

# THE HEATHER SOCIETY BULLETIN



Volume 4 No. 11 Autumn 1990

Editor: Daphne Everett, Greenacres Nursery, Bringsty, Worcester, WR6 5TA. Telephone: 0885 482206

*Another Conference has come and gone, good friends (old and new) have been greeted, chatted to and waved goodbye in what seems more like two hours than two days.*

*This is the 10th Conference that Maurice and I have attended. Not that ten years is anything to boast about, there are many members who have attended more, although, as far as I know, only our Hon. Secretary Pamela Lee has been to them all.*

*This year's Conference Organiser Phil Joyner, gave us a very interesting programme and he achieved the almost impossible by not only getting us all to the right places at the right time, but also (and even more difficult) getting everyone back to the coaches on time at the end; a dual programme on one day added to his problems. Even our President, who has been known to lose all idea of time while counting the hairs on an ovary or identifying an particularly obscure type of bamboo, was*

## AGM SPARSHOLT COLLEGE - 9TH SEPTEMBER 1990

The Chairman welcomed members to the Conference with special reference to our regular visitors from Norway and Sweden. He announced that the Society continues to flourish, although membership has decreased slightly in the last year. He thanked those members whose work for the Society contributes greatly to its continued success.

The long awaited National Reference Collection of Heathers at Wisley has been open to the public since Easter. The collection, which consists of 600 cultivars so far, is housed in Howards Field.

In August a party of members from Germany paid a visit to the South of England. During their stay they visited Wisley and David McClintock's garden at Platt in Kent.

Election of Officers was as follows:

Mr D McClintock re-elected President.  
Mrs C I MacLeod and Mrs D Metheny re-

elected Vice-Presidents. Major General P G Turpin re-elected Chairman. Mrs P B Lee re-elected Hon. Secretary. Mr D B Oliver re-elected Hon. Treasurer.

Election of Council Members:

Mr D J Small, Mr D J T Mayne, Mr A W Jones all re-elected.

The Hon. Secretary reported on the events of the various Regional Groups throughout the year and the work done by the committees.

The most important task still to be completed is the compilation of the International Register. Much of the work involved in detailing over 2000 entries has already been done and is being put on to computer. This part of the operation is now 90% complete. We were reminded that the name *Erica herbacea* has now been officially disallowed in favour of *Erica carnea*.

The Hon. Treasurer reported that the

cost of the 1989 Year Book was less than the previous one as there were no illustrations to be paid for (the 1988 Year Book was the Silver Jubilee edition). He praised the work done by our Administrator Anne Small and said that much of it was at no cost to the Society.

There was a vote of thanks for Mr Simms who has audited the Society's books for several years and is standing down.



## ROYAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY SHOW

Competition for Ornamental Plants from the Open.

August 14th & 15th 1990

There were very few entries for this competition, no doubt because of the hot dry weather in July, which played havoc with the heathers in many gardens.

Mr and Mrs Chapman are to be congratulated on their efforts in entering for so many classes and in keeping the flag flying.

The lack of entries in the competition was partly compensated for by the excellent display of heathers in the exhibit mounted by the Royal Horticultural Society's garden at Wisley.

Results:

- Class 1. Three Distinct Heathers in Bloom, one vase/bowl of each.  
One entry.
- 1st. Mrs M Chapman. *Calluna vulgaris* 'Silver Knight', 'White Mite' and 'Sunrise'
- Class 2. *ERICA VAGANS*, one vase/bowl. Three entries.
- 1st. Mrs M Chapman. 'Cream'

## HEATHER SOCIETY CONFERENCE 1991

The 1991 Conference will be held at Belstead House, Ipswich, Suffolk from 6th to 9th September 1991; the full programme will be published in the Spring Bulletin. It is hoped that, as part of the programme, a visit can be arranged to Adrian Bloom's famous heather garden at 'Foggy Bottom'. Advance bookings may be sent to Mrs Hilary Seager, Rose Cottage, Upper Street, Baylham, Ipswich, IP6 8JR, with a booking fee of £2.00 per mailing. This is to cover administrative costs incurred by the organiser and is not a deposit on the Conference fee.

- 2nd. Mrs M Chapman. 'Charm'
- 3rd. Mrs M Chapman. 'Miss Waterer'
- Class 3. *CALLUNA VULGARIS*, a single flowered cultivar, one vase/bowl. One entry.
- 1st. Mrs M Chapman. 'Sunrise'
- 2nd. Mrs M Chapman. Unknown
- Class 4. *CALLUNA VULGARIS*, a double flowered cultivar, one vase/bowl. One entry.
- 1st. Mrs M Chapman. 'Radnor'
- Class 5. *CALLUNA VULGARIS*, A single or double flowered white cultivar, one vase/bowl. Two entries.
- 1st. Mrs M Chapman. Unknown
- 2nd. Mrs M Chapman. 'Kinlochruel'
- Class 6. *ERICA CINEREA*, any cultivar, one vase/bowl. One entry.
- 1st. Mrs M Chapman. 'Hookstone White'
- Class 10. ANY HEATHER, one vase/bowl, to be judged for foliage effect. 4 entries.
- 1st. Mrs M Chapman. *Erica arborea* 'Albert's Gold'

- 2nd. Mrs M Chapman. *Calluna vulgaris* 'Anthony Davis'  
 Class 14. A HARDY HERBACEOUS PLANT, in bloom, one vase.  
 Two entries.  
 1st. Dr. A C Leslie. Phlox 'Fujiyama'  
 2nd. Dr. A C Leslie. *Polygonum amplexicaule*

## SOUTHERN GROUP

Jock Vickery has been organiser of the Southern Group for the last five years. He now feels that the time has come for him to hand over to a successor. We are very fortunate that Mr Allen Hall, who with Joan has been a great supporter of this Group, has agreed to take on Jock's responsibilities. I should like to take this opportunity of thanking Jock for all that he has done for the Group, while he has been our organiser, and to say how much the members have appreciated his enthusiasm and ingenuity in arranging such an interesting and rewarding series of programmes. To him and Olive we send our heartfelt thanks and we hope that we shall continue to see them at future meetings of the Group. To Allen we all send our best wishes for a successful tenure and promise him the same support which we have given to Jock.

P.G.T.

### *Primula vulgaris* 'Pridhamsleigh'

What has a primrose got to do with heathers? The Devon Branch of the NCCPG last year brought out an excellent book 'The Magic Tree', on plants and people connected with the county. From it, I learnt that this primrose, found in 1967, shared the unusual characteristic with *Daboecia cantabrica* 'Charles Nelson' of having single flowers to start with, the double ones only appearing later, apart from this characteristic the primrose is quite normal in colour etc. The

nearest other example of this phenomenon that I had come across was *Calluna vulgaris* 'Alba Plena' and the like, which may have single flowers at the base of the raceme, but this is not quite the same as *all* the flowers at first being single. On 'Charles Nelson' I have seen them single again late in the season. Explanation please The R.H.S. Scientific Committee had none!

David McClintock

## A DISTINGUISHED VISITOR FROM SOUTH AFRICA

Last October our good friend in South Africa Ted Oliver, recommended Dolf Schumann to get in touch with me as he wanted to come to England this year and come he did, with his wife Annie..

Dolf Schumann was at one time Chairman of the Trans-Natal Coal corporation, he founded a competitive Shield for safety in mines, which is named after him. Since his retirement (he is now 72) he has been striding over the Cape mountains in search of Ericas to photograph. He now has a collection of over 500 species and of their habitats.

In April he showed some of his slides to the Horticultural Club, then he and his wife set off on a tour of England and Scotland, meeting old friends and visiting gardens. They spent a day with us and were excellent company, they also met David Small.

Now, we and they hope for another visit here and they would doubtless welcome any member who was visiting the Cape. Their address is : 80 Twin Towers North, Beach Road, Sea Point 8001.

David McClintock

## SCRAP BOWL

### Titbits of News from Members

Every Spring I like to visit a few Garden Centres to see what the opposition is doing and each year I see something that appals me; *calluna vulgaris* plants with several bare stems, each with a little pompom of new growth on the end. Those plants have obviously been potted in the Spring and grown on during the year. After flowering in the Autumn they have then been overwintered and then sent out to the trade in time for the Spring rush.

Heather Society members will know that nothing will grow on those bare stems and they will cut them off before planting - WON'T THEY? but what about the hundreds of customers who don't know that they are buying the beginnings of a straggly plant? Isn't cutting off the bare stems the nurseryman's job?

I know that there are members who may take issue with me and feel that *calluna* should be allowed to grow gloriously untidy but I know how pruned and unpruned plants look side by side (Heather Trials at Harlow Carr) and I know the reaction of the hundreds of customers at the nursery and at shows when they are told that the remedy for straggly *callunas* is in their hands - clutching a pair of secateurs.

Peter Vickers

## GALL MIDGE DAMAGE TO ERICAS

Further to a letter on this subject in the Spring Bulletin:

Mrs Maginess has written before (in 1981) on gall midges. Those who have wisely kept their Year Books or have acquired back numbers should look at what she wrote then and also at the article by Dr KM Harris of Wisley in the 1966 Year Book. In 1966 Dr Harris wrote an account of the gall midge (*Wachtliella ericina*) and there is a photograph of the 'pineapple galls' it causes.

For many years I collected examples of these galls wherever I went. I must have had something like 50 sheets of them and I worked on them with Dr Harris, who is now at the Natural History Museum. Eventually he had to give up this research and in 1983 he sent the sheets back to me c/o the Botany Department. They have never been seen since. With the missing sheets were all our notes, including data from the Houard collection in Paris, as a result I have to rely on my memory for what was there.

One of the matters of special interest was that some cultivars of *Erica carnea* were susceptible, while others growing cheek by jowl remained unaffected; a useful way of deciding which similar cultivars to grow. Also I could find no references or specimens of this species being galled in the wild; all known examples were from our gardens in our islands, where of course it is not native.

Two other species which can, not all that rarely, be found galled are *Erica arborea* and *E. scoparia* but these I have only found abroad. Another I have seen recently is *E. manipuliflora*, in the broad sense of that name. The note I added to Mrs Maginess's article in 1981 reminds me that I have seen galls also on *E. australis* and *E. cinerea* and that they are recorded on *E. erigena*, *E. multiflora* and *E. umbellata*.

The fact is that I was so disheartened at this total loss that I have not taken the subject up again. At first I felt sure that this quite fat pile of papers must turn up, after all the Entomological Department is just across the landing from Botany, but every idea and search has failed.

Such disfigurements do not appeal to everyone, but do look out for them; there are lessons to be learnt and puzzles to be solved, there is at least one other species with more than one larva involved beside *ericina*.

By dint of cutting these galls off as soon as I notice them I soon rid my garden of these intruders.

David McClintock

## DAMAGE TO HEATHER PLANTS BY CATS

Judging by the many and varied solutions I have received, to try and solve Paul Scotland's problem with cats in his heathers, this subject has obviously struck a chord with members.

"I have read - and tried - MOTHBALLS as a deterrent against cats. I think they might have a good effect if spread rather thickly. The birds apparently ignore them".

*Joan Youle Zone 13*

"The following has been successful for us, both in our previous garden in Berkshire and here in Hampshire.

We were advised to obtain clear plastic bottles and almost fill them with water. Our experience is that the 500 ml. tonic or soda water bottles with the labels soaked off are ideal. After planting a heather bed here nearly six years ago we had the problem of a cat descending on us. We noted its direction of approach and laid two bottles of water on the ground on the appropriate side of the bed, which is 16 feet by 12 feet, with callunas in the centre and carneas as a border. The cat is still in our area but very rarely seen in our garden (beneficial for the birds) and certainly not on our heather beds.

We cannot explain the reason for our success. Is it connected to the eyesight of the cat? Is it associated with light reflection? However, for us it is a fact that in two gardens well planted with heathers we have not had a cat problem after the placing of the bottles.

Are the bottles unsightly? To begin with perhaps so, but we don't notice them now. Incidentally the original water has not discoloured over the past five years".

*Mr J A Simms Zone 12*

"I too had a similar problem with cats on my heather garden. After trying various deterrents, such as cat pepper, without

success, I tried using holly leaves. By mixing dried holly leaves in with the peat mulch and putting dried sprigs around vulnerable heathers I seem to have solved the problem. Just to confirm its effectiveness; a newly planted and mulched area that was not treated, had the attentions of cats (*Erica tetralix* seemed to suffer most). Incidentally, as the dried holly leaves are brown, they do not show when mixed with peat".

*David A Glue Zone 6*

"I have in Norway the same problems with the cats. They are finding the best toilets in between new plantings of heathers and are digging them up. My solution is to put stones, as big as a hand, between the new heathers. I also see that my kitten likes to play in my soft *Erica tetralix* - you may think how wonderful this is for the kitten".

*Jostein Liland Norway*

*Mr Liland has sent me a picture of his young heather bed with large flat stones set between the plants, the effect is quite attractive in a small bed; it is interesting that several of the correspondents particularly mention Erica tetralix as the main victim. I think we can safely assume that after all the good advice he has received, Paul Scotland's problem is now solved, but if you use Mr Simms's method, could I put in a plea on behalf of pygmy shrews and the like, which can fall in and drown if the bottles do not have caps on. Ed.*

## OLD YEAR BOOKS AND BULLETINS

I wonder if anyone would be interested in buying from me a few back copies of the Year Books of the Heather Society (12 copies, 1967 - 1979), also 30 copies of the Bulletin (1969 - 1979). Mr A N Desforges Telephone 0384 872421

*This is a rare chance to obtain old copies as I understand the Society has none available prior to 1975. Ed.*

## HEATHERS ON POSTAGE STAMPS

In Bulletin volume 2 no. 17 of Summer 1979, Major General Turpin referred to the only postage stamps he knew which depicted heathers. These were *Erica blenna* on a 2c from South Africa in 1973 and *Daboecia cantabrica* on a 17p stamp (the top value) of a set of four Irish native plants. *Phyllodoca caerulea* was depicted on a 1 Kr from Norway in 1973.

In Bulletin volume 3 no. 5 of Spring 1982 he added the 2c + 2c of the Dutch charity set of 1927. This showed the Arms of the province of Drente, where there is plenty of heather in a stylised design.

Now - in 1990, the Irish have issued another, viz *Erica erigena* 'Irish Dusk' on the top value (50p this time) of a set of four; the first time that a heather cultivar has appeared on a stamp. The others in this set depict *Narcissus* 'Foundling', *Rosa x hibernica* and *Primula* 'Rowallane Rose'.

David McClintock

---

## H J VAN DE LAAR

Harry van de Laar of the Horticultural Research Station at Boskoop has been a good friend of the heather world for many a long year; wise and knowledgeable and with a good set of cultivars in his herbarium.

We are delighted at the marks of his eminence and of the affection in which he is held, which were shown on the occasion of his retirement. These included numerous reminiscences about him, written by friends of all sorts and bound into a special book; a medal from the township of Boskoop and a huge cheque - subscribed for by his friends - which enabled him and his wife Nel to spend three weeks in South Africa in October. Finally, he was decorated as a Ridder (Knight) van de Orde van Oranje-Nassau; a high honour. Earlier he had been

awarded the very special Clusius - Sleutel (in fact, a large key) by the University of Leiden. We are proud of him!

David McClintock

## GROUP NEWS

### SCOTLAND

Two events in the Group's activities have recently contributed to its onward progress and offered a welcome indicator towards continuing expansion in the future. One was of about three hours duration and the other was spread over four days.

Saturday 25th August saw members meet again at Cherrybank Gardens in Perth and it was encouraging to note that the attendance of members and friends on this occasion had increased almost four-fold. Likewise, the extension of the catchment area was also evident in that we had members from Muir of Ord in Ross-Shire and from Girvan in Ayrshire, representing the northern and southern outreach of interested members supporting the opportunities to meet fellow members and hear visiting speakers. Our speaker on that occasion was plant pathologist Mrs Audrey Litterick from Glasgow, who delivered a most interesting and informative talk on pests and diseases of heathers. Members from all zones will have read her contribution on this subject in the Society's 1989 Year Book (pp 17-19) when, prior to her marriage, she was Audrey M Justice. She had plant material on hand for demonstration and examination and the scope and depth of her knowledge of her subject was fitting testimony to all the work she has carried out on heathers during the four years she was based at The West of Scotland College. She is now approaching her final presentation for her Ph.D degree, in which we wish her well. Question time elicited a good crop of queries, but in the final analysis Audrey, I think, had all of us convinced that

we should not be impatient in our propagation practices, for it seems that if we continue with the 'old' methods and materials we are less likely to have too much trouble with pests and diseases. An interesting follow-up to this talk was that on the following day a member from Glasgow who was examining newly delivered heathers on display at a Garden Centre, discovered that a batch bore overt symptoms of a disease that had been described by Audrey as affecting plants raised under the new commercial production methods. A chat with the management ensured their withdrawal for return to the suppliers.

On Monday 27th August three of us travelled to Letham, Angus, to select plants for a promotional display to publicise the Group at the Dundee Flower show from 31st August to 2nd September. I had accepted the invitation to attend as a recruiting outlet but staging a display garden seemed to offer more impact, not to mention a greater challenge. Mr George Sturrock of Angus Heathers, Letham (a nurseryman member of the Society) had kindly offered to loan us all the plants required for the exhibit. So, Thursday 30th saw three of us in one of the huge marquees, contemplating a blank area of turf which we just had to transform to advantage. George Sturrock was on a business trip to Boskoop at this time and none of us had ever attempted anything of this nature previously; however with a good load of peat, some large pieces of tufa rock, some hard graft and some really super plants, we rounded off the afternoon standing back and almost congratulating ourselves.

There was a reasonably good turn-out of the public on Friday, rather punctuated at short intervals by the arrival of the special buses running from the City centre to the show site in the tented area around Camperdown Mansion House. Saturday broke the attendance record for that day on previous occasions and Sunday was the

climax, when all previous records were broken. The entire event is in the nature of a family day out, with band concerts, fashion shows, treasure hunts, cartoons, puppets, animals etc. There are also ongoing demonstrations of cookery, cosmetics, crafts and of course the over-riding emphasis on gardening and the floral art marquees. The final total number of visitors was well over 8,000. There was no lack of interest in the Group's exhibit. This applied to all three days, but especially to Sunday, when at times, people wanted others viewing the stand to move back to permit photographing and filming of the display. Quite a few overseas visitors raised queries, but without any doubt the aspect which appeared to cause apprehension in most cases was that of pruning. So most assuredly there are a lot of people in and around Dundee who now know the correct procedures. Comments on the layout of the exhibit were all complimentary, so we can, with good reason, look forward to future displays with somewhat less apprehension.

There can be no argument as to the most popular variety on show - *Calluna vulgaris* 'Kinlochruel'. Others which proved popular generally were *Erica cinerea* 'Vivienne Patricia', *Calluna vulgaris* 'Tib' and *Calluna vulgaris* 'White Lawn'.

A similar facility has been offered to the Group for 1991, when, as part of Dundee's 800th Anniversary celebrations we have been invited by the City of Dundee District Council to participate in their Spring Flower Show on 6th and 7th April 1991 and again at their main Autumn Flower Show on 6th, 7th and 8th September. These shows are both part of the Flower Festival marking the anniversary. The Spring show will be staged in the Caird Hall and Marryat Hall in City Square in the centre of Dundee and the Autumn Show will again be held in Camperdown Country Park.

There are competitive classes in both of these shows for Heaths and Heathers and I

would ask members to keep the flag flying by entering some of their plants in both shows. The Spring Show schedule is available now from the City of Dundee District Council, Parks Department, 353 Clepington Road, Dundee, DD38PL. So, get your plants into pots and be prepared to stage a few entries when the time comes.

The Parks Manager has made the Group a most attractive offer which I feel should be pursued with all possible vigour. To encourage the Society to participate in Scotland he will give his support, along with that of the Dundee Flower Show committee, to provide the Dundee Show as a base for holding national competitions. This really is a very worthwhile proposal which merits our close attention and action.

At the business meeting which followed our talk on 25th August I took the opportunity to reiterate my intended initial wish to move aside and let appointed office bearers and a committee accept organisational responsibility. Five members will meet as a committee at Cherrybank on 29th September, but to date no specific posts have been filled, the proposal of a member being adopted that the duties and responsibilities could be shared around between them. Full details should appear in the next issue of the Bulletin.

Finally, another date for your 1991 diary. At the Dundee Show the view was expressed that members would appreciate an opportunity to be able to view the National Collection at Cherry Bank during the 'closed' season, when a superb show of Ericas make the garden so colourful. I have therefore arranged that any Society members and friends may join us for a non-business meeting - solely for a conducted tour of the Collection - on Saturday, 16th March, 1991, commencing at the earlier time of 1.30pm. I hope that the weather will be kind to us and we shall again see more new faces among those of us who have already met through the Group.

This contribution covers what has been organised and achieved to date and what is already in the pipe-line so to speak. When the committee meet on 29th September, the Group should thereafter have a definite structure within which policy-making and executive decisions can readily be made and implemented and members should not hesitate in offering their wholesale support and constructive proposals.

*John A Williamson*

## NORTH EAST

Our annual outing this year took place on May 19th when 14 members and their friends, totalling 36, boarded a coach for Harlow Carr Gardens. After a stop at Scotch Corner Hotel for coffee we arrived at Harlow Carr in time for a picnic lunch. We were met by David and Beryl Mayne from Kirbymoorside and they kindly escorted some of our members round both the old and the new trial beds. The others enjoyed a leisurely stroll round the delightful gardens even though it was rather overcast. Later in the afternoon the coach took us into Harrogate where the Valley Gardens were viewed then, after tea we left for home.

The weekend of September 21st, 22nd and 23rd was the biggest date in our calendar when, with the Bee Association, we staged 'The Heather & Honey Show' at the Gateshead Garden Festival for three days. There was a tremendous amount of work in planning and organizing this show as we had never done anything on this scale before. The prospect of several thousand people viewing our efforts was quite daunting to say the least. I must say that the sight of the 64 feet of 2 tiered empty benching which greeted us on our arrival nearly made me turn tail and run - but with the splendid team which we had - seven hours later, all was transformed. The benches were filled with 165 exhibits for 16 Classes (both a record) from 12 members and a table 8' x 7' was now a dazzling Heather Garden complete with pea gravel path, leading one



into a picture of a misty mountain scene, which was a back-drop to the garden.

I think we all went home that night not wanting to see another heather for a long time but next morning after the judging we couldn't believe our eyes when we saw that the Garden had won a Silver medal and that one of our members, Vera Scott, had won the coveted Miners Lamp for her exhibit of 6 spikes of *E. ciliaris* 'Corfe Castle'. The Best Exhibit in the Show - Congratulations!

Great interest was shown by the public during the three days and we hope to have recruited over 30 new members from all parts of the country. My sincere thanks to the team who helped to put up and steward the Show and to dismantle it at the end. I'm sure our efforts paid off.

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Monday October 29th 1990, in the upstairs room at the Methodist Church Hall, Ponteland, at 7.30pm when, after the business is concluded, there will be a Members Night.

*Dorothy Warner*

## MIDLANDS

Instead of our usual indoor meeting, the Midlands Group decided on a Spring visit this year. On the morning of May 19th, a good number of members (including some from other areas) met in the garden attached to Bridgemere Garden Centre, near Nantwich. This garden has been developed over the last few years and is well worth a visit; the Garden Centre itself is probably one of the best in the country.

After lunch we all drove 3 miles down the road to the Dorothy Clive Garden, which we were very lucky to find looking its most spectacular best.

This lovely garden, previously unknown to most of us, was designed by Colonel Harry Clive, in memory of his wife. The garden is on a sloping site, with an ornamental lake at the bottom and scree garden and rockeries leading up from it; there are also attractive lawns and

shrubberies, but on May 19th it was the quarry garden behind the house which drew the visitors, to see the magnificent display of rhododendrons and azaleas, all at their peak of condition.

The quarry had been abandoned for many years when Mr Clive took it over and was full of trees, mainly oak. The oaks provide the perfect high cover conditions in which rhododendrons thrive and they now make a spectacular display. What makes the quarry garden particularly attractive is that as well as being able to walk through it, admiring the plants at close quarters, there is a path running round the top where you can look down on the mass of colour below.

On Saturday August 18th we visited the Dairy House, Ludstone, Shropshire, where Miss Wood's gardener (Mr Idris Jones) took us around the 3 acre garden; coincidentally, this garden has also been established on the site of an old quarry.

Mr Jones has been in charge of the garden for the last 25 years and has created lawns and flower beds on several levels. The Dairy House is fortunate in having a large lake at the end of the garden, from which (although it belongs to the neighbouring farmer) they are allowed to pump water to irrigate the garden. However, Mr Jones was not very pleased recently, to find that the cows had waded across the lake from their parched field, to the greener grass in the garden, eating all the water lilies on the way.

The next event for the Midlands Group will be our Social Evening. This will be held at 6pm on Saturday November 24th at Winterborne and everyone is asked to bring something tasty for the cold buffet. There will be slides of some of the highlights from the 1990 Conference in Hampshire and we have also been asked to show some of the pictures that we took in the Dorothy Clive Garden back in May; if anyone else has any slides or prints of interest, please bring them along. If time allows, Maurice is

prepared to give a short talk on one of the many gardens we have visited, otherwise that can be held over until our March meeting.

*Daphne Everett*

## SOUTHERN

Members of the Southern Group visited the home and garden of John and Jennifer Turrell at Sunny Seaford in Sussex on 29th July. Jock Vickery had left it open to members to fill in the morning as they wished, so Joan and I had a picnic by the sea. Our only complaint was that it was too hot, but we enjoyed looking at the sea, the yachts and the gulls as we ate our sandwiches. Other members on their way, unaccountably joined the Milk Race which was passing through Brighton that day. As usual we were joined by some members from the South West Group, led on this occasion by their doughty organiser, Phil Joyner. The company arriving at 'Willowtree' were glad of the refreshing shade and the greetings of the friends they found there. There was much to talk about and our conversations were helped along in due course by a marvellous tea laid on by John and Jennifer.

The garden had an interesting layout with beds of heather featuring prominently. The heathers had been carefully trimmed, bringing out the beauty and symmetry of the individual plants. There was a bed of dwarf willows set out most attractively, alpine style and a large willow after which the house is named. There were heathers for sale at a low price and John gave the proceeds to the Society.

Sadly this was the last event to be organised by Jock Vickery, who has laid down the role which he has borne with so much distinction. The Group has had on offer over these past years some really enjoyable meetings and those who attended look back on them with much pleasure and gratitude.

My outline programme for the first part of 1991 is as follows:-

March 17th 1991 - Visit to Kew. Meet at the main entrance opposite Kew Green at 1.45pm for a prompt start at 2pm; there is a car park near the entrance. We shall see the winter heathers before going on to the temperate house, where there is a collection of South African heathers, some of which should be in flower. On then to the Alpine House to see, among other things, an *Erica sicula*. While there we can check to see whether an *Erica canaliculata*, which is planted outside, has survived the winter (assuming of course that it has survived the summer). Finally, we will go to the rock garden to see some *Erica* 'relations.'

May 12th - Visit to the Isabella Plantation, Richmond Park. Meet at 1.45pm for a 2pm start in the car park opposite to the Plantation entrance; this may be found between the Kingston and Robin Hood gates. Nothing much is doing in the heather garden in May so our visit there will be nominal, however, on the way to the heathers we will pass through bluebell woods and glades of flowering rhododendrons and azaleas. Isabella in the spring is truly lovely! Everything depends on the weather of course, if it is good let us arrive in the car park at 12.30 for a picnic; we will then regroup in the car park at 1.45pm as planned.

After our visit we are invited to the home of Mr and Mrs P J Hancock for tea. They live not far from Richmond Park at 'Beauchamp' Coombe Hill Road, Kingston upon Thames. In the Spring Bulletin I shall be giving more directions on how to get to 'Beauchamp' and I shall be asking those intending those intending to participate to let Mr & Mrs Hancock know two weeks prior to the event, so that they will know how many people to cater for.

Summer - Phil Joyner and I may arrange a joint meeting of the Southern and South Western Groups. Look out for news in the Spring Bulletin.

I trust that these meetings and ones later in 1991 as yet unplanned will give members as much pleasure as the ones which Jock has organised in the past. I am new in this job and request the support of Southern Group members. Your proposals for events and visits will be welcome.

In the future I hope to arrange an outing to a heather moor so that we can see our favourite plants in the wild. We may even follow in the footsteps of the youthful D F Maxwell (in Surrey). I should like to arrange some social gatherings with talks on the various aspects of Ericas - their cultivation, propagation and botany - and garden design and flower arranging would also, I believe, interest many members.

*Allen Hall*

P.S. If members of the Group, or indeed of other groups, would like details of our prospective programme, over and above those given in this and the Spring Bulletin, please send me a SAE in the New Year. When appropriate I will provide sketches to supplement directions on how to get to our meetings and any up-to-date information. My address is - 18 Albury Avenue, Cheam, Sutton, Surrey, SM2 7JT.

Incidentally, Joan and I paid a visit to Peter and Joan Hancock recently. They have charming heather garden and I told them that I would have been content to organise a visit just to see their garden and have tea. They would have none of that however - they are far too modest about their garden - but the visit will be an added bonus for our May meeting. Like me, I am sure that members will be delighted.

*Allen Hall*

## **SOUTH WEST**

The meeting on Saturday, 19th May, was a two garden visit in the New Forest area and although the afternoon started off with a cool north-easterly breeze, the sun came through and the afternoon became warm. We started with a picnic lunch in the delightful garden of Beryl Farrah at

Highcliffe. The garden had been designed by Beryl's husband Ken and since his death she has kept it more or less as he would have maintained it. The garden is basically a heather garden and although the heathers weren't in flower there were rhododendrons and other shrubs and plenty of foliage colour on the heathers. After we had all enjoyed our spell in Beryl's garden we moved on to Sway, to the garden of Phyllis Kennedy. Phyllis's garden is full of interesting plants and there was plenty to see in each nook and cranny. Phyllis and her helpers provided us with refreshment and this rounded the afternoon off perfectly. I am extremely grateful to Beryl and Phyllis and to their helpers for making a successful afternoon.

Friday July 6th to Sunday July 8th was the weekend of the Southampton Balloon and Flower Festival. The local Group erected and manned the stand for that weekend. With John Bridgland and Mike Kinshott taking charge on the Friday and Saturday and with enthusiastic members helping out, we were able to impart plenty of information on Heather Culture to the general public. My thanks go to John, Mike and their helpers.

Saturday 28th July was one of those very hot summer days and was the occasion for a visit to the Forest Edge Nursery at Verwood in Dorset. This is a wholesale nursery belonging to Society members David and Delia Edge. David, with one of his nursery staff, gave us a comprehensive demonstration of how to take cuttings and an insight into potting compost formulas etc. Members then wandered round the tunnel houses and stock beds and observed various techniques employed by David to produce his excellent plants. The afternoon was rounded off with a sumptuous tea arranged by Delia, then members had the opportunity to chat with old and new friends and to buy some of the superb plants. My thanks go to David and Delia for their hospitality.

The last meeting of this year was on Sunday, 9th September and was a visit to the Hillier Gardens and Arboretum. This was part of the Annual Conference programme and local members met up with those attending the conference. The whole party was split up into two groups to be taken round by the Curator Barry Phillips and one of his assistants Rita Farrell; members were given a well guided, comprehensive tour, on a beautiful afternoon. The tour ended in the heather garden and the afternoon was rounded off with a very welcome cup of tea. My thanks go to Barry Phillips and Rita Farrell for being our guides and to my wife, daughter, mother and Joan Vickery for providing the tea.

Now to the first two events for 1991:

Saturday, 9th March - We have kindly been invited to the Nursery/Garden of Bert & Diane Jones at West Camel in Somerset. Bert and Diane specialise in Winter/Spring flowering heathers and this will be an ideal opportunity to see their display beds. (One of which I notice is illustrated in the newly revised edition of Terry Underhill's book 'Heaths and Heathers'. Ed.)

Members are welcome to arrive anytime between 11.00am and 2.00pm and those arriving early should bring picnic lunches. Otter's Court Heathers is in Back Street (the turning by the village shop) in the middle of the village, about 1/2 mile south of the A303 trunk road east of Yeovilton.

The second meeting of the year will be at Lytchett Matravers Village Hall at 2.00pm on Saturday 6th April. A talk is being arranged. 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 Joyce Allen, will be awarded to the exhibitor with the most points. Lytchett Matravers is situated 6

miles from Poole and 1 mile west of the 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.

Can I remind members that if they live in an area not within the bounds of the South West Group they are also welcome to our meetings. Finally, would members please remember that if they require further details of the visits, they should send me a SAE well before the first meeting of the year.

*Phil Joyner*

---

## DIARY OF EVENTS 1990

- October 29th North East Group AGM.  
November 24th Midlands Group Social & Slides.  
November 27th Council Meeting R.H.S. November 27/28th R.H.S. Show, Vincent Square Westminster.  
Competitions include a class for Heather.
- 1991 January 15th Closing Date for material for Spring Bulletin.  
February 19th Council Meeting R.H.S. February 19/20th R.H.S. Show, Vincent Square Westminster.  
Competitions include classes for Heathers.
- March 8th Midlands Group Heather Competitions Winterbourne.
- March 9th South West Group Visit to Otter's Court Heathers.
- March 16th Scottish Group Visit to Cherry Bank Gardens.
- March 17th Southern Group Visit to Kew.
- April 6th South West Group Table Show & Talk. April 6/7th Scottish Group Dundee Spring Flower Show.
- May 12th Southern Group Visit to the Isabella Plantation.