

# THE HEATHER SOCIETY BULLETIN



VOL 4. No. 8. AUTUMN 1989

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*In the 22 years that the Bulletin has been published it has only had two editors, Diane Jones who, for the past 12 years, has combined the job with running a heather nursery and being a J.P. and Constance MacLeod the Heather Society's first Hon. Secretary, whose brainchild the Bulletin was back in 1967. I know therefore what a great deal I have to live up to.*

*Thank you to all the members who have written to wish me luck and for your suggestions. One member has requested a 'Problem Corner' and has offered to keep me supplied with at least one problem for each of the next six editions. I should be able to find some answers among the Society's experts, so if you like the idea and have any problems (heather, not money) please send them in.*

*Our conference at Durham was a great success; it is always a great pleasure to meet old friends and make new ones. Northern hospitality can be highly recommended and not just because Bells sent along a case of their special whisky for us to taste. I think the arrival of the Heather Society caused confusion among the holiday makers who were using the College as their base. They fully expected us to appear in kilts and dance a Highland Fling or at the very least break into a Scottish ballad after dinner. Even Durham's*

*local paper, The Northern Echo, appears to have been quite bemused by the whole affair, as is apparent from the article that appeared on September 1st, a small part of which is reproduced below:*

*"Heather is fairly fascinating stuff. It is waved under your nose by spurious gypsies outside long cinema queues. Either you part with ten bob for a sprig or get damned to a lifetime of hell on earth, or at least a half an hour of embarrassment before the box office opens. Cathy probably raced across a mile of it to get to her Heathcliff - but now arrives some news about heather which requires a complete suspension of belief - a group of people from England, not to mention the rest of Europe, is gathering in Durham tonight for a weekend of talking about it. There would not be a gypsy outside the conference hall, selling a touch of the white variety to ensure that all goes smoothly, confirmed Dorothy Warner. Nor will video recordings of Gene Kelly searching for his lost love on Scottish heaths be shown. This is serious business about heather. It is the Heather Society's Annual Conference no less and the first time it has been organised in the North-East".*

*There will be a full report of the Conference in the Year Book.*

## AGM DURHAM UNIVERSITY - 3RD SEPTEMBER 1989

The Chairman welcomed members to the Conference and especially several members of the North East Group who were attending for the first time.

It was announced that:- Mr Chris Brickell, who had been President of the Society for the last 10 years, had asked to be relieved

of the appointment, due to the pressure of his many commitments and his resignation had been regretfully accepted. Our Registrar, Mr David McClintock was then elected as President as a fitting tribute to all his work for the Heather Society in the past 26 years.

The Reference Collection at Wisley is progressing well.

The International Heather Register is expected to be ready in early 1990.

The death was reported at the age of 84, of Mr George Osmond of Archfield Nursery, Wickwar in Gloucestershire. Mr Osmond started his nursery 60 years ago, after working at the well known heather nursery of Maxwell & Beale. He was responsible for *Erica cinerea* 'George Osmond', *E. ciliaris* 'Corfe Castle', *Calluna vulgaris* 'Bunsall' and 'Wickwar Flame'.

The Chairman concluded with the announcement that the 1990 Conference will be held at Sparsholt College of

Agriculture in Hampshire, 7th - 10th September.

The Hon. Secretary reported on the progress of the Society throughout the year, especially through the activities of the various regional groups. She also spoke of the recently formed British Heather Growers Association and its aims in raising standards in commercial heather growing.

The Hon. Treasurer presented the Society's accounts for the year ending December 31 1988, in his usual humorous fashion. Mr Simms has agreed to audit the accounts for one further year only.

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## 20th ANNUAL CONFERENCE, 7th - 10th SEPTEMBER 1990

The 1990 Conference of the Society will be held at Sparsholt College, Hampshire from 7th to 10th September. The College is in a delightful rolling downland setting just a few miles west of Winchester. The College can be reached by train to Winchester and then bus or is easily found by car. The College runs Agriculture and Horticulture courses and is expanding into a Conference Centre role.

The programme is currently being organised but will include a tour of the College's Horticultural Department, a talk on and a visit to Hillier's Arboretum and a talk by John Battye of Wisley on 'Wisley and the Heather Garden - the next 10 years'. A field trip to the New Forest with an alternative garden visit is also being considered.

The single room accommodation available will be of the usual study bedroom type or a bedroom with an en suite shower and toilet. The en suite accommodation will be approximately £10 dearer for the whole weekend.

Advance bookings may be sent with a booking charge of £2 per mailing, to Phil Joyner, 84 Kinross Road, Totton, Southampton, SO44BN, indicating which type of accommodation is preferred. 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 the 'Heather Society Conference'. The programme and Conference charges will be published in the Spring Bulletin. For those people wishing to holiday in the area around the Conference weekend the College will be pleased to take individual bookings. Details will be enclosed with the advanced booking acknowledgement.

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## FROM THE CHAIRMAN

### An Appreciation

After 12 years of devoted service Diane Jones has handed over the editorship of the Bulletin to Daphne Everett. On behalf of all the members of the Heather Society I should like to express my appreciation and warm thanks to Diane for all she has done as Editor. The Bulletin provides a most valuable means of communication between the members of our widely

scattered Society and we all owe Diane a great debt of gratitude for the way in which she has maintained the character and the standards of the Bulletin during the years of her stewardship.

To her successor we offer a warm welcome and our best wishes for a successful tenure as Editor.

### R.H.S. Heather Competition - August 15th & 16th 1989

There was rather a dearth of entries in this competition, no doubt due to the hot, dry weather which we have been enjoying. There were very few entries in the classes for *Daboecia* and *Erica cinerea* but the *Callunas* were in flower earlier than usual and helped to make a good splash of colour.

### Results:

Class 1. Three distinct heathers in bloom, one vase/bowl of each. 3 entries.

1st. Mrs M Chapman *C.v.* 'Silver Knight'  
*C.v.* Unknown *C.v.* Unknown

2nd. Maj.Gen. & Mrs P G Turpin *C.v.* 'Bonfire Brilliance' *E. ciliaris*, *E. vagans* 'St. Keverne'

Class 2. *Erica vagans*, one vase/bowl. 3 entries.

1st. Maj.Gen. & Mrs P G Turpin 'Mrs D F Maxwell'

2nd. Mrs M Chapman 'Cream'

3rd. Mrs M Chapman 'Mrs D F Maxwell'

Class 3. *Calluna vulgaris*, a single flowered cultivar, one vase/bowl. 4 entries.

1st. Maj.Gen. & Mrs P G Turpin "PR 3"

2nd. Maj.Gen. & Mrs P G Turpin 'Ross Hutton'

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

Class 4. *Calluna vulgaris*, a double flowered cultivar, one vase/bowl. 2 entries.

1st. Maj.Gen. & Mrs P G Turpin 'Tib'

2nd. Mrs M Chapman 'Tib'

Class 5. *Calluna vulgaris*, a single or double flowered white cultivar, one vase/bowl. 2 entries.

1st. Mrs M Chapman Unknown

2nd. Maj.Gen. & Mrs P G Turpin 'August Beauty'

Class 6. *Erica cinerea*, any cultivar, one vase/bowl. 2 entries.

1st. Mrs M Chapman 'Katinka'

2nd. Mrs M Chapman 'Lavender Lady'

Class 7. *Daboecia*, any species, hybrid or cultivar, one vase/bowl. No entries.

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. & Mrs P G Turpin *E. manipuliiflora*

2nd. Maj.Gen. & Mrs P G Turpin *E. terminalis* Thelma Woolner

3rd. Maj.Gen. & Mrs P G Turpin *E. tetralix* f. *stellata*

Class 10. Any heather, one vase/bowl, to be judged for foliage effect. 6 entries.

1st. Maj.Gen. & Mrs P G Turpin *E. erigena* 'Golden Lady'

2nd. Mrs M Chapman *C.v.* 'Anthony Davis'

3rd. Maj.Gen. & Mrs P G Turpin *C.v.* 'Carole Chapman'

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. 3 entries.

1st. Jean L Merrin

2nd. Mrs Jill Wright

3rd. Mrs Jill Wright

Our Chairman comments that he is afraid that the name of Turpin appears rather too much. Where, he asks, are the other competitors? (Ed).

## GROUP NEWS

## North East

The Conference is still very much in our minds as it is only one week since we said 'au revoir' to all our new friends. We thoroughly enjoyed entertaining you and we were blessed with good weather which, obviously, added to the pleasure of the gardens.

Our own local Heather Show will be held on September 14th in David and Margery Goodchilds' garden and our A.G.M. will be on October 30th. Both these dates, already mentioned in the Summer Bulletin, will have passed by the time you read this, so a fuller report will be in the next Bulletin.

Now that the Conference is over it is 'heads down' again for the Gateshead Garden Festival which takes place next year from May 18th to October 21st 1990, more details about this later. The North East Group sends its thanks to Diane Jones for editing the Bulletin for so long and its best wishes to Daphne Everett in her new role.

*Dorothy Warner*

## Midlands

On August 19th the Midlands Group paid a visit to 'Lakeside' the home of Radio 3 Producer Denys Gueroult and the compiler of 'The Plant Finder' Chris Philip, at Whitbourne in Worcestershire. After a very welcome cup of coffee Denys took about 30 members on a tour of the garden with its 2 acre medieval lake and told us a little about its history. As the garden is walled on 2 sides Denys and Chris are able to grow many unusual and slightly tender plants and they have planted a large heather bed on a sloping site at the end of the lake.

In the 5 years that they have been at Lakeside, Denys and Chris have turned a rather run down garden into one which is

now featured in the 'Yellow book' and is open twice a year for charity.

Most of our members live in and around Birmingham and had to travel about 40 miles to attend this meeting so it was nice to see so many and to welcome several visitors from other regions.

After leaving Lakeside, those who had their passports with them crossed the border into Herefordshire and drove the 3 miles through bandit country to Bringsty where Maurice and I were very pleased to welcome everyone to a buffet lunch. The weather could not have been kinder so we were able to eat lunch in the garden and we even managed to find seats for nearly everyone.

After lunch, those who had enough energy wandered round the garden and nursery while others sat and chatted in the sunshine. Maurice and I had a lovely day (Heather Society members are very good company) we hope they all enjoyed it too.

Our next meeting is at 7.45 on November 10th at Winterbourne when Sarah Rogers is going to give us a talk on 'Paperweights' which she makes using real flowers, including heathers. Friday March 9th 1990 is the date for the Winter meeting which will be at 7.45pm at Winterbourne. This is the meeting in which we hold our annual Heather competition. The winner (currently Olwyn Warner) will receive the Midlands Group Silver Cup.

Full details will be in the Newsletter which I will be sending out after Christmas and if anyone who does not receive the Newsletter is interested in taking part or would like to be on the mailing list, please telephone me on 0885 482206.

*Daphne Everett*

## Southern

On 30th April a first visit was made to the nursery of Mr Richard Biggs at Bodiam, situated near the Sussex/Kent border. This venue was chosen due to the interest it offered and in the hope that some Society members from Kent might supplement our numbers for the first time. Interest there certainly was and the time devoted to our presence by Richard Biggs was greatly appreciated. The misting process for the rapid development of cuttings was evidently highly successful. Sadly the Kent contingent, with one exception, did not venture beyond their borders and consequently missed an enjoyable meeting and the very kind and generous hospitality extended by our host and hostess before we left.

Some 3 months and a lot of sunshine but little rain later, a delightful day was spent at two beautiful gardens belonging to members. Such is their splendour that it is always a joy to return. Champs Hill lost 600 trees in the 1987 hurricane, happily many were spared and the beauty of the garden and especially the panoramic view, had been greatly enhanced. Some new heather beds had been created where trees previously existed and the overall spectacle was quite superb.

Mary and David Bowerman, our kind and splendid hosts, had prepared a most delightful and appetising buffet luncheon. To consume these lovely solids and liquids seated on their patio, overlooking a valley with a backcloth of the South Downs, will be a memory to be treasured for a long time to come.

After lunch and travelling some 12 miles we reached the domain of John Tucker on the outskirts of Worthing. I should mention that the use of a garden hose had not been banned at Champs Hill but its output had been restricted to an area

around the house. Worthing however in their wisdom had imposed such a ban from 5th June. You can imagine the physical struggle it had been for John Tucker to maintain life and growth in some 3/4 of an acre. The appearance was a tribute to his tenacity and endeavour. Again the hurricane had created spaces for heather beds and John had ingeniously had their trunks and branches cut to form raised enclosures for several new heathers emanating from Holland. He had also found time to bake a wide variety of tasty cakes for the pleasure of 32 members before their departure on what had undoubtedly been a happy, enjoyable and most interesting day.

A lack of water, which at the time of our visit on 20th August, had extended to 11 weeks, provided an opportunity of ascertaining which heathers were more drought resistant than others. The following were John's findings:-

Drought Resistant	Fairly Resistant	Drought Susceptible
'Sandpit Hills'	'Atrosanguinea'	'Irish Dusk'
'Summer Wonder'	'Tib'	'Irish Salmon'
'W T Rackliff'	'Tenuis'	'mackaiana' 'Plena'
'Jan Dekker'		'Corfe Castle'
'Salmon Leap'		'Mrs Gill'
'Brian Proudley'		'Brightness'
'Ewan Jones'		'Wickwar Flame'
Tree heaths		
'Pink Spangles'		
'Fiddlestone'		
'Windlebrook'		

Future visits - These will be outlined in the Spring Bulletin

*Jock Vickery*

## South West

It was a hot, sunny day on Saturday 20th May when the group visited 3 gardens in Dorset. Little did we expect that day was one of the forerunners of our long hot summer. We started the afternoon with a



picnic lunch in the steeply sloping heather garden of Ruth and Douglas Mortimer at Corfe Mullen. Douglas grows rhododendrons and azaleas as well as heathers and although the heathers were not in flower there was plenty to see. After lunch we popped into the 'back door' neighbour of Douglas and Ruth, Maurice Hill, who had a shaded garden full of colourful rhododendrons and azaleas, some of which were quite old, large and floriferous. We were not finished there as we had yet another garden to see, this was the garden of Val and Alan Davis at Lytchett Matravers. This spacious garden provided a relaxed end to the afternoon, allowing us to enjoy rhododendrons, azaleas, wistaria and many other plants and shrubs. Val and Alan provided us with generous refreshment, rounding off an enjoyable afternoon. My thanks go to Ruth and Douglas, Maurice, Val and Alan for being our marvellous hosts that afternoon.

Saturday 24th June was another hot day when we made a pilgrimage to the Archfield nursery near Wickwar in Gloucestershire. The nursery had belonged to that marvellous character the late George Osmond. We had made visits before and George used to impart some of his wealth of knowledge to us. The nursery has now been taken over by Derek Fry who, in the latter years, ran the nursery with George. He and his staff made us welcome. We were able to wander freely around the nursery looking at the propagating house which was gradually being filled with cuttings and looking at the new display and stock bed being created. After our walk, Derek and his staff answered questions and provided us with refreshment. Needless to say members eagerly gathered up some of the excellent plants for sale. It was nice to see that the nursery was to continue and my thanks go

to Derek and his staff.

Saturday September 23rd started warm and sunny but when the local group members gathered together at the Old Rectory at Seaborough in Dorset the heavens opened. Mr Wright, who is a plantsman, showed us around his garden full of horticultural gems and kindly offered us many cuttings and seeds. After our damp tour we were dried out by the warm hospitality of Mrs Wright who provided us with generous refreshment and a place to have a good natter. The Old Rectory is open under the National Gardens Scheme and is advertised in the 'Yellow Book' and I am grateful to Mr and Mrs Wright for their hospitality.

Now to 1990. The first meeting of the year will be at Lytchett Matravers Village hall at 2.00pm on Saturday 24th March. There will be a talk on heathlands by Andrew Byfield of the Nature Conservancy Council. 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 awarded and the Burfitt Bowl, currently held by Anne Pringle, will be awarded to the exhibitor with the most points. Lytchett Matravers is situated 6 miles from Poole - 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 charge to cover expenses.

The second meeting of the year will be on Saturday May 19th and will be a visit to Beryl Farrah's at Highcliff and the garden of Phyllis Kennedy at Sway, both in the New Forest area. The third meeting is currently being arranged and the fourth meeting will involve the events of the 1990 Conference at Sparsholt near Winchester, on the weekend of 7th - 10th

September. More details of this elsewhere in this Bulletin.

Finally, would members please remember that if they require further details of the 1990 visits, they should send me two SAE's before February 1990. I look forward to a successful programme of visits for 1990.

*Phil Joyner*

## ERICA CARNEA IS THE CORRECT NAME FOR THE WINTER HEATH - OFFICIAL

A long, very fully documented proposal to conserve the name of *Erica carnea* over the competing *Erica herbacea*, was prepared by Mr Brickell and myself and put up to the relevant authorities in 1987. The process of obtaining agreement takes time; there are twelve men from different countries on the committee which decides matters. But after two years their individual decisions all arrived and happily the majority agreed.

Technically this needs the eventual approval also of the next Botanical Congress at Tokyo in 1993 but the chances of disagreement there are so remote and almost unprecedented that it may be taken for granted that it will be passed without comment. Meanwhile a note announcing the result will appear in the journal *Taxon* some time next year.

In all this we had the invaluable advice of Dr R Brummitt of Kew, who is providentially the Secretary of the Committee. Without his guidance I doubt if we could ever have made the proposal so effective. We are most grateful to him. Now, please ensure that if you have altered your catalogues and labels to *herbacea*, you return them to *carnea* where they have really belonged.

*David McClintock*

## PUBLICATION - Heathers and Heathlands ed. S L Jury

A Botanical Society of the British Isles report of the papers given at a joint meeting to celebrate the Bicentenary of the Linnaean Society. Price - £4.85p including postage from BSBI Publications, 24 Glapthorn Road, Oundle, Peterborough, PE8 4JQ.

## SCRAP BOWL - Titbits of News from Members

### From the Ryedale Star

A Kirbymoorside farmer is helping the Dutch go Green by exporting heather to help Holland's anti-pollution efforts.

David Cussons exports 85% of the heather cut on the North York Moors to a Dutch wholesaler who supplies factories in Holland. Because of its rough wiry texture, the heather is ideal for using in filtration processes to help rid factories of foul smells and other pollution.

The heather cutting is a winter job which fits in with their farming interests including a flock of about 200 breeding ewes and cattle. Mr Cussons said that he took only the very old heather which was cut to form firebreaks so that the remainder could be burned. That was the traditional form of heather management on the moors. Mr Cussons has been cutting heather to form firebreaks for many years but it was only 18 months ago that he began exporting it.

Gathering the heather means travelling onto virtually inaccessible and boggy parts of the moors which in the past has left the Cussons family with three tractors stranded for two days. Dr Roy Brown, Moorland advisor with the North York Moors National Park, said they began seriously cutting heather in 1983 as part

of the Moorland Management programme.

*Beryl & David Mayne Zone 5*

## From the Daily Telegraph September 4th

Heather is rapidly disappearing from the countryside, mainly because of over-grazing. There are now a record 43 million sheep in Britain. But on the Yorkshire moors high above Swaledale, plans are under way to restore the purple splendour of heather to moorlands and mountains.

Researchers on the 35,000 acre Gunnerside Estate, owned by Earl Peel, are trying to discover a way to restore the heather without affecting long term sheep production or wildlife conservation.

Lord Peel is chairman of the Game Conservancy's North of England Grouse Research Project. Mr David Newborn, scientific officer on the project said "If you don't have heather you don't have grouse".

Lord Peel said "There has been an estimated 70% loss of heather moorland in Cumbria. On this estate we have lost 30% of the heather cover over the past 40 years". He said heather moorland was used mainly for sheep farming and grouse-shooting. Correctly managed, they operated to the advantage of each other.

## PROBLEM CORNER

**Q.** When should heather cuttings be snipped out to make them grow bushy? I use a pair of nail scissors to snip off the growing point but but am never confident about the time to do it: Immediately it is obvious the the cuttings have struck? A week later? Two weeks later? How much of, say, a 3/4 inch cutting should be removed? Should the cutting then be left to recover - or can it be potted up after surgery? Is this procedure indicated for all cultivars of whatever species or will some bush out naturally? R.C.D. Kingsford Zone 4.

**A.** Putting on my nurseryman/woman's hat I can say in answer to this question that I have no doubt the best time to take the top out of the

cutting is at the time of insertion into the cutting mixture. Only the tip needs to be removed, the cutting will then begin to bush out as soon as it roots. All species benefit from this treatment although one could probably get a reasonable calluna without it. Ed.

**Q.** Prostrate heathers: Is this a characteristic genetic in origin or simply a response to constant high winds? R.C.D. Kingsford Zone 4. More problems and opinions by members on both these questions will be welcome.

## DIARY OF EVENTS

October 30th	North East Group. A.G.M.
November 10th	Midlands Group. 7.45pm Winterbourne. Talk on Paperweights made with flowers.
November 28th	Council Meeting. R.H.S. Halls Westminster
November 28/29th	R.H.S. Show. Competitions include a class for Heather. R.H.S. Halls Westminster.
1990	
January 15th	Closing date for material for Spring Bulletin.
February 20th	Council Meeting. R.H.S. Halls Westminster.
February 20/21st	R.H.S. Show. Competitions include classes for Heathers. R.H.S. Halls Westminster.
March 9th	Midlands Group. 7.45pm Winterbourne. Heather Competitions.
March 24th	South-West Group. 2pm Lyttchett Matravers Village Hall. Talk on Heathlands & Heather Competitions.
May 15th	Closing Date for material for Summer Bulletin.
May 19th	South-West Group. Garden Visits (see Group News).
August 14th	Council Meeting. R.H.S. Halls Westminster.
August 14/15th	R.H.S. Show. Competitions include classes for Heathers. R.H.S. Halls Westminster.
September 7th/10th	ANNUAL CONFERENCE Sparsholt, Hampshire.