darleyensis</u> 'Arthur Johnson' |
| 4th Mr. B.G. London | <u>E. carnea</u> 'David's Seedling' |
| H.C. Mr. B.G. London | <u>E. carnea</u> 'Pirbright Rose' |
| C. Mr. B.G. London | <u>E. carnea</u> 'King George' |
- Class 8. A Heath or Heather shown for foliage effect, one plant. Three entries.
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| 1st Mrs. T.N. Forbes | <u>Calluna vulgaris</u> 'Sunrise' |
| 2nd Mrs. T.N. Forbes | <u>Calluna vulgaris</u> 'Rot Fuchs' |
| 3rd Maj.Gen. and Mrs. P.G. Turpin | <u>Calluna vulgaris</u> 'Firefly' |
- Class 16. A Tree or Shrub grown under glass in bloom. Two entries.
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| 1st Borde Hill. | <u>Acacia baileyana</u> |
| 2nd Borde Hill. | <u>E. canaliculata.</u> |

Major General and Mrs. Turpin were helped at the Heather Society stand by Mr. and Mrs. Mayne and Mr. B. G. London. It would be very much appreciated if other members of the Heather Society would volunteer to help at the Society's stand on one or both of the days when a Show is being held. Will those willing to do so please send their names to the Hon. Secretary, Mrs. P. B. Lee, Birches, Kingswood Firs, Grayshott, Hindhead, Surrey. GU26 6EX.

1986 Year Book — Another Aspect of Cultivar Names.

Some time ago Douglas Chalk found an E. carnea seedling in his Polden Acres Gardens. He told the Editor of the Year Book that he intended to call it "Polden Pink". The Editor thought that this was too similar to E. x darleyensis 'Putford Pink' and suggested that Douglas should discuss the name with David McClintock in his capacity as Registrar.

Later, while preparing the 1986 Year Book, the Editor did not check the draft as thoroughly as he should have done, and the name E. cinerea "Polden Pink" slipped through. Mr. Kingsford spotted this, and wrote saying that he considered that there may be confusion between that and E. vagans 'Holden Pink'.

I am now happy to report that there is no need for further concern, as Douglas has decided to call his plant E. carnea 'Polden Pride'. However, this story shows that, when considering naming a plant, the raiser or finder must not only ensure that his plant is distinct and worthy of a name, but also that the name will not be confused with that of any other cultivar. This will be made easier when the Society publishes the "International Register of Heather Cultivar Names".

The rules and recommendations covering the naming of cultivars are set out in the "International code of nomenclature for cultivated plants - 1980", and these have been summarised in "A guide to the naming of plants" by David McClintock.

Bert Jones.

BRITISH HEATHER GROWERS ASSOCIATION

The idea of forming an association of heather growers came whilst reading through an horticultural trade magazine which detailed the formation of a herb growers association, and it occurred to me that if this relatively small sector of the nursery stock industry saw a need for an association, then one must question whether there was a similar need for heather growers who occupy a larger market share. Whilst the aims of the herb growers association were directed more towards the retail outlets, I saw that the fragmentation of heather production was likely to lead to the requirements of the producers being overlooked.

My own contacts with the garden centre trade had shown that there was a distinct lack of promotional material available in the form of posters and pictorial bed labels.

I first put the ideas to Tim Argles of Berrydown Nurseries who greeted them with enthusiasm, and with this encouragement I approached John Hall Jnr. of Winchfield Nursery and John Hall Snr. of Windlesham Court Nursery. This culminated in a meeting at my home earlier this year where a deeper study of the heather industry showed further areas where greater unity could result in benefits to both growers and retailers.

The formation of such an association could provide a focal point from which the demands of the industry could be made and information disseminated back to the growers. It was thought that there were four main areas where an association could play an important role.

1. To encourage the production and supply of promotional and point of sale material.
2. To foster and direct research and development work.
3. To sponsor clonal selection i.e. the selection of the best form of each cultivar.
4. To disseminate resulting information back to the member growers.

The inaugural meeting of the resulting British Heather Growers Association was held near Oxford on May 1st when growers from throughout the country attended to discuss the problems that currently affect the industry. It was unanimously agreed that there was a real need for an association, and subsequently a committee was formed. John Hall Snr. of Windlesham Court Nursery was elected Chairman, David Hutchinson of Hampshire Agricultural Development and Advisory Service was elected Secretary, and Diane Jones of Otters' Court Heathers was elected Treasurer. It was agreed that a joining fee of £10 should be levied to provide some initial finance, and that the subscription rate for the future would be discussed at the next meeting in July. It was stressed at the meeting that with 10-12 million heathers being produced annually in the U.K., growers must aim to supply only plants of the highest quality free from pests and disease and true to name. The stronger the association is, the more effective it will be, and therefore the aim should be to recruit as many growers as possible.

The next meeting of the Association has now been arranged for Tuesday July 8th, 2 p.m., at the N.F.U. headquarters, Agriculture House, 25/31 Knightsbridge, London, SW1X 7NJ. David Hutchinson the Secretary is away until July 7th, but in his absence further information can be obtained from John Hall Jnr. Winchfield Nursery, Hartley Wintney, Hampshire. Tel. 025 126 2082

GROUP NEWS

David Edge, Zone 12.

NORTH EAST (NEWCASTLE)

Despite several weeks of very inclement spring weather we were fortunate to have a dry sunny day on Saturday April 19th for our visit to Belsay Hall where we all enjoyed a conducted tour of the beautiful gardens originally laid out over 200 years ago, and until recently the home of the Middleton family. The Hall and its gardens have recently been taken into trust by the English Heritage Organisation, and the gardens have been renovated and planted with extensive beds. The heather gardens have been planted within the shelter of established trees, much in keeping with the work carried out by the late Sir Charles Middleton.

Our walk, with a detailed commentary by Mr. Anderton Head Gardener giving us all an insight into his personal involvement and knowledge of the past history, established the route via the quarry gardens to the old castle dating back to the 12th century. Early flowering rhododendrons, in particular 'Praecox', and grassed areas planted with dog tooth violets revealed the wonderful work being carried out by the new trustees.

The gardens, situated on the A696, a popular route to Scotland, are now attracting many visitors, and I can thoroughly recommend a visit to our Heather Society members.

The North East Group are again to hold an Annual Heather Show, by the kind invitation of our members Mr. & Mrs. D. Goodchild, Ponteland, on Saturday 6th September, which will link up with the opening of their garden on 7th September in aid of Red Cross funds. Details of the Show and schedules will be posted to members in due course, but please book this date in your diary now.

Syd Courtney.

MIDLANDS (BIRMINGHAM)

At our meeting on **March 7th**, members arrived prepared to talk about their own 'preferred list' of heathers and with the use of heather snippets, plants, slides and interesting chat, the evening turned out to be a very enjoyable one. It was surprising to see how much in agreement we all were as to our favourites. Realising that Maurice and I were the only ones from the group who had attended the 1985 Conference, we took along some slides of Champs Hill and Nymans Gardens. Members found these interesting, and it was agreed to include a Conference Report as part of the November meeting programme in the future.

On Saturday May 17th we are holding our annual social evening, when members attending are asked to provide something towards a cold supper. This year we are very fortunate that our members Vera and Leonard Hemming are throwing open their house and garden for the evening. Their very attractive garden is opened for charity several times a year and is well worth a visit. We just hope that spring has arrived by May 17th.

The Heather Society display at the National Garden Festival will not be on the original site that was offered to us, for reasons too numerous to go into now. Instead, it will be in what I think is to be called the Norwegian Theme Garden. (That should please Mrs. Petterson). The heathers will be planted round an 'Activity Lawn' where jugglers, musicians, clowns etc. will perform.

As I write, with about three weeks to the opening of the Festival, we have not yet been able to plant, as the contractors are still preparing the site. However, we hope it 'will be all right on the night' and that there will be a Heather Society display for members to see when they visit the Festival.

Daphne Everett.

MIDLANDS (LEICESTER/NOTTINGHAM)

The first meeting of the new East Midlands Group was held on April 16th at the Brooksby Agricultural College and was attended by twenty one people, most of them Society members, but a few who had seen the press notice, or heard the radio, and came along to see what the Heather Society could offer them. We think we recruited five new members!

Ray Warner of Barncroft Nurseries provided most of the entertainment, not least of which was being delayed by floodwater and arriving with one minute to spare before the scheduled start time. Thanks to some excellent staff work by Peter Hutchinson (who had also obtained the use of the staff common room and provided refreshments) the meeting started only a few minutes late and Ray treated us to a feast of colour and interest with his slides and dry humorous commentary on the two gardens which he, and his family had built over a twenty year period. We couldn't have had a better start for our new Group.

There were several "volunteers" to help run the Group and the following programme was agreed:

Friday August 15th. 7.00 p.m. onwards.

Garden visit and buffet supper at the home of Leighton and Liz Jones (Heatherscaping). **Ladies** please bring something for the buffet (liaise with Liz on 0455 282505)

£1 a head should cover the wine etc.

17th October, 8 p.m.

"Heather arranging for Home and Show". Talk by Daphne Everett to be held at the Nottingham School of Agriculture at Sutton Bonnington.

18th March 1987, 8 p.m.

"Our Favourite Heathers".

An informal meeting for members to argue the merits of their favourites. To be held at Brooksby Agricultural College.

Leighton Jones.

SOUTHERN.

The sun proved a welcome guest at the two part outing of the Group on 20th April. Its visitation added a further golden touch to the multitudinous *daffodils*, *hyacinths*, *helliborus orientalis*, *anemonies* and other bulbs which filled some 2 acres of the grounds of Highdown near Worthing. The owner of the property set out to show what could be grown successfully on almost solid chalk. The garden has now been taken over by the Worthing Borough Council who happily have maintained this aim. The 23 Group members who attended this visit were deeply impressed by the result.

The second visit of the day, only three miles from the first, was to the home of John Tucker one of our members, and a great pleasure awaited us. John's house and garden originally formed part of his nursery which he disposed of some fourteen years ago. He has since transformed it into a heather lover's dream. The wide range of colour emanating from the winter and spring varieties was a joy to behold as was the delightful tea of sandwiches and cakes which followed.

Our next visit is on 27th July at 2.30 p.m., at the kind invitation of Hedda and Hugh Nicholson, to their home and garden at Farm Cottage, Dorking. We know which members on the April visit will be coming to Dorking - other members from the Southern Group and other Groups who would like to join us are asked to let us know for catering purposes. A map locating the destination will be sent on receipt of an S.A.E.

The last outing of the year will be to Leonards Lee near Horsham on Sunday 24th October. These gardens are renowned for their *rhododendrons* and *azaleas*, also for the wonderful autumn tints. It is suggested that members assemble in the car park at 12.30 p.m. either bringing their own lunch or having the hot or cold snacks available on the site. A brief talk about the property and grounds will be given by a member of the National Trust staff prior to the tour. Those who would like to join in the visit are asked to let me know at least seven days before the visit indicating if they are National Trust members. Please remember that clocks will have been put back one hour that morning or you might be the first to arrive!

Finally would you please amend our postcode mentioned in the Spring Bulletin to RH2 7DN - otherwise your letters may be welcomed by someone in Guildford.

Jock Vickery.

SOUTH WEST.

Our first meeting of the year was held on March 22nd at Lytchett Matravers Village Hall, on a cold, wet, and windy afternoon. John Bridgland gave some 40 members a **demonstration** of heather Cultivation followed by a collection of slides. The subject of propagation was particularly useful to our newer members.

The afternoon also included a two class Table Show, the first Class being a vase or bowl of heathers in bloom; the second, a vase or bowl of heathers shown for foliage effect.

Class 1 (9 entries) 1st Miss J. Burfitt, 2nd Mr. H. Pringle, 3rd Mrs. D.H. Jones, HC Mrs. V. Davis.

Class 2 (5 entries) 1st Miss J. Burfitt, 2nd Mrs. V. Davis, 3rd Mrs. D. Maginess.

Our Chairman Maj. Gen. Turpin who attended this meeting kindly judged the Show entries.

During the afternoon, our Chairman also made a presentation to Beryl Farrah who has recently retired as the Society's Administrator; the gift being a brooch and earrings from Heather Gems and a plant labelling kit. Our Chairman thanked Beryl on behalf of the members for her devoted hard work over the past two years.

The afternoon concluded with an informal get-together over tea. John Bridgland was thanked for his interesting and informative talk, and Mesdammes Burfitt, Davis, Joyner Snr and Jnr for their delightful refreshments.

Our Group met again on April 26th at Catnap Cottage in Hilton, Dorset, close to the picturesque village of Milton Abbas. The garden belongs to Mrs. M.J. Phillips and is open to the public on Sundays under the National Gardens Scheme. The garden on the slopes of a valley in the North Dorset Downs is on chalk, and we saw a colourful display of heather (*E. carnea* and *E. x darleyensis*), bulbs, primulas and cowslips. Some unusual plants were displayed in the island beds and offered for sale. Mrs. Phillips herself showed about 20 members round the garden and we all enjoyed the visit enormously.

Future plans: On Saturday 19th July, members are invited at 12.30 p.m. to Beryl Farrah's home at 7, Rossley Close, Highcliffe. Please bring a picnic lunch and garden chairs. At about 3 O'clock we will drive to Phyllis Kennedy's garden at 2, Anderwood Drive, Sway for tea.

Members are again invited on Saturday 30th August to bring a picnic lunch to the home of Rev. and Mrs. Mortimer at 5, Haven Road, Corfe Mullen. (garden chairs would also be welcome). After lunch and some time to look at the garden, we will drive to Naked Cross Nurseries, formerly Maxwell & Beale's nursery, where we will be welcomed by Peter French the new owner who is busily trying to restore this nursery to its former glory.

Directions for both the meetings mentioned will be sent to members on receipt of an S.A.E. and I look forward to meeting you at one or both venues.

Phil Joyner.

FAR WEST (DEVON & CORNWALL)

As all members of the Group will be aware, we have not met together since the Conference at Falmouth, and finding a suitable venue in this area is not easy. However, I did promise to arrange one more gathering, and as the heathers in the new plantings at Exeter University are now mature, and whilst their funds still permit the gardens to be maintained, we thought it would be worth another visit as many rare plants are now also established. The meeting place will be at the Marden Hill car park on the Exeter University Campus at 2.00 p.m. on Saturday 30th August. We hope to have the retired Superintendent of the Gardens as our guide subject to his availability, for which he will charge a fee of £12.00 which would need to be raised from amongst those attending.

Should anyone wish to purchase in advance the University booklet entitled "Tour Guide to the Estate" this can be obtained for £1.16 which includes postage from the Director of Domestic Services, University of Exeter, Devonshire House, Stocker Road, Exeter.

June Randall.

N.B. If members in Devon and Cornwall would like to meet on a regular basis, perhaps once a year, we would like to hear from a "Willing volunteer" who would arrange visits and send the details to be included in our Bulletins - not such an arduous task really.

We are naturally sorry June Randall is unable to continue, and thank her for her support and enthusiasm over the past ten years. Ed.

SCRAP BOWL - Titbits of News from Members.

Heather Gems. Regarding the note on Heather Gems in the Spring Bulletin, I thought members would like to know that on our frequent visits to the Lake District we have seen these interesting forms of craft jewellery on sale in many towns and villages - a shop in Hawkshead had quite a good selection.

B.K. Lancaster, Zone 4.

Heather Whisky? How many of us realise that the finest brands of whisky derive some of their delicate flavour from heather? "The Dalmore distillery has produced the same malt whisky since 1839. The combination of cool crystal clear water from the river Alness and the patient 10 year maturing in oak produce a round full bodied malt with subtle tones of peat and heather on the aftertaste."

The Irish Mist Liqueur Co. Ltd., of Tulach Mhor, Offaly, Ireland, describes Ireland's **Legendary Liqueur with the words:-"Irish Mist is as exceptional as the beautiful green isle of its origin: a pleasing, legendary liqueur made from an age old recipe. Four great spirits each with distinct ancestry and personality are blended with exotic flavours - honeys of heather, and clover, and a dozen hand-picked aromatic herbs."**

Pat Turpin, Zone 11.

Silverpurl offer. Prize Packs of Silverpurl Growing Media are available as prizes at Shows. Groups who run Shows may like to take up this offer, so please contact Messrs Silverpurl Products Ltd., PO Box 8, Harrogate, HG2 8JH quoting their reference BLD/PJH/M28 of 4th March 1986.

E. cinerea 'Pallida' and 'Pallas' In his 'pocket Guide to Heather Gardening' page 24, Geoffrey Yates says that the latter has purple flowers and that it had previously been **grown** on the Continent as 'Pallida'. Mr. Yates possibly derived this information from Harry van de Laar's 1970 lecture at the Society's A.G.M. (reprinted in the 1971 Year Book) during the course of which he said "Our 'Pallida', a clear purple, rather hardy cultivar, appeared to be wrongly named because the true one has pale purple flowers. This old variety has been renamed 'Pallas'". Terry L. Underhill in his 'Heaths and Heathers' 1971, p.156 says that "'Pallida' has a pale pink flowers with a touch of purple". (Yates, op.cit.says "very pale lilac flowers with a trace of purple") and that 'Pallida' seems to be confused with 'Apple Blossom' and is also similar to 'G. Osmond', a statement supported by Harry van de Laar in his "The Heather Garden" (English edition 1978, p.105). As long ago as 1928, A.T. Johnson in his "Hardy Heaths" on p.70 described 'Pallida' as "a delicate shell-pink". John F. Letts antedates both Yates and Underhill by referring in his "Hardy Heaths and the Heather Garden" to 'Pallida' as "pale lavender pink with a tinge of purple" and that "there is some confusion..... between this plant and 'Apple Blossom'."

Unfortunately, neither 'Pallas' nor 'Pallida' figured in the 1971/5 Heather Trials so we lack authoritative help from that source. it would however be very helpful if members who are growing either or both of these cultivars would check their flower colour against the Society's colour chart and let the Editor know of their findings.

R.C.D. Kingsford, Zone 13.

Was it a Whirlwind? I would be interested to know if any members have experienced anything similar to the following rather strange happening and maybe can give an explanation?

It was a pleasant very calm day during last summer (1985). I cannot remember if the sun was shining. Probaly not! There was a crowd of us working in the nursery that day. I think we were weeding the young plants, and I know we were all spread about the nursery. All of a sudden, several piles of large black plastic trays which were stacked at the end of one of the beds began shaking about violently until most of the piles crashed to the ground. No one was near them and there was no wind to be felt at all.

The falling of the trays attracted everyon's attention and we were all staring in amazement when we saw that near the trays the plants in the beds were vibrating and the foliage was being whipped about just as if a large helicopter was hovering immediately over them, although there was nothing to be seen at all.

This whirlwind, if that is what it was, then made its way up the nursery. Its progress could easily be followed by the agitation of the plants as it passed over them, disturbing an area of roughly 2 or 3 square yards as it went and there still was not a breath of wind to be felt where we stood and watched. As it progressed it zig-zagged about rather erratically and I began to wonder what it would feel like if it hit one of us, or worse still, if my little sheltie 'Polly' got in its way.

When it eventually reached the nursery boundary, it disappeared over (or maybe through) **the hedge into the orchard beyond and we all heaved a sigh of relief. Not for long though,** because the next minute it was back again. This time it did a very quick circuit of the top half of the nursery and disappeared for good over our neighbours' fields.

Apart from the tipping over of the piles of trays which first attracted our attention, the whirlwind did no damage at all. We were lucky that it happened at a time when we had not started selling plants, so the beds were all full with no gaps between the pots at all. If it had happened later in the year I am sure we would have **had** many tipped up pots and mixed groups of plants.

It was an extremely eerie experience, which probably lasted no more than 2 or 3 minutes in all and one which none of us had ever seen the like before.

Daphne Everett, Zone 7

An early flowering plant of Erica tetralix At the Southern Group meeting on the 20th April 1986 I was astonished to see a plant of E. tetralix 'Hookstone Pink' in John Tucker's garden in Worthing with two flowers in full bloom. This exceptionally early date is all the more surprising in view of the harsh winter and the comparatively late season.

Pat Turpin, Zone 11

DIARY OF EVENTS

Jul.	4/6th	Southampton Show - South West Group Heather Society Stand.
Jul.	19th	South West Group - Two garden visits, see Group Nes.
Jul.	26th	North East (Newcastle) Group - Garden visit at Ogle, see Spring Bulletin.
Jul.	27th	Southern Group - Garden visit, see Group News.
Aug.	12th	COUNCIL MEETING at R.H.S. Halls, Westminster.
Aug.	12/13th	R.H.S. Summer Flower Show & Heather Competitions, R.H.S. Halls, Westminster.
Aug.	15th	Midlands (Leicester/Nottingham) Group - Garden visit & Buffet supper, see Group News.
Aug.	17th	Midlands (Birmingham) Group - Coach trip to the National Garden Festival.
Aug.	30th	South West Group - Two visits at Corfe Mullen, see Group News.
Aug.	30th	Far West (Devon & Cornwall) Group - Visit to Exeter University, see Group News.
Sep.	6th	North East (Newcastle) Group - Annual Heather Show, see Group News.
Sep.	5/8th	ANNUAL CONFERENCE, Tetley Hall, Leeds University.
Sep.	7th	ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, Tetley Hall, Leeds University.
Oct.	17th	Midlands (Leicester/Nottingham) Group - Heather arranging for home & show, see Group News.
Oct.	24th	Southern Group - Garden visit, see Group News.
Nov.	25th	COUNCIL MEETING at R.H.S. Halls, Westminster.
Nov.	28th	Midlands (Birmingham) - Heather Quiz.
Mar.	6th(87)	Midlands (Birmingham) - Programme to be decided.
Mar.	18th(87)	Midlands (Leicester/Nottingham) - Our favourite heathers, see Group News.