

# THE HEATHER SOCIETY BULLETIN



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*A very happy and prosperous 1992 to you all. Christmas, with our family and especially with our increasing brood of grandchildren of assorted sexes around us, is a lovely time - not to be missed. However, when it is all over, it is quite nice to get back to the nursery, where I know that if I put a heather into a bed, it is going to stay quietly put.*

*I have a special weakness for furry caterpillars (which seem, like many other creatures of my childhood memory, to be much scarcer these days) so when last autumn, we found hundreds of them among the heathers*

*in the nursery, I was delighted and had them collected up as the beds were cleared and put into one of our overwintering tunnels. (We already have several lizards and a toad living in the propagating tunnels so our employees are used to my peculiarities). Having done my 'good deed' I then thought to look them up in my book on butterflies and moths and find that the most likely candidate is the Ruby Tiger Moth which - guess what - lives on heather moors, lays its eggs on heather plants and - presumably - feeds on heather. What have I done?*

## KENNETH McCRINDLE

It is with great sadness that I have to report that the organiser of the 1992 Conference, Ken McCrindle, died of a heart attack just after Christmas. I am sure that you will all wish to join me in sending Jean our heartfelt sympathy.

Ken was an accountant by profession, he took early retirement nine years ago when he was 57. As a Church Elder, he played an active part in the Church (he was treasurer of the Sunday School); he was also Secretary to the local Gardening Club. He loved his heather garden and at his funeral the Minister especially

mentioned the pleasure it had given to the village; "the cascades of colour to delight us all" was how he put it. Jean says that Ken's interest in heathers began in 1963, when they moved (with small children and not much cash) to their present bungalow. He borrowed a book from the library called 'Gardening on a Shoe String' which led on to his reading Fred Chapple's 'The Heather Garden'. This, he enjoyed so much that Jean subsequently bought him his own copy, which had a message on the dust jacket saying 'Why not join the Heather Society'.

In 1966 she sent off a subscription for him to become a member and they have been stalwart supporters of the Society ever since.

The Conference Programme was almost complete when Ken died but there is still much to be done; Jean has very bravely offered to take over the organisation and continue with the arrangements. We are most grateful to her.

## 22nd ANNUAL CONFERENCE

West Park Hall, University of  
Dundee, 11th - 14th September 1992

**FRIDAY Afternoon:** Registration and Welcome by the Chairman. Evening : Demonstration - Floral Art with Heathers - Mrs Mary Clarke, Dunblane. Talk about the University of Dundee Botanic Gardens - Curator, Mr L Bissett

**SATURDAY Morning:** Talk on the Diseases of Heathers - Dr Audrey Litterick, Auchincruive Agric. College, Ayr. Tour of University of Dundee Botanic Gardens. Afternoon: Visit to George Sturrock's Nursery at Letham. Another visit - yet to be arranged. Evening : A talk on Cherrybank Heather Gardens - Norrie Robertson.

**SUNDAY Morning:** AGM Leave for Cherrybank Gardens, where Bells will be providing a 'Pimms reception' followed by a light lunch. the Heather Society will take the opportunity to present Bells with a Plaque in appreciation of their good work in promoting heathers. There

will be a tour of the gardens and the Group Photograph will also be taken. Evening : Open Forum.

### MONDAY: Depart.

Members will no doubt appreciate that due to the sad circumstances, the cost of attending the 1992 Conference has not yet been finalised; from the details available at the moment, it is likely that it will be approximately £100 - £120 for the full Conference. The final costing will be announced in the Summer Bulletin - but don't delay - send your £2 booking fee shortly to Jean McCrindle, 1 Drummond Rise, Dunblane, FK15 0EX.

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FROM THE ROYAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY SHOW

November 26th and 27th 1991  
Ornamental Plants from the Open.

Class 12. A Heath or heather judged for foliage effect, One vase/bowl. There were eight entries for this Class, but unfortunately five of these were disqualified as being 'N.A.S.' (Not according to Schedule). Competitors must be more careful to ensure that their entries are strictly in accordance with the schedule.

### Results:

1st Winkworth Arboretum  
*E. arborea* 'Alpina'

2nd Mrs Joan Hall  
*E. arborea* 'Alpina'

3rd Mrs Joan Hall  
*E. arborea* 'Albert's Gold'

## HUGH NICHOLSON

*Our long standing Council Member (recently retired), Hugh Nicholson sent me details of his life as requested, intending that I should put it into my own words. However, by doing this I felt it would deprive members of his sense of humour, so I have left his story written in the first person.*

### H L NICHOLSON

MBE, FLS, FRICS, MICE, MRTPI  
(Nick the Twig)

I was born on 5th May 1909 at Upton by Chester during Race Week and it was thought that I would be called 'Santa strata' after the winner of the Chester Cup. However that was not to be, so it was Hugh Litherland Nicholson instead (Litherland because of our family ties with that non-tourist district in the Merseyside conurbation).

In 1919 the family moved to Shrewsbury where, after demobilization, my father restarted his practice as a Solicitor. I duly went to a local preparatory school where my interest in nature and gardening started to flourish: I regularly won first prize for my school garden (1x2 metres) having had plants given to me by Hilda Murrell, the daughter of a local rose grower (she, alas, was murdered in March 1984).

I became very interested in Wireless and was licensed in 1922 before the BBC started. As a result I just scraped through my Common Entrance exams and hence to Shrewsbury School where I followed my father - my scholastic career was not

brilliant! However, after articles I qualified as a Chartered Surveyor in 1930, having - as they say in the USA - 'majored' in Land Agency, Agriculture and Forestry (being helped by Hilda in the latter) and in Agricultural Botany. I then held appointments in Local Government with Cheshire, Berkshire and Gloucestershire County Councils, in their Planning Departments. I married my first wife in 1934.

In April 1939 I joined the TA and found myself in a Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery, based in Cheltenham. When war was declared on September 3rd I was immediately sent (in civilian clothes) to the Merchant Venturers Hall in Bristol and it was RADAR! Thence a course at the Military College of Science to be instructed in the repair and maintenance of very early Radar sets. During the Battle of Britain I looked after sets at Cobham and Tangmere and part of my battery was at Wisley: it was then to Shrivenham and I finished up as a Gunnery Control Officer on the Thames Estuary; being released in October 1944 to build homes for heroes in Gloucestershire (I hated it).

In 1947 I entered the Civil Service and was posted to the West Midlands area as Assistant Regional Planning Officer, where in the course of my duties I met Mr J W Sparkes at Beoley and we established a firm friendship. Through him my interest in heathers was stimulated and to my delight Joe Sparkes named a Calluna after me (for services rendered!).

In 1956 the Regional Office closed down and my wife and I moved to London and settled down in Surbiton in a run-

down house with a ditto garden. I contacted the Maxwell and Beale Heather Nursery and with the help of Mr Stevens, our first heather garden came into being. I went to the meeting at the RHS when Sir John Charrington mooted the idea of a Heather Society but I did not join at once, however, within months I was recruited by the first Hon. Secretary Mrs MacLeod to serve on the committee and to provide some technical advice if required.

I could see the need for the Society to be divided into Regions and I devised a plan based on the way Central Government set up their Planning Areas; the Heather Society Zones came from this idea.

I was anxious that the concept of the Heather Society should spread overseas and in 1966 I was invited by the Staatbosbeheer to study Recreation and Coastal Planting in the Netherlands - there I spread the Gospel.

I was appointed Tree Adviser (Planning) with the Department of the Environment in 1965 and covered the whole of England. The work was semi-judicial, dealing with Tree Preservation Orders, advice to Local Authorities, preparation of Circulars (Plant a Tree for 73) and a British Standard (Trees in relation to construction). I was delighted to be asked to give advice to the Crown Estates, again on Coastal Planting. I think that because of this I was made a Member of the Order of the British Empire *inter alia*!

I acted as an assessor at Public Local Enquiries on Overhead Electricity Power Lines and at the termination of one of these meetings in Cornwall, being forced

by British Rail to buy a ticket for a Seat Reservation at Penzance, I found myself sitting opposite to a German citizen - this turned out to be Hedda, now my third wife. I lost my second wife after only nine years, so my life has been one of Joy and Sorrow.

During the last two years I found that my sight was not so good. A cataract had developed so much that, in July 1991, I resigned from Council and the Technical Committee; I will miss the meetings.

My family motto is 'Servabo Fidem' which takes some living up to as the translation is 'I Will Serve Faithfully', which I have always tried to do.

I am a member of the German, Dutch and American Heather Societies and was elected a Fellow of the Linnean Society of London in 1971. To my friends in the trade all over the country and beyond I have always been known as 'Nick the Twig'.

*Since Hugh wrote this, I am pleased to be able to say that he has had successful operations on both his eyes. Ed.*

## SCRAP BOWL

Titbits of News from Members

*Dorothy Metheny, (The first Editor of 'Heather News', the Journal of the North American Heather Society) whose new book 'Hardy Heather Species' has recently been published, tells us how it all came about and gives hope to the rest of us. Ed.*

In the 1950's, after a number of rigorous years working to keep a community service functioning, I

determined to spend more time developing my garden. Toward this end, having never had the least brush with the study of botany, I registered for a University of Washington Arboretum hobby class called 'Botany for Gardeners'. Following this class, it was my good fortune to be invited to join the *Ericaceae* Study Group at the Arboretum; the eight members of the group were all studious housewives bent on increasing their knowledge of plants of the *Ericaceae* family, many of which thrive in the conditions of our part of North America.

After studying appropriate texts and growing the plants, in 1958, sponsored by the Arboretum Education Committee, we offered a series of slide lectures entitled 'A Survey of the Heath Family' to other gardeners who might be interested in the subject. For practical purposes the species growable in our climate were divided among us. Since I had long since grown some heathers on my sandy hillside garden and liked them, the slide show of the heathers fell to me. A satisfying audience appeared to hear what we had to say and a booklet, 'A Survey of the Heath Family', was published in 1959.

We continued our studies and growing the plants and presented a second set of lectures, 'Ericaceous Plants for Northwest Gardens', in 1964. As the beloved leader of our study group died later that year, the editing of the next booklet (with the title as above) fell to me and was published in 1965. For this book I did drawings of flowering stems of 13 heather species and flowers only of 27 other ericaceous species.

When the Pacific Northwest Heather

Society was organized and I became editor of our 'Heather News' it soon became apparent from the questions submitted that some of our members had no means of distinguishing the species (some uninformed retail merchants love to designate all of them 'Scotch Heather'); so the species articles were begun. And there was the beginning of 'Hardy Heather Species'.

*D Metheny, Seattle*

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## FROM THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

Though most visitors to Jodrell Bank make a beeline for the science centre and gaze at the galaxies in its planetarium, the arboretum attached to it has plenty of autumnal stars of its own.

The Granada Arboretum is comparatively young, having been started in 1972. Since then it has rapidly grown in stature, with important national collections, notably of *Malus*, the crab apples, and *Sorbus* (mainly rowans and whitebeams).

This is the ideal place to visit if you are planning a wildlife garden. So far, 112 different bird species have been recorded in the arboretum and 19 species of butterfly. Birds at this time of year are treated to a veritable banquet of berries. ...

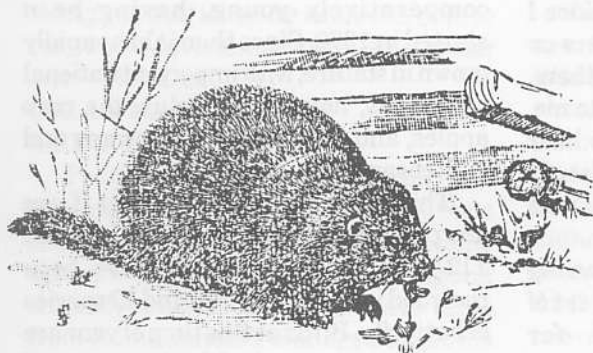
... As if all that wasn't reason enough to visit, the heather gardens provide an alternative focus closer to ground level, with more than 150 varieties in the Heather Society's *Calluna* collection.

## GROUND HOGS

After my appeal in the Autumn Bulletin, for someone to tell me what a ground hog is, kind members from both here and the USA wrote with information. Now - as the UK authority on the subject - I can pass this information on to you.

"The ground hog is a common rodent of the species *Marmota*, also known as a woodchuck, fully grown it weighs around 8-15 pounds and has gray-brown fur" - was the authoritative answer to my question, given by Dr Richard H Munson of the Botanic Garden of Smith College, Massachusetts.

"Meet our pesky friend, the GROUND HOG!" said Alice Knight of Elma Washington - as she enclosed a drawing of him, or her



(apparently they burrow under plants and can cause much damage). She and Dr Munson both tell of 'Ground Hog Day' on February 2nd when, if the Ground hog comes out of his burrow after hibernation on that day and sees his shadow, he retires into his burrow again, ensuring six more weeks of winter.

Our Chairman quotes the tongue twister : 'How much wood could a woodchuck chuck, if a woodchuck could chuck wood? The wood that a woodchuck would chuck, if the woodchuck could chuck wood, would be the wood that a woodchuck could chuck, if the woodchuck could chuck wood'.

Bob Rope from Nottingham and Mr Cassels from Essex also took the trouble to phone me with information and even Walter Warnick (who started it all) decided to look them up in his town library and send me the biological details; he adds that they are very selective in what they eat - they love lupins - nibbling leaves and flowers down to the ground and will eat some of his hostas (as someone would eat a stick of celery) while leaving others severely alone.

Now why, I wonder, is the ground hog also called a woodchuck? Could anyone ... No I had better not ask!

*Daphne Everett*

## MOUNT ST. HELENS AFTERMATH - 10 JUNE 1980

FROM 'HEATHER NEWS'  
the Journal of the North American  
Heather Society.

"May 25th. Woke up at 5am as it was getting light and turned over for a few more winks. Awoke about 6.45 to pitch darkness and the awful awareness of what had happened.

Bob and I were dressed and into the nursery as the first drops of muddy ash began falling. It turned quickly to dry ash. We worked frantically with flashlights in respirator masks trying to protect what we could until it began to get light about 9 am.

What an ordeal! The greenhouses were completely covered and it was night time inside until we could get the stuff scraped and washed off. Those first few days we all had our chins down to our boot tops, but we finally got in a crew and began the task of washing each plant individually with high pressure hose nozzles to actually wash the ash crust off each pot (+200,000 pots). We used sprinklers for several days but the ash just crusted on top of the soil and clung to the heather leaves. We even tried washing them with detergents, leaf-shine, Amway products and several other things. Nothing seems to help get rid of that gray tinge. Guess people will just have to live with gray heather plants for as long as it takes to get rid of the ash and dust.

Alice Night

## PROBLEM CORNER

Mr Neil Forsyth from Vancouver would like information on drought resistant varieties of heather. Do any members have experience of particular species, and especially particular cultivars - which they have found to be exceptionally tolerant of drought? Answers, if any, will be published in the next Bulletin, as this is a subject which must interest a great many people.

## ERUDITE ODDS AND ENDS FROM OUR PRESIDENT EXPERIENCES WITH ERICA BOCQUETII

At the 1990 Conference, Bert Jones kindly gave me twelve bonny young plants of *Erica bocquetii*. Before I could say 'jack-knife', eager members had asked for some of them and nine were given away, with the firm proviso that I would be told a year later how they had fared. I do not regret this because thus we should get a wider variety of experiences - and anyway - the best way to keep a plant is (don't I know it) to give it away.

So - this is a reminder to those who have any plants of this promising new species - to let us know how they have fared. They seem to have survived out of doors (as I had hoped they would) through the winter of 1990/91, which was a good test. Was it so everywhere? Did it flower? Any seed?

I might add that Tessa Forbes at Plaxtol has a dozen; no two are quite alike and some are markedly different. Most are prostrate or low-growing, some more erect, one strikingly so, about 5" high with very short erect leaves and a white stem; most others have brownish stems and some, greyer foliage. Even though I purposely took cuttings from every bush I saw, I had not expected quite so much variation. (For details of the re-discovery of *E. bocquetii*, see 1990 Year Book, pp 48-52).

(I must admit to being one of the 'gannets' who descended on David and had one of his plants. It is looking well and is showing plenty of flower buds (for the first time) but has not as yet put on much growth. Ed.)

## TRANSPARENCIES WANTED

The first Vice-President of the North American Heather Society, Joyce Descloux, is writing a book on the Ericaceae in gardens, for the Timber Press. She needs "a multitude of good photo illustrations", and would be very grateful to anyone who could let her have transparencies showing; 1. heather in the wild, 2. its uses as special garden material, and 3. close-ups of some of the best cultivars. If you can help, please write to Mrs Joyce Descloux, 32 Long Ridge Road, Randolph, New Jersey 07889.

## IRISH WHAT?

*Erica erigena* 'Irish Dusk' has collected at least three amusing misnomers, viz 'Irish Duck', 'Irish Duke' and 'Irish Dust'. Who knows of any others?

(I am sure that David won't mind me telling you that when he wrote this note to me, he inadvertently invented another one - 'Irish Disk.' Ed.)

## CALLUNA VULGARIS 'BRITA ELIZABETH'

From time to time Pat Turpin has sent me precise and detailed descriptions of special heathers. I have just come across what he wrote three years ago on the only double *Calluna* to have come from Scandinavia. I managed to get his permission to reproduce his astute commentary and here it is: "I have carefully examined a number of florets of *Calluna vulgaris* 'Brita Elizabeth'. When the four sepals had been removed, the rest of the flower appeared to have been formed by the doubling of the corolla, in which the stigma and stamens (of which there were no trace) had

undergone petaloid growth, producing the cluster of petals which form the double flower. This is the same process which occurs in other double-flowered heathers, eg. *Calluna vulgaris* 'Alba Plena', *Daboecia cantabrica* 'Charles Nelson' and *Erica mackaiana* 'Plena'.

I do not think therefore that 'Brita Elizabeth' can be described a "f. *polysepalata*". Rather than classifying it "f. *polypetalata*", it would be preferable just to call it f. *plena*".

In my text for the Kew monograph on heathers I have put this cultivar into f. *polypetalata* "... petalis numerosis pleni" : f. *plena* will not do - "petalis et sepalis numerosis pleni". But there is a very old variety *plena*, which demands only "gefüllte Blüten", so any double could fit into it.

## WHITE CALLUNA AND SNOW

In volume 2 p. 350 of the magnificent new "Farn und Blütenpflanzen" Baden-Württembergs (Ulmer) is a glorious photograph of *Calluna* in full flower. But this note concerns what is written on the previous page "An lange schneebedeckten Stellen des Feldberg-Gebietes oft weissblühend" (Where the snow lies longest on the Feldberg, often with white flowers). At the back of my mind I think I have heard the idea before. Does anyone recollect it or can guess if or why it is true?

## HEATHER LIQUEUR

A German visitor brought with him a bottle labelled Heidegeist from the Lüneberger Heide. It is a liqueur said to be produced from the best heather plants, but it tastes of liquorice (some members tested it at the Conference). Has anyone

else come across this? The inference is that it is an old drink.

### **CALLUNA VUIGARIS 'SPRING CHARM'**

Several years ago, John Horsey of Rivendell Alpines, Wimborne, obtained a plant under this name from a Gloucester Garden Centre. He propagated it and then felt sure that it was in fact *Cv* 'Spring Torch'; his latest catalogue therefore corrects this. Are others growing it under this misnomer?

*David McClintock*

## **GROUP NEWS**

### **SCOTTISH**

On January 4th 1992, the Scottish Group suffered the great loss of Ken McCrindle; he and his wife Jean were enthusiastic members and Ken was in the process of organising the 1992 Conference. Our thoughts are with Jean at this sad time and we thank her for her offer to continue with the Conference organisation.

On a wet and windy Saturday 28th September, we were taken on a conducted tour of Edinburgh Botanic Gardens by Mr Bill Tait, the Floral Superintendent, who told us some of the history of the gardens. On the way round we paid a visit to the heather garden where the *Callunas* were in full flower.

After a welcome cup of tea, Bill showed us slides of plants which were suitable for growing with heathers and we finished our day with a tour of the glasshouses and the Palm House. Nineteen members attended, including a few from south of the border.

Saturday 11th April 1992 is the date for the Spring Meeting, which will begin at 1.30pm at John Proudfoot's garden and nursery at 34 Lyndoch Road, Methven, Perthshire. Take the A85 Perth to Crieff road - on entering Methven, take the first turn on the right (Skelton Road) to the T junction, turn right and No. 34 is the last

bungalow on the right (about 100 metres from the T junction). As well as heathers there is a wonderful collection of dwarf conifers; John and his wife look forward to meeting all members.

As Scotland is hosting the Conference this year there will be no Autumn meeting; I appeal for as many Scottish members as possible to make the effort to attend. The highlight will be a visit to Bell's Cherrybank Gardens to view the National Heather Collection, which by then, will be growing over 820 varieties.

*Norrie Robertson*

### **NORTH EAST**

Eighteen members attended the AGM on October 28th which was a very pleasant evening. The Officers and Committee were all re-elected namely, Roy Nichols - Chairman, Dorothy Warner - Secretary, Geoff Warner - Treasurer, together with Sid Courtney, Bill Crow, Rita and David Plumridge and Mary and David Roberts. The trophies for the Annual Show were presented, then Dr Ron McParlin, Head of Horticulture at Kirkley Agricultural College, gave us an informative and often amusing account of how he took over and developed the gardens at Kirkley these last 20 years. He is an organic gardener which was of great interest to our members; question time was lively.

At the time of writing this report we have no firm dates for future activities, but I do know that Houghall College of Horticulture will be extending their Open Day to a two day event this year and it will possibly be held on May 16th/17th 1992.

Edinburgh Botanic Garden is where we will be heading for our Annual Outing in May/June but local members will be notified nearer the time with details of dates and times etc.

*Dorothy Warner*

### **MIDLANDS**

On November 16th, the Midlands Group held its annual Social Evening at Winterborne and after a very good supper (provided by members) Maurice and I showed some of the slides we took at the 1991 Conference. The weather was lovely when we visited the Suffolk Sandlings and Adrian Bloom's spectacular garden at Foggy Bottom,

so the slides brought a breath of summer into a November evening; we also showed some pictures of Beth Chatto's lovely garden, which we visited on a rather round-about way home.

Our next meeting will be on Friday 13th March when we are holding our annual Winter Heather Competition; details of classes etc. were in the Midlands Group Newsletter which was sent out in January. All members (from the Midlands and elsewhere) are welcome to enter the competitions and compete for the Midland Group Silver Cup, if you would like details please let me know.

May 8th/9th/10th are the dates for the Malvern Spring Show, when we plan to put on a display for the Heather Society. This show is fast becoming a second Chelsea, so we hope it will be worth while. Any help to man the stand for an hour or two will be very welcome and it will be a good opportunity to visit a major horticultural event at the same time. If you can help, please get in touch with me - as we hope to display a list on the stand, stating the times when a member will be on hand to give advice etc. We don't expect to be able to man it all the hours that the show is open but will concentrate volunteers at the times we expect it to be at its busiest. We hope to be displaying copies of some of the winning entries in the photographic Competition held at the 1991 Conference as an added attraction.

On the 4th July we plan to visit Wolseley Park Gardens in Staffordshire. We will meet in the Garden Centre car-Park at the entrance to the garden with our picnics, which we can then take in with us. This is our second attempt at this garden. Last year the rain came down in torrents and the few hardy souls who turned up, ate their picnics in their car and then went home. Anyone who would like a leaflet giving directions please give me a ring. PS. Since writing this, the newspaper stories about the financial problems at Wolseley Park Gardens, are not very encouraging. We still hope to be able to visit but will keep you informed.

Saturday 5th September - Visit to Crail Nurseries and the Ropes - details in the Summer Bulletin.

*Daphne Everett*

## SOUTHERN

On Sunday October 6th 1991, the Southern Group met at Wisley for an indoor meeting and 19 members attended. By courtesy of Mr C D Brickell, CBE., Director General of the Royal Horticultural Society, we had the use of a splendid lecture room and every facility we requested was provided. We are most fortunate to be able to use this lecture room which is so conveniently situated in regard to the motorway network of the South East and on the site of one of the most important of our national heather collections. I wish to express our gratitude to Mr Brickell and to Mr W J Simpson, Director of Horticulture, RHS Wisley.

The meeting began with a heather competition. Mr Desmond Perry and Mr Andrew Collins were our judges and they confessed to me afterwards that they had had considerable difficulty in making their choices, so keen was the competition. There was a large field with many entries, including some from the President and Major General and Mrs Turpin. The winners were :

Class 1. Best bowl of heathers in flower - Mr and Mrs Jock Vickery.

Class 2. Best bowl of heathers chosen for foliage - Mrs Pamela Lee.

Class 3. Best arrangement of flowers - Mrs Pamela Lee.

I should like to put on record my appreciation for the sporting efforts of members in putting on such a magnificent show of heathers; at the very end of the season too! Naturally, not all those present entered the competition and I trust that no-one will be put off attending future meetings because a competition is included.

The meeting continued with a viewing of some slides of heather gardens including some close-up shots and finally tea and home-made cake brought the proceedings to a close. A number of us then visited the Wisley book shop and Garden Centre.

## 1992 PROGRAMME

March 22nd - Visit to the Valley Garden, Windsor Great Park

Assemble at the nearby Savill Gardens car-park at 10.45am for an 11am start. Mr J D Bond, Keeper of the Gardens has kindly agreed to lead the tour.

This splendid garden should be full of

winter bloom for our visit which, by my records, is the first winter visit of the Society. Those who have not visited the garden for some time will find that there have been extensive additions in recent years and those who have never been before will want to go again. The Savill Garden car-park is best reached from the A30 road about a mile south of Egham (the A30 intersects with the M25 motorway junction 13 at Egham). Driving south from Egham on the A30, look out for Wick Road on the right hand side at Englefield Green. Wick Road leads into Wick Lane and the Savill Gardens car-park is on the left hand side of this road.

#### July 12th - Chelwood Vachery

I have arranged a visit to Chelwood Vachery, Nutley, Uckfield, East Sussex. Members of the Society visited the Vachery (which is the staff college of BAT Industries) in 1987, as part of the Annual Conference programme that year. Mr John Battye (now at Wisley) was responsible for the grounds at that time and he had created a fine heather garden - I am looking forward to seeing it again. The Senior Gardener, Mr Cyril Organ, is hoping to lead the tour. Meet in the car-park at 1.45pm for a 2pm start; Chelwood Vachery is situated on the west side of the A22 road between Wych Cross and Nutley.

If the day turns out to be dry, I propose that we start with a picnic in the Ashdown Forest; the forest includes a considerable heather moor. Joan and I will arrive at the Gill's Lap car-park at about 11.30am. This car-park is grassy and on a gentle knoll overlooking part of the heath; it will be possible for those inclined to do a bit of gentle exploration on the moor to do so and for the rest to sit and watch. Gill's Lap is only a mile or two east across the forest from Chelwood and is situated on the B2026 road. I have a sketch map - please send SAE if you would like one.

#### August - 'Playboys and Pensioners'

It became clear during the 1991 season, that a number of members would welcome a mid-week event and I am endeavouring to arrange one. August could be a good month for this.

*(What about the 'Playgirls' Allen? Ed.)*

September 19th - Indoor Event, Wisley, including Competition. November 1st - Visit

to Sheffield Park Full details of these last two meetings will appear in the Summer Bulletin.

*Allen Hall*

## SOUTH WEST

Looking around my garden at the time of writing (early January) it is obvious that the extra rain we experienced in the early summer last year, improved the flowering potential of my winter/spring heathers. During the previous two winters and springs the majority of my heathers flowered poorly but this winter, the plants, if not already in flower, are covered in buds. I note from an article in the local paper that the forecast for this summer is poor for holiday makers but looks good for our heathers - so perhaps I will be able to spend more time admiring than watering. Enough of my patter, so below is a description of the first three meetings for this year.

Saturday 28th March - Members should meet at Lytchett Matravers Village Hall at 2.00pm. The meeting is a 'members' meeting - that is - it will be an opportunity for the members to bring along their slides and photographs and share them with the rest of us. A projector and screen will be available for the slides and tables will be provided for the photographs. The annual Two Class Table Show will also take place; the classes are as below: Class 1 A vase or bowl of heathers in bloom. Class 2 A vase or bowl of heathers shown for foliage effect. Members may enter more than one entry in each class but when the points are totalled for the award of the Burfitt Bowl, only the highest placed entry will count. Prizes will be awarded for the first three placings in each class. 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.

Saturday 23rd May - We have been invited to visit the garden of Highbury at West Moors in Dorset and members should arrive by 2.00pm. Highbury is a half acre garden owned by Mr and Mrs Stanley Cherry and is open under the National Gardens Scheme. The garden contains rare plants and shrubs, spring bulbs and heathers; there is also a

small weather station and records of local weather conditions are kept. Mr and Mrs Cherry will kindly provide refreshment during the afternoon, for which there will be a small charge - all for charity. The garden is situated in Woodside Road at the north end of the West Moors village. If travelling from Ferndown area it is off the B3072 Ferndown to Three Legged Cross and on the right.

Saturday 27th June - on this particular afternoon members will be visiting two gardens in Wiltshire. The first visit (at 2 pm) will be to Bryher, to see the garden of Mr and Mrs Richard Packham, which is open under the National Gardens Scheme. Bryher is in the village of Bromham, north of Devizes; the garden is about two thirds of an acre and has borders planted with many unusual foliage effect plants, there are also several display greenhouses and a small nursery bed. Bryher is in Yard Lane, Bromham, just off the A342 Devizes to Chippenham road and about 4 miles north of Devizes. If travelling from Devizes - Yard Lane is the right hand turning off the crossroads in Bromham. Later in the afternoon we will be making our way South through Devizes to Market Lavington where we have kindly been invited to tea by Des and Sybil Perry, two very enthusiastic Heather Society members. Des and Sybil have a heather garden and we will no doubt catch some of the earlier summer flowering heathers. Des and Sybil's house at 26 Park Road, Market Lavington is reached by travelling along the A360 Devizes to Salisbury road and turning left at West Lavington onto the B3098. Park Road is left off the B3098, just past the school.

Friday 3rd July - Sunday 5th July - Southampton Balloon and Flower Festival has a large horticultural display, well worth visiting and the local group will have a stand; any volunteers for manning the stand?

Saturday 22nd August - A two garden visit to the edge of the New Forest. Further details in the Summer Bulletin.

Members of the Society are reminded that the South West local group meetings are open to all members. If more details of the above mentioned meetings are required, please send me two SAE's - you will then receive a circular at the end of February and another at the end of May.

May I take this opportunity to wish all members a good 'heathering' year for 1992 and hope to see many at the meetings.

*Phil Joyner*

## DIARY OF EVENTS

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|--------------------|--|
| <b>March 13</b>    | Midlands Group, Heather Competition and Open Forum.          |
| <b>March 22</b>    | Southern Group, Visit to Valley Gardens.                     |
| <b>March 28</b>    | South West Group, Members Evening & Competition.             |
| <b>May 8/10</b>    | Midlands Group, Malvern Spring Show.                         |
| <b>May 15</b>      | CLOSING DATE - CONTRIBUTIONS TO SUMMER BULLETIN.             |
| <b>May 23</b>      | South West Group, Garden visit - Highbury, West Moors.       |
| <b>June 27</b>     | South West Group, Garden visits - Bromham & Market Lavington |
| <b>July 3/5</b>    | South West Group, Southampton Balloon & Flower Festival      |
| <b>July 4</b>      | Midlands Group, Visit to Wolseley Park Gardens.              |
| <b>July 12</b>     | Southern Group, Visit to Chelwood Vachery.                   |
| <b>Aug. 11/12</b>  | RHS Show & Heather Competition.                              |
| <b>Aug. 11</b>     | Heather Society Council Meeting.                             |
| <b>Aug. 22</b>     | South West Group, Garden visits - New Forest.                |
| <b>August</b>      | Southern Group, Mid-week event to be arranged.               |
| <b>Sept. 5</b>     | Midlands Group, Visit to Crails Nursery & Ropes.             |
| <b>Sept. 11/14</b> | HEATHER SOCIETY CONFERENCE                                   |
| <b>Sept. 19</b>    | Southern Group, Wisley meeting & Competition.                |
| <b>Nov. 1</b>      | Southern Group, Visit to Sheffield Park.                     |