

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

It was a great pleasure for us to meet so many members at our Annual Conference early in September. We were fortunate to enjoy a warm and sunny weekend in the lovely area of Mid-Wales near Newtown, and the venue itself Gregynog "a stately home" was really delightful. An added pleasure was meeting members from Australia, the U.S.A., Holland, Norway and Sweden, a truly international gathering. A full report of the Conference will be in the 1989 Year Book.

Now that autumn is upon us, there are many tasks for us to catch up with in the garden before the winter sets in. We still have apples to pick and store, leaves to clear, also weeding and top dressing the new heather beds. How thankful we are that the winter-flowering heathers are going to bloom through those grey days ahead, filling the gap until the spring bulbs appear.

Diane Jones.

AGM GREGYNOG, NEAR NEWTOWN, POWYS, 11th SEPTEMBER 1988

In the Chairman's opening statement he reminded us of the sad loss of one of our Vice-President's Dr. Violet Gray who had generously made a bequest to the Society.

General Turpin then welcomed our many overseas visitors and all those attending.

The new management at Wisley is making further progress with the Reference Collection and planting should begin this autumn.

Bells Whisky have started a heather collection at Perth and are funding a scholarship for a student to work on heathers at Harlow Car.

In our 25th Anniversary year we must look afresh at the aims of the Society and work to encourage more local groups.

Concern has been expressed about indiscriminate naming of new heathers. All members are encouraged to name new plants only if they are distinct and different enough.

The Chairman then thanked all members of Council, Group Convenors, Officers and our Administrator for their tireless efforts for the Society.

The President, Vice-Presidents and Officers of the Society were re-elected, and our Auditor Mr. Alan Simms was re-appointed for a further year.

Three members of Council retiring by rotation under Rule 6 were re-elected, Mr. H. L. Nicholson, Mr. A. Stow, and Mr. G. P. Vickers. An appreciative vote of thanks to the Chairman was proposed by Mr. Arnold Stow.

The Hon. Secretary, in her report, spoke of our varied membership. She made an appeal for photographic material for the society's records and encouraged members themselves to form small local groups within Zones. She also would be representing the Society at the Specialist Societies' Conference on October 15th, organised by the RHS, which it is hoped will strengthen links with the RHS for the future.

The Hon. Treasurer presented the Society's Accounts for the year ended 31st December 1987. A brief summary is included in this report. If any member would like a full copy of the statement would they please write to the Hon. Treasurer with a SAE at 17 Hayclose Crescent, Kendal, Cumbria. LA9 7NT.

Summary of the Accounts for the year 1987.

INCOME: Subscriptions, Donations, Tax Rebates on Covenants	£6712.53
Profit from Sales of publications etc.	526.68
Interest from Investments and Deposits	1780.71
Registration Fees	4.00

	£9023.92
Expenditure: Year Book, Bulletins, Postage	£2301.84
Administration	2072.27

	£4374.11

The Balance Sheet shows that there was a credit balance on the year's transactions at 31st December of £4649.81.

Royal Horticultural Society's Competition for Heathers and other ornamental plants from the open August 16 and 17, 1988

There were 10 exhibitors in this competition. It was nice to see the names of a number of newcomers, although some of our regular exhibitors were missing.

Results:

Class 1

Three distinct heathers in bloom, one vase/bowl of each. 5 entries.

1st Dr. W. J. Stevens	<i>Calluna vulgaris</i> 'Silver Queen'
	<i>E. Cinerea</i> 'Foxhollow Mahogany'
	<i>E. cinerea</i> 'Rock Pool'
2nd. Mrs. Chapman	<i>Calluna vulgaris</i> 'Silver Knight'
	<i>Calluna vulgaris</i> unnamed
	<i>E. vagans</i> 'Charm'
3rd. Maj-Gen. and Mrs. P.G.Turpin	<i>Calluna vulgaris</i> 'Grey Carpet'
	<i>Daboecia cantabrica</i> "TC 58"
	<i>E. vagans</i> 'Grandiflora'

Class 2. *Erica vagans*, one vase/bowl. 6 entries.

1st. Mrs. M. Chapman.	'Cream'
2nd. Maj-Gen and Mrs. Turpin.	'Mrs. D. F. Maxwell'
3rd. Mrs. M. Chapman.	unnamed.

Class 3 *Calluna vulgaris*, a single flowered coloured cultivar, one vase/bowl. 5 entries.

1st. Maj-Gen. and Mrs. Turpin.	'Hookstone'
2nd. Mr. D. McClintock.	'Prizewinner'
3rd. Mr. D. McClintock.	'Grey Seedling'

Class 4. *Calluna vulgaris*, a double flowered coloured cultivar, one vase/bowl. 4 entries.

1st. Mrs. M. Chapman.	'Radnor'
2nd Mr. D. McClintock.	'Mrs. E. Wilson'
3rd. Maj-Gen. and Mrs. Turpin.	'Tib'

Class 5. *Calluna vulgaris*, a single or double flowered white cultivar, one vase/bowl. 6 entries.

1st Mrs. M. Chapman.	'White Mite'
2nd Maj-Gen. and Mrs. Turpin.	'Alba Plena'
3rd. Maj-Gen. and Mrs. Turpin.	'August Beauty'.

Class 6. *Erica cinerea*, any cultivar, one vase/bowl. 6 entries.

1st. Dr. W. J. Stevens.	'Hookstone White'
2nd. Mr. D. McClintock.	'Next Best'
3rd. Mr. D. McClintock.	unnamed.

- Class 7. *Daboecia*, any species, hybrid or cultivar, one vase/bowl, 4 entries.
 1st Maj-Gen and Mrs. Turpin. 'Praegerae'
 2nd Mr. D. McClintock 'William Buchanan Gold'
- Class 8. Any heather species or hybrid, one plant. No entries.
- Class 9. Any heather species or hybrid not specified above, one vase/bowl. 3 entries.
 1st. Maj-Gen. and Mrs. Turpin. *E. x watsonii* 'H. Maxwell'
 2nd. Mr. D. McClintock. *E. manipuliflora*
 3rd. Maj-Gen. and Mrs. Turpin *E. manipuliflora*
- Class 10. Any heather, one vase/bowl, to be judged for foliage effect. 10 entries.
 1st. Dr. W. J. Stevens. *E. cinerea* 'Windlebrooke'
 2nd. Mrs. M. Chapman *E. arborea* 'Albert's Gold'
 3rd. Maj-Gen. and Mrs. Turpin *E. erigena* 'Golden Lady'
- Class 11. Any heather, one plant, to be judged for foliage effect. No entries.
- Class 12. Decorative Class - An arrangement of heathers in a basket. 4 entries.
 1st Mrs. J. Wright
 2nd Mrs. J. Merrin
 3rd Dr. W. J. Stevens
 4th Mrs. E. A. McClintock

19th ANNUAL CONFERENCE, 1st - 4th September 1989

The Society's Annual Conference next year will be held at Durham University from 1st to the 4th September. This will be the first occasion the Society has held a Conference in the North East, and the thriving local Group there are looking forward to welcoming as many members as possible. We will not be restricted for numbers on this occasion so please reserve the dates now. Mrs. Dorothy Warner, the North East Group Secretary tells us the University is in beautiful grounds close to the City and the river. Durham is easily reached by both the motorway and the railway. A longer stay will enable members to visit the spectacular Northumberland coastline.

Dorothy Warner has kindly agreed to be the Conference Organiser and advance bookings may be sent to her (enclosing £2 per mailing) at "Littlecroft", Click-Em-In, Ponteland, Newcastle Upon Tyne. NE20 9BQ. The booking charge is to cover administrative costs incurred by the organiser and is not a deposit on the Conference fee. Cheques should be made payable to "Heather Society Conference". The programme and Conference charges will be published in the Spring Bulletin.

CORRECTION - YEAR BOOK 1988

Page 58, third paragraph, line 3. The colour of the flowers of 'Gwen' is pale pink (H8).

GROUP NEWS

NORTHEAST (NEWCASTLE)

A very enjoyable Open Day was spent at the Durham College of Horticulture at Houghall on Sunday May 15th where, at their invitation, the Heather Society had a stand. The whole event was well supported and everyone enjoyed seeing the gardens and demonstrations in glorious sunshine.

Not so well supported unfortunately was our outing to Windermere on June 4th, which meant that those of us who were keen went in cars when we had to cancel the bus. There were 14 of us, and we had a wonderful sunny day visiting Holehird where we were privileged to have a talk on the history of the garden before we went round. This garden is quite unique and there were fine displays of massed heathers as well as many other specimens of great interest and beauty, to say nothing of the views across the Lake with a backdrop of the Langdale Pikes. From there we went on to Stagshaw gardens which were equally interesting although completely different. This is a heavily wooded garden supporting rhododendrons and azaleas in profusion.

Our most recent event was on Sunday September 18th when we held our 5th Annual Show at David and Marjorie Goodchild's garden. As ever, the garden was delightful and many members and visitors enjoyed strolling round in the sun. There were 14 Classes for heathers which attracted 86 entries and the standard was high. The Trophy for the maximum number of points was won by first-time exhibitors Lt. Col. and Mrs. Roberts, and they also won the Trophy for the best exhibits in classes 11-14. The Trophy for the Best Exhibit in the Show went again to Dorothy Wild with 'Kinlochruel'. Congratulations to you all.

Our A.G.M. (very short) will be held in the Methodist Church Hall on Monday 31st October 1988 at 7.30 p.m., and after the business is over we welcome our member Jim Shipp who will give an illustrated talk on heathers. We look forward to seeing you all there.

Dorothy Warner

MIDLANDS (BIRMINGHAM)

On September 17th, Midlands members visited Julian Swain's wholesale heather nursery at Burton Overy near Leicester. Apart from being given the ever popular opportunity to browse round a heather nursery, we were also able to wander round Julian's very attractive display gardens, 'laid out like a mini Wisley' as my husband Maurice remarked. The Callunas were just at their best when we were there. An enjoyable afternoon ended with a cup of tea provided by Julian's wife in their thatched cottage next to the nursery.

Our next meeting is at 7.45 p.m. on November 4th 1988 at Winterbourne, when Ray Warner will give us an illustrated talk on 'The Beginning of Barncroft Nursery'. Anyone who has seen this nursery with its beautiful heather garden, cannot fail to be impressed with what it entailed at the start.

For your Diary - Friday March 10th 1989, at Winterbourne, heather competitions and members' slides.

Daphne Everett.

SOUTHERN

On one of the very few fine days in July, 29 members foregathered on the 31st at the Savill Gardens, Windsor. We were pleased to have with us some who had crossed the frontier of their own Zones and hope they may decide to come again.

After a picnic lunch we were joined by Mr. John Bond, the Keeper of the Gardens, who led our convoy through to the adjoining Valley Gardens. Since our last visit he had made major changes in the design and layout of the heather gardens in which a number of interesting slow-growing conifers had been incorporated. As usual Mr. Bond gave a most articulate account of his husbandry and future intentions. His practice of planting heathers a metre apart came something of a surprise. I suppose if we had control of some 500 acres of parkland our plants might find themselves more widely separated!

Events in 1989. On 30th April, Mr. R. S. W., Biggs of Ockham House, Bodium, Robertsbridge, East Sussex, has kindly consented to be invaded at 11 a.m. Mr. Biggs produces a million heathers each year for the wholesale and retail trade as well as a wide variety of other plants. We earnestly hope that by choosing this location we may have the pleasure of the company of some of the several Society members resident in Kent who may have felt that past venues were too remote from them.

The village of Bodium is within a square bounded by the A229 on the west, A268 on the north, A28 on the east and B2089 on the south. Quite close to the nursery are the ruins of Bodium Castle which attracts many visitors and may appeal to members after lunch. There are excellent eating facilities in the village for those who prefer not to picnic.

August 20th is a date you must not miss. Kind invitations have been received to visit two outstandingly beautiful heather gardens. Firstly at 11.30 a.m. Mr. and Mrs D. W. Bowerman of Champs Hill, Coldwaltham, Pulborough will await our arrival and, in addition to letting us share their acres of heather for a while, have generously offered to provide a buffet lunch.

Parting company with our first hosts at about 2.45 p.m. we shall proceed to 'Floraldene', Findon Road, Worthing, where John Tucker will show how ingeniously he has covered the deep scars left behind by the violence of the storm in October 1987. The colours of his heathers and other plants at this time of year cause many of us pangs of envy. He also proposes to serve tea before we leave. Further details will be given in the Summer Bulletin.

Notice of intention to attend either or both gatherings should reach me at least 14 days beforehand to assist with catering.

Jock Vickery

SOUTHWEST

June was hot and dry but on the last day of that month the rains came heralding the weekend of the Southampton Show. The local Group stand was erected on the Thursday evening whilst a thunderstorm broke over the Show ground and horticultural marquees, but despite the wet weather for the rest of the weekend interest was again shown in the Society by some of those people brave enough to slosh around in the mud. My thanks go to John Bridgland for taking charge of the stand on the Friday and Saturday, and to the willing helpers Bill and Joan Vicary, Olivia Hall and Betty Allsop for manning the stand. My thanks also to Derek and Owen Price for supplying plants and materials.

Saturday July 9th was a day when the weather wasn't quite sure of what it wanted to do and although rain threatened, an enjoyable day was had by the members attending two venues in Wiltshire.

We started off by having picnic lunches with Des and Sybil Perry at Market Lavington, and as on previous occasions members were warmly welcomed into their home and garden. We were shown the summer-flowering heathers beginning to put on their display and an enjoyable hour was spent looking at the garden and chatting on our favourite subject. After lunch we moved on to visit the Botanic Nursery at Atworth near Melksham. Apologies were received from Mr. and Mrs. Baker who own the nursery and who were unable to attend that day. However Mr. Baker's brother was on hand to show us round the nursery still being created after a recent change of site. Many unusual plants were on show and some were available for members to buy. The afternoon was rounded off with refreshment provided by the nursery staff.

It seemed every holidaymaker was on the roads on Saturday 13th August when members made two visits in Dorset. We started the afternoon by meeting at the home of John and Michelle Keenan at Wimborne, and members were treated to a neatly laid out garden on a modern housing estate. The beds and borders were of heathers and dwarf conifers as well as a display of fuchsias. Michelle provided additional refreshment for our picnic lunches and both she and John extended a warm welcome to us all. It was nice to relax after the hustle and bustle of the surrounding holiday routes.

It was a short distance after lunch to Heatherwood Nurseries at Ashington. At the nursery members were greeted by Ron Squires and his son Peter, who showed us how the ericaceous potting compost is mixed and bagged. Peter also described the making of the various "Minster" brands of potting compost which are distributed widely. Ron Squires then showed us the garden adjacent to the nursery and we admired the superb display of heathers and conifers. As on previous visits to this nursery, Mrs. Squires provided us with ample refreshment and so another successful visit was enjoyed by all.

I must thank again all those who have hosted our meetings, the local Group would not prosper without them.

For your 1989 diary. Our first meeting of the New Year will as usual be at Lytchett Matravers Village Hall at 2 p.m. on Saturday 1st April. There will be a talk on wild flowers by Desmond and Marjorie Parish, plant hunters, photographers and authors. We will also have our annual two Class Table Show —

Class 1 A vase or bowl of heathers in bloom.

Class 2 A vase or bowl of heathers shown for foliage effect.

Prizes will be given, and the Burfitt Bowl will be awarded for the year to the exhibitor with the most points. Lytchett Matravers is situated 6 miles from Poole, and 1 mile west of the Poole to Blandford road. The village hall is on the west side of the High Street just north of the Rose and Crown Inn. Ample parking is available, and there will be a small charge to cover expenses.

May I remind members to send two SAE's for details of the 1989 visits. I shall conclude this report by wishing members a colourful winter and look forward to seeing you all in 1989.

Phil Joyner.

NORTH AMERICAN HEATHER SOCIETY.

I have been impressed during the past year by the number of popular articles about heather growing in a variety of magazines, journals, and newspapers. Whether or not there is an actual increase or just more coming to my attention, it is encouraging to see so many people promoting heathers for the landscape garden. The commercial heather growers seem to be growing and selling more plants than they used to. All this indicates to me that more and more people are discovering heather as a desirable plant for North America. NAHS is in a position to contribute in several ways to this increased interest in heathers.

Lloyd Eighme.

Erica terminalis* var *albiflora

The drawback to *Erica terminalis* is that the flower colour of the usual clone is dull. It remains to be seen if the darker 'Thelma Woolner' attains tree-like trunks and height (8ft 9ins at Bracken Hill, and 9½ins girth at the base after about 35 years). If only we had a white one, what a boon to our gardens! Of this there seems to be three records, all very old, near Salerno in Italy in 1831, and two in Corsica in 1842 and 1847. No one seemed to know more until, by chance a friend mentioned that he had seen one on his honeymoon in Corsica a few years ago. The spot had been wet rocks in the upper parts of the Gorges de l'Asco, on the north side of the road to the hospice.

So, in early June I fitted in a very brief trip there. It started by meeting a very remarkable woman, Mme Marcelle Conrad, getting on in years, but still camping out in the hills and very familiar with the island's wild flowers, her paintings of which had been published in 11 fascicules between 1974 and 1987. She has just been awarded the Gold Medal of the Botanical Society of France. She had never heard of a white one. But she surprised me by saying that *E. terminalis* grew only about 50 cm high, 1 m at the most; and I surprised her when I told her of its tree-like stature here.

In the end, I saw it only in two places, in no great quantity, and none with white flowers. The first was at 1600 ft right by the river's bushy bank, where it obviously got swept in the snow melt. Here, the bushes were tree-like, if pressed nearly flat by the flood water; one stem was measured at no less than 9 ft, by 9¾ins. The flowers were dark, Red-Purple 78A. Cuttings have rooted.

The other place was by the N roadside below wet rocks at 2,800 ft, west of Asco village. Here the plants had been well grazed by cattle and no doubt goats, and few flowers had been able to show themselves — but the few which did were also dark. No plant seemed to have the paler foliage which usually goes with white flowers. Is such a plant still there?

David McClintock.

SCRAP BOWL — Titbits of news from members.

A Scottish National heather Collection has been established at the headquarters of Arthur Bell Distillers, Perth, in the delightful surroundings of their Cherrybank Gardens. A most happy and appropriate arrangement with one of Scotland's foremost distillers supporting Scotland's best loved flower. This has come about through the joint co-operation of the Company, the National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens and the Northern Horticultural Society. Indeed Harlow Car Gardens have a leading role to play in the development of this most important and prestigious collection.

It is here at Harrogate that the technical and scientific back-up for the collection will be provided in conjunction with the Heather Society, the International Registration Authority. Arthur Bell Distillers have also agreed to fund the first Heather Scholarship, a post graduate one year award to be undertaken at Harlow Car with the heather collection. The intention is that the scholar undertakes practical research work and produces a thesis, and at the end of the year presents the Bell's Heather Lecture at the Annual Conference of the Heather Society.

(The Cherrybank Gardens, on the A9 western approach to Perth, are open to the public during the summer months. Exact times are available from the local tourist board office.)

Extract from 'The Northern Gardener' (N.H.S.) summer issue.

'A Strategy for Surrey heathland' A publication with this title was jointly published in June this year by The Nature Conservancy Council and Surrey County Council. This 40 page booklet deals with the ownership and management of the Surrey heathlands, and makes recommendations for the future protection of them. Copies of this publication are available from Surrey County Council Planning Department, County Hall, Kingston-on-Thames, KT1 2DT.

Couch amongst heathers. I had foolishly allowed Couch (*Agropyron repens*) to become established in part of a healthy 17 year old planting of *Erica x darleyensis* 'Silberschmelze' which had long since grown together. Reluctantly, I decided that the safest way to rid the bed of that tiresome member of the Gramineae was to dig out the affected heathers, and then thoroughly clear the soil of its rhizomes.

When the heathers were removed, I found that some of the outer stems were 1.25 m long. They were bare of leaves for about 1 m where they had crept along the ground. The outer 25 cm turned upwards, and were well clothed with foliage and flowers. One of the "trunks" was 13.3 cm in circumference.

Bert Jones.

Heather restoration in Dorset. Forty acres of poor quality farmland are being restored to heath at Middle Beer Farm, between Corfe Castle and Arne in the Purbecks.

Dorset has lost 90% of its heathland to farming or other development this century. So the Trust decided to take the opportunity of a change of lease to restore this land which had only been cultivated since the 1960's. Warden Geoff Hann hopes the restoration will not need expensive re-seeding, because of the relatively short time it has been farmed and because it adjoins a natural seed bank — the heathland of Hartland Moor which is a Trust-owned National Nature Reserve. He said "No sprays or fertilisers will be used on it and we are leaving it ungrazed. We are experimenting with some areas by breaking up the greensward by rotavating or harrowing. Already, in this first year, we are getting some re-generation of cross-leaved heather".

Gorse is being allowed to colonise parts of the same area to increase the habitat of the rare Dartford Warbler. Brian Pickiss, Warden at the RSPB's neighbouring Arne reserve, has offered help and advice with the project.

Extract from: National Trust, Wessex.

An unusual year —

During the summer of 1988 most heathers tended to flower earlier than usual, partly because of the comparatively mild winter of 1987/88. The winter-flowering heathers also appeared to form their buds early and many plants of *E. carnea* were full of bud in July.

Now, some cultivars of *E. carnea* and *E. x darleyensis* have started flowering before the end of October. I have a plant of *E. x darleyensis* 'Dunreggan' in full flower, while 'Darley Dale' and 'Arthur Johnson' have some stems in flower. At the last R.H.S. Show (Oct. 11/12) several stands had *E. x darleyensis* breaking into flower. A white seedling of *E. carnea* is already in flower here, and last week I saw several plants of *E. carnea* (including 'Queen of Spain') showing flowers at Wisley.

E. lusitanica, as usual, has been flowering since the beginning of October, and *E. canaliculata* even longer.

P.G. Turpin,
Zone 11.

DIARY OF EVENTS

- Oct. 29th CLOSING DATE - material for the 1989 Year Book.
Oct. 31st NORTHEAST (NEWCASTLE) Group. A.G.M. & illustrated talk. See Group News.
Nov. 4th MIDLANDS (BIRMINGHAM) Group. Illustrated talk at Winterbourne. See Group News.
Nov. 29th COUNCIL MEETING - R.H.S. Halls, Westminster.
Nov. 29/30th R.H.S. Show, Competitions include a class for heathers. R.H.S. Halls, Westminster.
- 1989**
- Jan. 14th CLOSING DATE - Material for the Spring Bulletin.
Feb. 21st COUNCIL MEETING, R.H.S. Halls, Westminster.
Feb. 21/22nd R.H.S. Show inc. Heather Competitions, R.H.S. Halls, Westminster.
Mar. 10th MIDLANDS (BIRMINGHAM) Group. Heather Competitions & members' slides at Winterbourne.
Apr. 1st SOUTH WEST Group. Talk at Lytchett Matravers. See Group News.
Apr. 30th SOUTHERN Group. Visit to Ockham Nursery, E.Sussex. See Group News.
Aug. 15th COUNCIL MEETING, R.H.S. Halls, Westminster.
Aug. 15/16th R.H.S. Show, incl. Heather Competitions, R.H.S. Halls, Westminster.
Aug. 20th SOUTHERN Group. Two garden visits in Sussex. See Group News.
Sep. 1/4th ANNUAL CONFERENCE, DURHAM UNIVERSITY