

THE HEATHER SOCIETY BULLETIN



Volume 4 No. 13 Summer 1991

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There are two things which signal the start of the six-week potting season on our nursery, one is the arrival of the cuckoo and the other, the return of the swallows, who seem to find the muddy patches on the nursery ideal material for nest building. While they are engaged in mud gathering they need to keep a keen weather eye open for Seville our marmalade cat who lies in wait for them. Incidentally, although Seville may chase swallows he would not dream of harming a heather. So far this year the cuckoo has been very silent around this part of Bringsty, (though everyone else seems to have heard him) and we have had to start potting without him but the swallows are arriving a few at a time and are now nesting in our label shed.

At a ceremony to be held on May 29th of this year at Harlow Carr, the Northern Horticultural Society is to honour one of the Heather Society's most hard-working (and modest) Council members -Albert Julian. He will receive the Award of Honorary Membership of the NHS for his outstanding services to that Society and will be presented with a medal and a citation. As, by the time this Bulletin is published the event will have already taken place, may I just say 'Congratulations Albert, we all hope you had a wonderful evening' and my thanks to Jean Snape from Zone 12 who made sure the Heather Society knew about it.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Heather Society will be held during the Annual Conference at Belstead House, Ipswich on Sunday 8th September 1991 at 9.15 am. The agenda for the meeting is enclosed with this issue of the Bulletin.

21ST ANNUAL CONFERENCE - BELSTEAD HOUSE, IPSWICH, SUFFOLK.

6TH - 9TH SEPTEMBER 1991

Full details of the programme were included in the Spring Bulletin, the final date for payment is 31st July 1991. If you have not yet booked, please get in touch with Hilary Seager, Rose Cottage, Upper Street, Baylham, Ipswich, IP6 8JR.

PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

The final date for entering the photographic competition (for which you do not need to be attending the Conference) is August 23rd 1991. The classes are as follows:

Best photographic print of a heather garden
Best photographic print of a heather plant.
Best close-up photographic print of a heather (floret or part of, raceme or part of).

Best colour slide of a heather garden.
Best colour slide of a heather plant.
Best close-up colour slide of a heather (floret or part of, raceme or part of).

Entries to:- David Small, Slide Librarian, Denbeigh, All Saints Road, Creeting St Mary, Suffolk, IP6 8PJ

R.H.S. SHOW 19th & 20th FEBRUARY 1991

Competition for Ornamental Plants from the Open. The combined effects of the frost and snow in early February and the closure of London's main line stations on the 18th February, as a result of terrorist threats, were that entries to the Competition were severely restricted.

Thanks to the enthusiasm and dedication of Mr and Mrs Chapman, who set such a fine example to other members of the Society, there were entries in both Heather Classes.

It would be very much appreciated if other members, who live within reach of London, would make the effort to enter for these Competitions and help to maintain the high standards which our

members have reached in the past.

Results

Class 5. A heath or Heather in Bloom, one vase or bowl. 4 entries. 1st. Mrs M Chapman. *E. carnea* 'Alan Coates' 2nd. Mrs M Chapman. *E. x darleyensis* 'White Perfection' 3rd. Mrs M Chapman. *E. carnea* 'Foxhollow'

Class 6. A Heath or Heather, shown for foliage effect, one vase or bowl. 1 entry.

3rd Mrs M Chapman. *E. arborea* 'Albert's Gold'.

TOP 20 HEATHERS

Members are asked to list their TOP 20 heathers, judging them for foliage, flower, ease of growing etc. The resulting favourites will be announced at the Conference and reported in the Autumn Bulletin. I hope that at the same time it will be possible to print the results of a previous poll for comparison.

Send your list to: Hilary Seager, Rose Cottage, Upper Street, Baylham, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP6 8JR by August 23rd 1991.

HEATHERS ON POSTAGE STAMPS

Since writing on this subject in the Autumn 1990 Bulletin, I have received no. 78 of the Dutch Society's publication 'Ericultura'. On pages 14-17 is a list by J Delvaux, of the Ericaceae which have appeared on postage stamps from 1938 to 1988, some 114 in all. This information adds three more ericas to my list: *E. carnea* from West Berlin 1973, 30 + 15pf, *E. ardens* from Equitorial Guinea 1977, 2ek50 (what is an ek?) and *E. maderense* from Madeira 1983, 30c. David McClintock

A MESSAGE FROM MERSEYSIDE

From time to time I have the pleasure of speaking on the phone to my old friend Bob Pickering of Formby, Lancashire. Bob has not been keeping all that well in recent times and had a spell in hospital in 1990. However he is still keen to meet fellow members and although he modestly feels that his own garden is not one he could open to the public in any formal sense, he says he would welcome any member "who happens to be passing through"; he would of course appreciate a telephone call or postcard from anyone thinking of taking up this offer. I must say we have always found plenty of interest there and plenty to talk about when we lived in Formby. Bob also asked me a question which might be worth passing on (unanswered). His garden is now beginning to mature and he wonders what to do with plants which are now growing too big and are growing into each other? No doubt there is an obvious answer but a little horticultural science is being sought I believe.

Allen Hall

PAINTINGS AT WISLEY

For some years the RHS had paintings made of plants when they received awards. There are no fewer than 3,300 of these, beautifully done and carefully stored in filing cabinets at Wisley. Eleven of these paintings are of heathers, viz -*C.v.* 'Alba Flore Pleno'. September 1938. DB Martin. 'H E Beale'. 10 September 1927. S Ross. Craig. 'H E Beale'. 21 September 1943. A J Wise *E. australis* 'Mr Robert'. 15 June 1925 E.F. 'Mount Stewart'. 19 May 1936. AJ Wise (FLs Red-Purple 72C) 'Riverslea'. 30 April 1946. AJ Wise (FLs Red-Purple 66C) *E. canaliculata* 'Boscawen's

Variety'. 8 February 1937. Ex Exbury. (FLs Purple 75D) The flowers have a lavender look, rather than the pale pink one normally seen but it was hard to match. *E. tetralix* 'Alba Mollis'. 8 June 1927. E.F. *E. vagans* 'Lyonesse'. 31 July 1928. E.F. *E. ventricosa* 2 April 1938. Ex Exbury. Unsigned. *E. verticillata* 'Major'. 21 August 1937. Unsigned. The only plate depicting details is that of 'Lyonesse'. Alfie Wise was the artist at Wisley for many years; who E.F. was has not yet been traced but one plate is signed Eva F. I am grateful to Peter Barnes and Diana Miller at Wisley for their help with this article.

D. McClintock

From the Newsletter of the North American Heather Society:

From an English bee keeping book I learned that *E. cinerea* and *E. tetralix* give a normal type of flower-honey, though it is very dark coloured but *Calluna* gives a very unusual honey. *Calluna* honey is very viscous, almost jelly-like, which never crystallizes like other honeys, it has to be squeezed out of its comb with the aid of a press; it cannot be drained or centrifuged out like other honeys. Also, hives moved to the moors in August and September to take advantage of *Calluna* blooming have to be furnished with preformed combs if the bee's energy is to be focused on honey making. With the shorter, cooler days of autumn a spell of bad weather is bad news for the bee-keeper, and to maximise odds for success he has to time the move to the moors, not only with the addition of preformed combs but with a freshly emerged brood of energetic forager bees. Well, why not? Doesn't heather deserve special treatment.

B. Keeper

TWO BIOGRAPHIES

In a previous Bulletin there was, by popular request (I hope) a profile of our Chairman, Major Gen. P G Turpin and in this issue I am continuing the theme with two more biographies, one of our Past President, Christopher Brickell and the other of Council Member Peter Vickers. I had been proposing to present everyone in some sort of sensible order but things are not working out like that, in the event I think it will depend on who is the most susceptible to arm twisting.

PORTRAIT OF A PAST PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER DAVID BRICKELL, B.Sc., F.inst. Hort., VMH

Christopher David Brickell was born on 29th June 1932 in the small town of Bodmin in Cornwall, the son of a Master Baker. Bertram and Kathleen Brickell had two sons of whom Christopher was the younger; his school days were spent at Queens College, Taunton, where he boarded.

By the time he was five or six years of age, Chris was developing a lively interest in wild flowers, an interest his parents encouraged. After leaving school he spent a year doing practical work at a nursery in Berkshire (where he developed a love and appreciation of herbaceous plants and alpinists), before going on to read Horticulture at Reading University. After graduating, he did two years National Service in the army, followed by a year's research on Pests of Stored Products. (A consequence of two years of army food I wonder?)

In 1958 Chris was appointed Assistant to the Botanist at the Royal Horticultural Society's Garden at Wisley, and from then on his promotion through the ranks of the RHS was swift; from Assistant Botanist to Botanist, Senior Scientific Officer, Deputy Director and eventually to Director

in 1969. During this time he met and married Miss Jeanette Fleckloe and they now have two grown-up daughters. In 1985 he was appointed Director General (the post he holds today) with responsibility to the RHS Council for administration and execution of the Society's affairs at Vincent Square, Wisley, Rosemoor and RHS Enterprises. His service to horticulture has been recognised by the Royal Horticultural Society with the award of the Victoria Medal of Honour and he has also been awarded the George Robert White Medal of Honour by the Trustees of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society.

Chris Brickell's commitments are legion, he has been particularly active in the taxonomy of cultivated plants and has served for over 20 years as Chairman of the International Commission for the Nomenclature of Cultivated Plants and also as Chairman of the Nomenclature and Registration Commission of the International Society for Horticultural Science; other Scientific, Advisory, Consultative etc. organisations of which he is a Trustee, Member, Vice-Chairman, Chairman or President are too numerous to mention.

He has travelled to most parts of the world on plant collecting expeditions and to visit botanic gardens and research

institutes. As one would expect, his horticultural interests are wide and varied but especially include woodland plants (rhododendrons, camellias, magnolias) alpine, bulbs and of course heathers. He is very interested in garden design, particularly as applied to small gardens and the flora and garden plants of China, South Africa, Greece and other Mediterranean and Middle Eastern Countries are a special love.

He joined the Heather Society in 1974, being interested in both the growing and the taxonomy of the plants. His involvement in the nomenclature and taxonomy of garden plants in general and the stabilisation of plant names (I am sure we all say 'Amen' to his aims there) has been especially beneficial to the Society. In 1987, in conjunction with David McClintock and Dr R Brummitt from Kew, a long and fully documented report was put to the relevant authorities with the aim of conserving the name *Erica carnea* over *Erica herbacea* which was beginning to gain much acceptance on the Continent. The majority of the twelve-man committee from around the world were persuaded by the arguments put forward and although the agreement will not be ratified until the next Botanical Congress in 1993, it should be passed with no further trouble.

He is an author of note, contributing to many prestigious journals and other publications, as well as editing several more. He has been either Co-author or Author of several books, including (with Brian Matthews) '*Daphne*' - a guide to the genus in cultivation; (with Fay Sharman) A guide to Garden Plant Conservation - 'The Vanishing Garden' and his own 'An

English Florilegium' with paintings by Mary Grierson. In 1989 he was also Editor in Chief of that outstanding volume the 'RHS Encyclopedia of Garden Plants and Flowers' which no plant lover should be without.

The Heather Society was very fortunate in having Chris Brickell as its President from 1978 to 1990. He agreed to be elected to the post after the death of Sir John Charrington (who had the idea of forming the Society, and was its first Chairman and later its second President) and he eventually relinquished the post due to pressure of work, as he felt he was unable to give the Society the time the position merited.

GORDON PETER VICKERS

(known to his many friends as Peter)

Peter was born in Sheffield on the 31st January 1925, the son of a Bespoke Tailor. During his childhood he moved in fairly quick succession to Scunthorpe and then to Doncaster where he received his main education at the Technical School. He went on to the Technical College where he says "they pumped Engineering into us". After a five year Engineering Apprenticeship he had a number of appointments, working during this time to become a Chartered Mechanical Engineer and a Member of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers. He eventually worked for James Neill, the manufacturers of 'Eclipse Tools', where, during the twenty five years he was with them, he was Development Engineer, Production Engineer and Special Projects Engineer, which included being Father of overseas Companies. At the age of sixty he was

made redundant, along with many others.

The first garden that Peter ever had to deal with was the Grace and Favour house he was given when he first went to work for James Neill. He eventually bought the house from the company and having read that heathers were just the plant for the lazy gardener he planted some. Peter was soon 'hooked' and in a few years the garden was planted with 100% heathers.

A request by St. Luke's Hospice in Sheffield for a 500yd heather garden, prompted Peter to start propagating and, as he succinctly puts it, an unkind neighbour prompted him and his wife to move house to his present 1/2 acre and bungalow, 16 miles South of Sheffield. The garden of the bungalow was a wilderness, but after much hard work he and his wife Sylvia eventually turned the wilderness into an attractive Heather and Conifer Nursery. Sadly, Sylvia died in 1985 and since then Peter has run the nursery on his own, with the help of some part-time staff.

Peter joined the Heather Society in 1970 and was elected to Council in 1971. He is a long serving member of the Technical Committee and was very much involved with the Heather Trials at Harlow Carr, which ran from 1971 to 1975. Peter edited the resulting publication at the end of the trial and he was also responsible for designing The Heather Society Colour Chart. As a Council member Peter lives up to his Yorkshire reputation and speaks his mind come what may.

Peter sells his heathers both wholesale and retail. He designs gardens for local people and speaks on gardening subjects on Radio Sheffield. He also gives talks on heathers to garden clubs etc. and writes

the occasional article. He has had articles printed in the Heather Society Year Book (see Year Books for 1973, 1974 and 1976) and in that most prestigious magazine of the RHS, 'The Garden'. However, this will probably be Peter's last season as a nurseryman as he has decided to hang up his secateurs and give a little more time to his other love - the gentle art of woodcarving.

1991 HEATHER SOCIETY YEAR BOOK

The Year Book will be sent out rather late this year due to the serious illness of its Editor, Bert Jones. Bert has recently undergone major surgery and, as I write, is still in hospital in intensive care. The latest news, received from Diane on the 2nd June, is that after a (hopefully) final operation, the doctors now expect Bert to begin to improve and make a slow progress back to health. I am sure you all join me in wishing him a speedy recovery.

Daphne Everett

MEMBERS LETTERS

From Delia P Wyers Zone 7

To continue last year's discussion on keeping cats off heathers (or anything else in the garden for that matter) our solution is to distribute bits of orange peel around the beds and even on top of very susceptible low growing varieties. A customer gave us this hint some time ago and it appears to work well. Try offering a piece of peel to most cats and watch them back off! Years ago we were advised to sprinkle our back door with oil of citronella (lemon oil) to deter the procession of Tom cats who had adopted it as a territorial

marking post; the main problem was that it washed away. Orange peel is environmentally friendly and, after being rain splashed, soon blends in with the surrounding soil.

Sorry I didn't write last year. Like most nurseries we were too busy surviving and cats were the least of our problems.

From Don Richards Zone 4

I was flattered to be asked to open my garden for a day under the 'National Gardens Scheme', with the proceeds for charity and listing in the 'Yellow Book'; there was a meeting at Sizergh Castle for all the Cumbrians listed, to discuss arrangements, distribute literature and answer questions. The National Trust is much involved and I took the opportunity to raise a point with their representative.

Coming back from Harlow Carr in the autumn, the moors above Harrogate are a picture, with heather in full bloom, whereas here in Cumbria the fells have been scalped with overgrazing. The useless bracken takes over more and more land and the remaining vegetation is cropped closer and closer. On mentioning the problem I was pleasantly surprised to find that the National Trust (who own much of this National Park) is well aware of the problem and is limiting the number of sheep on new leases.

GROUP NEWS

SCOTLAND

On a fine Saturday in March, thirty three Scottish members and two from Yorkshire (Mr & Mrs Mayne) toured the Bell's National Heather Collection to view the *Erica carnea* cultivars in flower and

also a few of the earlier flowering *E. darleyensis* and *E. erigena* varieties. Head Gardener Norrie Robertson (who is now the secretary of the Scottish Group) took members on a guided tour of the extensive gardens and answered their questions, they were also shown new beds being prepared for planting the following week.

On the way back for tea, which was supplied by United Distillers UK, they surveyed, inspected and photographed the 4000 plants in 100 varieties, which were ready for planting in time for the 1991 opening of the Garden; over 700 heather cultivars have now been planted.

The next outing is to view the heather garden at Edinburgh's Royal Botanic Gardens, on Saturday 28th September; members please meet at the WEST GATE in Arboretum Road at 1.30pm. At the time of writing I do not know who will be our guide on that day as there are due to be changes in senior staff at the Botanic Gardens.

Norrie Robertson

NORTH EAST

On May 12th we were again invited by the Durham Horticultural college at Houghall to have a stand at their 'Gardeners' Open Day'. The sun shone most of the day and, whilst it was breezy, it was very pleasant and the gardens looked most attractive. There was cherry blossom in profusion and the greenhouses were all full of plants ready for the summer bedding-out displays.

On June 8th we will be going by coach to Askham Bryan just outside York, so a report of this outing will be in the next Bulletin.

We hope to have our Annual show on

September 21st but details of this and the schedule will be sent to members when various points have been finalised.

The A.G.M. will be held on Monday October 28th, in the upstairs room of the Methodist Church Hall, Ponteland, at 7.30pm when we look forward to seeing as many members as possible.

Dorothy M Warner

MIDLANDS

The Winter/Spring heather competitions were held at Winterbourne on Friday March 8th and after an extremely dry Summer last year many members had difficulty finding material in flower. This year we had a separate room for the competitions and all members were able to participate in the judging by placing 3p in the box by the entry they considered to be 1st, 2p in the 2nd and 1p in the 3rd - a total cost for the 5 classes of 30p per member, which was deducted from the usual cost of the meetings. The results were: Class 1 Any *E. carnea* - 1st Daphne Everett: 2nd Olwyn Warner: 3rd David Radley. Class 2 Any heather hybrid - 1st Daphne Everett: 2nd Daphne Everett: 3rd Olwyn Warner. Class 3 Any heather for foliage effect - 1st Daphne Everett: 2nd Olwyn Warner: 3rd David Radley. Class 4 A tree heath in flower - 1st Olwyn Warner. Class 5 Arrangement in a basket - 1st Daphne Everett: 2nd Olwyn Warner: 3rd Rosemary Radley. The overall winner and thus the holder of the Silver Cup for 1991 being Daphne Everett. Afterwards Maurice Everett showed slides of entries in the Heather Classes at the RHS shows in London.

Our next event is on Saturday June

22nd, a visit to Wolseley Park Garden, approximately 2 miles north of Rugeley on the right-hand side of the A51 road, travelling north towards Stone. By the entrance is a Cramphorn Garden Centre complete with cafe and car park. Meet in the car park at 1 o'clock for a picnic lunch before viewing the Garden - admission charge £2.50p. There should be a cafe and possibly a new restaurant open within the Garden for tea if required.

On Friday 30th August we aim to try a summer flowering heather competition for the first time. This will be at Winterbourne; doors open at 7.00pm for a 7.30pm start. Also at this meeting, Peter Vickers (who has a heather nursery near Sheffield) will give us a talk entitled '30 Years of Heather Growing'. We hope to have a good attendance for what promises to be a very good ericaceous evening.

Classes for the competition:-Class 1 Any *E. cinerea* in flower - in an Oasis block. Class 2 Any *E. vagans* in flower - in an Oasis block. Class 3 Any *calluna* in flower - in an Oasis block. Class 4 Any *calluna* for foliage effect - in an Oasis block. Class 5 An arrangement of heathers in a basket.

At our March meeting a member asked for another summer visit and we have been fortunate to be able to arrange a visit on Saturday September 14th to Graham Cooke's lovely garden, Little Froome, 2 Drayton Lane, Fenny Drayton, near Nuneaton, Warwickshire. It is suggested that we meet at 12 noon to see the garden and have a picnic lunch on the lawn. Afterwards we make our way to Mr and Mrs Cooke's daughter Wendy and son-in-law Simon Law's heather nursery - Brooklands Heathers, Nuneaton Road, Mancetter.

Advance notice - our Autumn Social Evening - Saturday 9th November at Winterbourne; Buffet Supper and slides of the 1991 Conference at Ipswich. A full programme - we hope to see you.

David Radley

My thanks to David for taking over the reporting of Midland Group News. Ed.

SOUTH WEST

The first meeting of 1991 on Saturday 9th March, was much earlier than usual because members were invited to view the display of Winter/Spring flowering heaths at the garden/nursery of Bert and Diane Jones. Plenty of colour was on show and Bert and Diane guided us around all the stages of heather cultivation, from cuttings and new plantings to areas which were in need of replanting, giving members a comprehensive guide to heather gardening. As in the past, Bert and Diane showed us marvellous hospitality and I am very grateful to them for providing us with a very entertaining day.

The second visit of this year was on 6th April at the Lytchett Matravers Village Hall in Dorset. Members gathered together for a talk and slide show given by Allen Hall, the Organiser for the Southern Group. Allen showed us some of his excellent close-up slides supplemented by general heather and garden slides; these were accompanied by an informative description and gave us all a different view of our favourite plants.

The talk was followed by refreshment and the judging of the Table Show, the results of which are detailed below:

Class 1. A vase or bowl of heathers in bloom 1st Bob Allen, 2nd Joyce Allen, 3rd Maureen Clark, HC Joyce Allen

Class 2. A vase or bowl of heathers shown for foliage effect. Joint 1st Bob Allen and Joyce Allen, 3rd Maureen Clark

The winner of the Burfitt Bowl for the most points overall was Bob Allen and six members staged exhibits. My thanks go to Allen Hall for the entertainment and to the ladies who provided and helped with the refreshments.

Saturday 22nd June will see a visit to the Naked Cross Nurseries (formerly Maxwell and Beale) and members should assemble at 2.00pm. Peter French and family have kindly offered to show us around the nursery as a whole. We will see the propagating area as well as the stock plants and the sales area and will perhaps get some information on Peter's ideas of a display bed 'reference collection'. The Naked Cross Nurseries are situated just to the west of Corfe Mullen, on the Corfe Mullen-Lytchett Minster road, 1 mile east of the Poole - Blandford road.

The Southampton Balloon and Flower Festival takes place from Friday July 5th to Sunday July 7th on Southampton Common. Once again the Horticultural Marquees have an abundance of interest, with the local group flying the flag of the Heather Society. Any volunteers to man the stand? Open heather classes are also a feature and details are available from me if you wish to take part.

Sunday 14th July will be the occasion for a joint meeting between the South West Group and the Southern Group at Wisley. Members may meet at the car park at 12.30pm for a picnic or assemble at the main entrance for a 1.45pm start to the tour. John Battye will be guiding members around Wisley's Heather Garden and RHS members should bring their membership

cards; please see the Southern Group News for further details. I thank Allen Hall for organising this visit.

Finally would members please remember that if they require further details of the visits they should send me a SAE.

Phil Joyner

SOUTHERN

On 17th March, the Southern Group visited Kew. We were privileged to have with us members from no fewer than four other Groups and four members of Council were also present.

We were met at the Temperate House by Mr Hans Fliegner, Assistant Curator, who described the Collection of Cape Heathers and their cultivation in a glass house. The octagonal conservatory covers 100 square metres and is of Victorian design. The cape heather bed is constructed literally over staff quarters, making it, in the words of Mr Fliegner, "the first roof garden built at Kew".

There are about 50 varieties of cape heath growing and most are winter species, flowering at Kew from November to March; this follows the Victorian tradition of the winter garden. South African summer flowering varieties are not needed because there is so much of interest at Kew in the summer. The heathers are planted in a well drained compost in which 'lumpy' peat and low pH grit feature prominently; Mr Fliegner ruefully commented that Kew now has a no-peat, environmentally friendly policy, perhaps the policy is not so friendly to the heathers.

Watering is mainly done by hand to make sure the heathers get enough but not so much as to encourage fungi. The

temperature is controlled to be frost free but otherwise there is plenty of ventilation. Windows are left open most nights but there are staff on duty to close them if a frost is forecast.

Mr Mark Bridger, Arboretum Supervisor, who looks after the hardy heather garden at Kew, told us that the pH of the soil in that area was very variable. Although the natural soil was sandy and light, soil with a heavy clay content had been imported some time in the past; plantings in the heather beds were therefore concentrated, though not exclusively, on winter flowering heathers.

The no-peat policy was causing some problems and bark and pine needles were now being used as mulches. Some of the older beds had been prepared using possibly too much peat, these had now become a very acidic pan; a more recent policy was to include some manure in the first preparation of a new heather bed.

Kew do little propagation of heathers themselves, relying on the trade to supply them when new plantings are needed but a few of the less usual cultivars are grown and there are 16 of the European species represented in the heather garden.

Future programme

The programme for the Southern Group for the remainder of 1991 and the early part of 1992 are given below. I have sketch maps and other information relevant to meetings and members are requested to send a stamped addressed envelope if they would like copies; I shall up-date this at Christmas for the coming year. As always, members of other Groups are welcome to join our meetings

July 14th - visit to Howards Field, RHS Wisley (Joint meeting with South Western Group)

On Sunday July 14th, a joint visit for the Southern and South Western Groups has been arranged to the new national heather collection in the Royal Horticultural Society Gardens, Wisley. A new area in Howards Field has been planted with many hundreds of heather cultivars in an attractive open woodland setting, the traditional arrangement of conifers planted among heathers has been dropped in favour of shrubs, ericaceous and otherwise, plus the existing mature trees. Our visit will be led by Mr John Battye, Superintendent of the Floral, Rock Garden and Battlestone Hill Departments at Wisley, who is a member of the Heather Society.

It is suggested that participants might like to start the day with a picnic in the picnic area outside the main entrance at about 12.30. We shall however assemble outside the main entrance at 1.30pm for a 1.45pm start. There will be no charge for admittance on this occasion but those of us that are RHS members are strongly requested to bring their RHS membership cards. Sundays are RHS members-only days and special arrangements are being made for our members. I am sure that non-RHS members will wish to respect this and will understand that the tour will be to Howards Field ONLY; there is however plenty to occupy us there.

RHS Wisley is about 20 miles south of London, on the A3 and also just south of junction 10 on the M25, it is very well signposted. Those travelling south down the A3 will need to get onto the north-bound carriageway and there is a roundabout two or three hundred yards south of the Wisley turning. Travellers by public transport could make use of the

Green Line coach No.715 from Oxford Circus or from the Friary Bus Station at Guildford. The No.740 Green line coach from Victoria also goes to Wisley, passengers should however ask the driver to stop at the Gardens.

October 6th - Indoor Meeting, Wisley

About 18 months ago, Jock Vickery asked me to present some slides of close-up views of heathers but unfortunately it did not prove possible to finalise arrangements for an indoor meeting last year. I am glad to be able to report that the Director General of the RHS, Mr C D Brickell, has kindly agreed that the Society may have the use of a lecture room at Wisley on 6th October 1991; I propose to make a presentation of some slides, thereby fulfilling a long-standing commitment. I also propose that we have a heather competition that day, which will be open to all members. There will be modest prizes for the following classes:

1. The best bowl or vase of heathers in flower.
2. The best bowl of heather chosen for foliage, any species, which may be mixed.
3. The best arrangement of flowers and foliage in which heathers must predominate.

Other Groups have I know had a good deal of fun with low key competitions of this sort and I invite your participation.

The meeting will begin at 2pm and we should assemble outside the main entrance to the RHS Garden, Wisley; travel arrangements are as above. Wisley is situated very conveniently for road transport in the Southern Group area and there is some public transport as well, so I trust the venue will prove satisfactory to members. The meeting is once again on a Sunday, ie. on RHS members-only day as

far as the Garden is concerned; HS members will have free admittance to the lecture room but not the garden. The facilities are being offered free of charge, though it will be appropriate for the Group to make a donation to RHS funds and RHS members are again asked to bring their cards with them.

NEXT YEAR

March 22nd 1992 - Visit to the Heather Garden, Valley Gardens, Windsor.

This visit, to see the winter heathers, will be led by the Keeper of the Gardens, Mr J D Bond and we plan to meet in the car park of the SAVILL GARDENS at 11am; this will allow us to make the best of the early spring day and afterwards members may like to visit the Savill Gardens restaurant or bookshop. Although March 1992 seems a long way ahead, I invite you to make a note of the date. Do bear in mind that the Spring Bulletin does not usually appear in time for our early meetings.

I look forward to seeing you all at our meetings, which are characterised by friendly companionship and good talk. Incidentally, Joan and I plan to be wearing our Heather Society badges on the visits so that you can recognise us more easily.

Allen Hall



DIARY OF EVENTS 1991

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| June 22nd | Midlands Group, visit to Wolseley Park Gardens. |
| June 22nd | South West Group, visit to Naked Cross Nurseries |
| July 7th | South West Group, Southampton Balloon and Flower Festival |
| July 14th | Southern and South West Group, joint visit to Wisley. |
| Aug. 30th | Midlands Group, Heather Competition and talk. |
| Aug. 13th | Heather Society Council Meeting |
| Aug. 13th/14th | RHS Show & Heather Competition, Vincent Square. |
| Sept. 6th/9th | 21st ANNUAL CONFERENCE, SUFFOLK. |
| Sept. 14th | Midlands Group, visit to Little Froome. |
| Sept. 21st | North East Group, proposed date of Annual Show. |
| Sept. 28th | Scottish Group, visit to Edinburgh Botanic Gardens. |
| Oct. 6th | Southern Group, Heather Competition and slides. |
| Oct. 24th | CLOSING DATE FOR MATERIAL FOR THE AUTUMN BULLETIN |
| Oct. 28th | North East Group, A.G.M. |
| Nov. 9th | Midlands Group, Social evening. |
| 1992 | |
| March 22nd | Southern Group, visit to Valley Gardens, Windsor Great Park. |