

THE HEATHER SOCIETY BULLETIN



Volume 4 No. 17 Autumn 1992

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

Having recently returned from the Dundee Conference - several pounds heavier than when we went, we can testify that Scottish hospitality is as good as ever. The highlight of the Conference had to be Bell's Cherrybank Gardens (the pride and joy of Norrie Robertson and justifiably so); United Distillers really 'did us proud' with a Pimms reception, a superb buffet lunch, afternoon tea AND sunshine.

It was a very happy and successful Conference, due in no small part to the hard work put into it by its organiser, Jean McCrindle, but a sad one too as Jean's husband Ken wasn't there to share the congratulations.

We also said a sincere 'Thank you' (in absentia) to Major General P G Turpin, who retired as the Society's Chairman after 15 hard-working years; we all hope that he will be fit enough to join us at next year's Conference. Pat has a wide knowledge of heathers and he and Cherry have put in a great deal of work for the Society over the years; they were greatly missed. The Deputy Chairman, David Small, who was Council's nominee to succeed Major General Turpin, was elected unanimously to the office of Chairman. I am sure you will all wish to join me in wishing him success for the future!

One of my own personal Conference highlights was to be able to meet, in person, Valerie Proudley ([E.vagans]) and Brian Proudley ([E.erigena]) who are over here from New Zealand.

AGM DUNDEE UNIVERSITY - 12 SEPTEMBER 1992

In the absence of the Chairman, Major General P J Turpin, who has decided not to seek re-election due to ill-health - we were welcomed to the AGM by the Deputy Chairman, David Small. The assembled members sent their best wishes to Pat and Cherry, with the sincere hope that we shall see them in the future. New members were particularly welcomed and also the large number of overseas visitors, the highest number ever to have attended at one time.

The Deputy Chairman reported that

the drop in membership in recent years is causing concern and a future aim is to try and analyse the reason for the decline. Computerisation of the records, which has now been completed, will assist in this work. The records have already shown that many new members join the Society and leave it within two years, it is hoped to contact these fleeting members to obtain their views. Despite falling numbers, the Society continues to flourish and to fulfil the objectives for which it was founded; in

recent years it has given assistance to holders of National Collections, with the verification of cultivar names and has now formed a close alliance with the British Heather Growers Association (a trade association of heather growers).

At the Election of Officers it was proposed and accepted that, in appreciation of the many years he has given to the Society, a Vice-Presidency should be conferred on Major General Turpin. The Deputy Chairman David Small was elected Chairman in his place.

In her report, The Hon. Secretary Pamela Lee said:

"Major General Turpin's meticulous attention to detail in running the Council, his memory for and knowledge of heather cultivars and his contacts with the RHS have been of great value to our Society. Although he has been unable to participate actively this year, he has continued to keep in touch by post and telephone. He and Cherry upheld the RHS Heather Competitions for many years, raising the quality of the Classes and winning many awards. When they were unable to continue, entries dropped sharply and there was a danger that the Competitions would be discontinued. Now, with the help of the President David McClintock, and others, they are reviving. At last month's Show a new competitor entered the field. Indeed it was good to see - after such a long absence - the name of Bowerman; Mary Bowerman (daughter-in-law of a much loved Chairman, Alfred Bowerman) was awarded six first prizes for heathers

from that same beautiful but much extended Sussex garden - Champs Hill" Pamela reported that membership was now around 900 and that Administration continued to run smoothly in the capable hands of Anne Small. The Society were presenting a Brass Plaque to United Distillers, in acknowledgement of their achievements at Bell's Cherrybank Gardens and this would be unveiled when the members of the Conference visited there during the weekend; Allen Hall was congratulated for having had the initial idea and for seeing it through. She also told us of a recent visit she made to see the Society's first Hon. Secretary, Constance Macleod, shortly before she moved from 'Yew Trees', Horley (an address well-known to long established members). Constance is now living at The Old Rectory, a nursing home in the nearby village of Newdigate, Surrey (RH5 5DC) and Pamela says she is sure Constance would welcome some nice cheery cards. The Audited Accounts were presented by the Secretary - as the Treasurer was unable to attend.

The final item of business was a resolution put forward for consideration by David Plumridge (Zone 3). David made the point that there should be more personal contact within groups, that *all* members in the zones should be regularly contacted, not just those who attended meetings and to do this regularly was expensive. David thought that there was a need for financial support for the Groups and he asked for a proportion of the subscription to go annually to the various Groups to enable them to function

effectively. Roy Nichols, also from Zone 3, spoke with feeling in support of the resolution.

The Chairman replied that this matter had been very seriously considered in Council and the need for money to keep the local groups solvent was well understood; he expressed Council's appreciation of the great efforts members of the North-East Group made on behalf of the Society. However, it was felt that an overall levy would penalise members in those areas which had no local groups and as other groups operated satisfactorily by making a small charge at local meetings to cover costs and by making use of the Bulletin to advertise coming events, it was felt that this should be the way to continue.

An Amendment to the Resolution was then put forward by Allen Hall that: - If any Group found that it needed extra funding, an application should be put to Council, who would view the matter sympathetically. A grant could then be made accordingly.

This amendment was voted on and accepted almost unanimously.

23rd ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The 23rd Annual Conference will be held in St Andrew's Hall, Reading University from 10th - 13th September 1993. St Andrew's Hall, once the home of the Palmer family, of biscuit fame, offers single student type accommodation. There is also an annexe, giving a total of 100 bedrooms. Both the Hall and the Annexe are within 50 yards of the complex that comprises the Dining Room, Lecture Room and Bar.

The Programme will include a talk by John Bond, Keeper of the Gardens, Windsor Great Park, plus visits to Valley Gardens and Wisley.

Advance bookings may be sent to Josey Stowe, Widmour, Limmer Lane, High Wycombe, Bucks HP12 4QR, with a booking fee of £2 per mailing. This is to cover administrative costs and is not a deposit on the Conference fee.

Full details of the programme will be included in the Spring Bulletin. Arnold & Josey Stowe

ROYAL HORTICULTURAL SHOW

Ornamental Plant Competition 11-12 August 1992

There are ten Heather Classes in our major competition of the year. The 57 entries from 5 competitors made a most colourful table and it was good to see some new names among the winners, with such fine quality exhibits. We would still like to encourage more members to enter Class 10 - the decorative arrangement; this has always been of great interest to the public in previous years.

Results: Class 1. 3 Distinct heathers, one vase/bowl of each. 3 entries. 1st. Mrs C M Bowerman, *E. cinerea* 'Alfred Bowerman', 'Margaret Bowerman' and 'Champs Hill'. 2nd. No prize awarded. 3rd. Mrs M Chapman, *Calluna vulgaris* 'Sunrise', *E. vagans* 'Charm', *E. cinerea* 'Hookstone White.' Class 2. *Erica vagans* one vase/bowl. 10 entries. 1st. Mrs C M Bowerman, 'Pallida'. 2nd. Mrs M Chapman, 'Cream' 3rd. Mr D McClintock, 'Birch Glow'. Class 3. *Calluna vulgaris*, a single flowered cultivar, one vase/bowl. 8

entries. 1st. Mrs M Chapman, 'Allegro' 2nd. Mr D McClintock, 'Seedling' 3rd. Mrs M Bowerman, 'Silver Knight'. H.C. Mrs M Bowerman, Name Unknown. Class 4. *Calluna vulgaris* a double flowered coloured cultivar, one vase/bowl, 3 entries. 1st Mrs M Chapman, Name unknown. 2nd. Mrs C M Bowerman, 'County Wicklow' 3rd. Mrs M Chapman, 'Radnor'. Class 5. *Calluna vulgaris*, a single or double flowered white cultivar, one vase/bowl. 5 entries. 1st. Mr D McClintock, Seedling 2nd. Mrs M Chapman, Name unknown. 3rd. Mr R Cameron, Cv. Class 6. *Erica cinerea*, any cultivar, one vase/bowl, 4 entries. 1st. Mrs C M Bowerman, 'Champs Hill'. 2nd. Mr R Cameron, Cv. 3rd. Mr D McClintock, Seedling. Class 7. *Daboecia*, any species, hybrid or cultivar, one vase/bowl, 8 entries. 1st. Mrs C M Bowerman, 'Praegerae'. 2nd. Mr D McClintock, 'Praegerae' 3rd. Mr R Cameron, 'Praegerae.' 4th. Mr R Cameron, 'Globosa'. Class 8. Any heather species or hybrid not specified above, one vase/bowl, 8 entries. 1st. Mr R Cameron, *Erica watsonii* 'Dawn'. 1st. Mr R Cameron, *Erica terminalis*. 2nd. No prize awarded. 3rd. Mrs J Hall, *Erica manipuliflora* 'Heaven Scent'. Class 9. Any heather judged for foliage effect, one vase/bowl, 8 entries. 1st. Mrs C M Cameron *Erica lusitanica* 'George Hunt'. 2nd. Mrs M Chapman, *Erica arborea* 'Albert's Gold'. 3rd. Mr D McClintock, *Erica arborea* 'Estrella Gold'. Class 10. Decorative - heathers to predominate, one entry. 1st. Mrs C M Bowerman.

30 YEARS AGO - that great man of heathers, D, Fyfe Maxwell, died (1st November 1963) D. McC.

BOOK REVIEWS

Our members are mostly interested in heathers to grow in gardens. Nevertheless, heathers do grow elsewhere and much study has been given by ecologists as to where they grow, with what and why. The latest of these surveys is in *BRITISH PLANT COMMUNITIES*, vol. 2, entitled *MIRES AND FENS* - mires being the jargon words for bogs and the like. Its 628 pages come from C.U.P. and cost an awful lot (I borrowed it from the library). But, it does the job - covering the whole of the British Isles, except the Channel Islands, very thoroughly. *Erica tetralix* is naturally featured very prominently but *E. ciliaris* is curiously hardly mentioned and *E. watsonii*, not at all. D. McC

ERICAS OF SOUTH AFRICA

by Dolf Schumann and Gerhard Kirsten in collaboration with E G H Oliver - Published by Fernwood Press, price £40.00

It is not necessary to be an expert on South Africa Heaths, (in fact it is aimed at the lay readership) to recognise that this is a most important book on the subject. With its clear concise text and mouth watering illustrations, it has much to offer the ordinary heather enthusiast and the expert alike. The book describes some 450 species of Cape Heath and is illustrated with about 250 pages of superb colour photographs - the flowers are shown in close-up so it is possible to see the structure clearly and there is often a dissected flower to make it even clearer; in most cases there is also an accompanying photograph of the plant

growing in its natural habitat. Some of these plants are illustrated for the very first time.

The difficulties encountered in the production of such an ambitious book are described by the authors in the introduction. As they say - some species are very rare and it was necessary to be on the right mountain at just the right time to get the necessary photograph. Not always possible!

Towards the end there is a chapter on growing *Ericas* from seeds and cuttings, hints on transplanting and pest control and information on which are good garden plants (not for British gardens though I fear). It concludes with detailed and helpful hints on photographing flowers, and *Ericas* in particular.

'*Ericas* of South Africa' is an important book that deserves the attention of someone with a greater knowledge of the subject than I possess, so it will be reviewed in more detail in the 1993 Year Book by our Chairman David Small, who is the Society's Registrar for South African Heaths. For more information write to Fernwood Press (PTV) Ltd 6 Tabora Way, Fernwood Estate, 7700 Newlands, South Africa. D.E.

HANDY GUIDE TO HEATHERS

Denbeigh Heather Nurseries 1992
120 pages, 15.5 cm x 21 cm Spiral bound.
£4.95 (paperback)

In Anne and David Small's 'Handy Guide to Heathers' we now have the much needed and very worthy successor to Geoffrey Yates' 'Pocket Guide to Heather Gardening'. It lists 1,000 or so cultivars and synonyms of the heather species and hybrids known to be in

cultivation in the Northern Hemisphere and is based on the information which is to appear in the Heather Society's forthcoming 'International Register of Heathers', on which David is still working. Information that he has gleaned from authorities in the United Kingdom and on the Continent has enabled him to add further data and descriptive notes to the basic detail of the International Register.

Accompanying the name of each cultivar is the flower colour indicated where possible by the Heather Society's Colour Chart H code, ultimate height and spread, period of bloom, foliage colour, notes on habit and other interesting details, and possible sources of supply. (Suppliers are listed on the last nine pages).

Details are given of the National Heather Collections where plantings of many of the listed cultivars may be found and there is a short glossary of botanical terms which should prove to be useful to many readers. The high order of accuracy which has been achieved is not unexpected as the International Register had been so assiduously checked by our President and Major General Turpin.

My copy of the Guide has been in almost constant use, for the short period that I have had it and I have found that the print is rather small for easy reading in poor light; however the spiral binding facilitates the manipulation and handling of the book in adverse, windy conditions. The cover is showing slight signs of wear now, with my frequent handling; it is to be hoped that future editions will have covers of a more durable material but still retaining the delightful painting by

Brita Johansson.

Useful information on soil requirements are given for some, but not all, species. 'Bud bloomer' appears on page 2; I was under the impression that, by general consensus, 'bud flower' is preferred. The colour chart is such a natural companion to the Guide that its inclusion, with instructions for its use seems to be desirable. No doubt considerations of cost prevented this.

I am happy to say this useful and excellent book meets the needs of experts and beginners in heather culture and should be in the possession of all Heather Society members T A Julian

UNUSUAL TETRALIX FORMS IN SOMERSET

Between the Vale of Taunton and Exmoor, lies the lesser known and more diminutive Brendon Hills, where a few years ago the huge Wimbleball Reservoir was built to alleviate the water shortage of West Somerset and North Devon. Fortunately, most of the surrounding countryside was left in its natural state and it was on Haddon Hill to the south of the reservoir where we were walking one Saturday in July 1991 that we spotted an unusual looking *Erica tetralix*. It was a small, young plant, with flowers not quite fully open and instead of the usual terminal whirl of flowers of this species, they were arranged individually down the stem. I photographed it and took what little cutting material the plant could spare and we now have several potted-up rooted cuttings.

On 31 May 1992, we re-visited the site hoping to see it again, but we were too early and at first it appeared that no

plant of this species was yet in flower. However, just one flowering plant was seen and we became most excited to discover that it had a split corolla, described by David McClintock as a 'Fissa' form for a similar plant I found near Newark, about thirty years ago; he explained the aberration as 'mite-induced' on that occasion. We sent photographs of both finds to him and with his usual enthusiasm, he kindly made the following comments:—"The Fissa forms occur not infrequently and early in the season. The one with flowers arranged down the stem, I called *f. Racemosa*. The original plant like this came from Terschelling Island (Holland). I had it once but it was unstable and reverted, though others have kept it longer. Please send me a sprig of this form for the Society's Herbarium." We visited the site again on 18 July, but could not locate the 'Fissa' form and in subsequent correspondence David suggested that the mites had left the plant and it would now look the same as a normal *E. tetralix*. We had difficulty in locating the *Racemosa* form but eventually found a plant that was similar in some respects and assumed that it was reverting like *E. tetralix* 'Terschelling' had done. We selected three pieces from it and sent them to David with the photographs taken the previous year. David commented that these sprigs were intermediate between 'Racemosa' and ordinary *E. tetralix* and thought that this was a different plant. He was most interested in this intermediate form.

We are now eagerly awaiting flowers to appear on our rooted cuttings and hoping that they will assume a *Racemosa*



Heather Hunt Aids Saudis

Fifteen 40ft containers have been shipped to Saudi Arabia containing Yorkshire moorland heather, as part of a material mix for use as a biofilter at a food processing plant in the kingdom.

form, though I think we will have to wait until 1993. I am most grateful to David for his enthusiastic help and advice.

Don & Eileen Lockie

Shortly after sending me this interesting account, Eileen Lockie telephoned me to say that Don had sadly and unexpectedly died after a heart by-pass operation. I know that you will all wish to join me in sending Eileen our sincerest sympathy. (Ed.)

HEATHERS FROM SEED

Our President asks if anyone has any experience of heather cultivars growing true from seed? If you have, would you please get in touch with him and let him know your findings. David says that he has had self-sown seedlings of *Erica cinerea* 'CG Best' appearing in his garden, which appear to be identical to their parent, and seedlings of *Daboecia cantabrica* 'Bicolor' have also grown true but, from correspondence he has recently received, it is possible that this occurrence is not as unusual as he had thought. Please write to - Mr David McClintock, Bracken Hill, Platt, Seven Oaks, Kent. TN15 8JH.

It is not often that my business of freight forwarding and my hobby mix, but I was interested in this news item in one of the freight newspapers. In order to meet the departure date, 15 drivers went into deepest Yorkshire, armed with Ordnance Survey maps, in order to find the exact position of the fields being harvested.

Arnold Stow Zone 10

HEATHERS IN A HAMPSHIRE GARDEN

My present heather garden is now ten years old and well matured and I have a proud boast that I can find a heather in bloom any day of the year.

The tree heaths have been excellent, starting about Christmas time. *Erica lusitanica* 'Lionel Fortesque' was first, followed in succession by the ordinary *E. lusitanica*, then *E. lusitanica* 'George Hunt'; *Erica x veitchii* 'Exeter' has just gone over (letter written 1 June (Ed)) and so too have the *E. arborea*s. I have both *E. arborea* 'Estrella Gold' and 'Albert's Gold' but being younger plants these did not bloom. The *E. australis* were in full bloom but the recent hot spell has browned

them off early. Last winter's display was the best ever; we had no bad weather here, so *Erica carnea*, *E. erigena* and the hybrids put on a wonderful display.

I am looking forward to the blooming of a seedling which appeared in the soil below adjoining plants of *E. terminalis* and *E. terminalis* 'Thelma Woolner' and am hoping it may be a hybrid.

John Bridgland Zone 12

RESEARCH BID TO BANISH BRACKEN FROM HEATHLAND

- this interesting snippet from the Daily Post (27/7/92) was sent by B K Lancaster - Zone 4.

Trials are going on in the Wirral to evaluate the best method of banishing bracken and restoring heather at two beauty spots. Liverpool University is taking a lead in the research through its botanical garden at Ness.

Bracken has become a problem in some areas of Thursaston Common and Heswall Dales, both designated nature reserves and Sites of Special Scientific Interest. They are classified as 'lowland heath' an important wildlife habitat which has been in decline.

Professor Rob Marrs, Director at Ness, has been researching bracken management for many years and has set up an experiment which is being carried out by research student Kate Snow. Professor Marrs said: "This has two elements - the protection of the habitat and the production of a useful compost".

They brought in a mechanical digger to strip a 750 sq yards plot of bracken

litter at Thursaston Common earlier this year. Seventy eight tonnes was taken to Ness where it is being composted and will be evaluated for use as a peat replacement or mulch. Different methods of encouraging heather restoration are being tried out.

An old-fashioned technique of cutting the fronds of new bracken was used this week and the plot will be sprayed with herbicide. Soil samples are being checked for heather seed and ploughed strips are being compared with unploughed strips. Professor Marrs said: "So far, gorse Scots pine and brambles have come through, which we don't want. There has been no sign of heather, but I would not have expected it, due to the dry summer. I would hope it would come up in the autumn and winter; if not we will have to sow some heather seed".

HEATHER PHOTOGRAPHS FOR DISPLAY

The Society now owns a collection of very good quality display photographs of heathers and heather gardens, which have been selected from the collections of some of the many keen photographers in the Society. The display was put together by the Midlands Group, who used the pictures to publicise the Society at the Malvern Spring Show in May of this year (a month when heather flowers are thin on the ground). The Society has now bought the photographs and they are available for the use of other Groups at similar functions. For details - telephone Daphne or Maurice Everett 0885 482206.

GROUP NEWS

NORTH EAST

On 26th September the group held a meeting and its annual Heather Competitions at a new venue - SHAWS Garden Centre at Cramlington; we were the first Society to have been invited to hold a meeting there.

Entries were down compared with previous years, mainly due to the very wet weather which made good material hard to find, but we still had ninety one. Mike Hurst from Houghall College judged the entries and he commented that, considering the weather conditions, the standard was very high.

The Group's AGM will be held on Thursday October 29th and Norrie Robertson has sent some of his beautiful slides of Bell's Cherrybank Gardens for us to enjoy that evening.

Details of our 1993 programme will be in the Spring Bulletin.

Dorothy Warner

Congratulations to the Society's latest TV Stars, Rita and David Plumridge from the North East Group, whose lovely heather garden was featured on Channel Four's Garden Club recently (Ed)

MIDLANDS

Considering the weather we have been getting this year, we were amazingly lucky to have picked September 5th as the day to visit Crail Garden and Nursery at Linby in Nottinghamshire - especially as we were being joined by two members from the USA, Walter Warnick and Art Dome, who must think it never stops raining in Britain. Crail House lies hidden in the grounds of Newstead Abbey Park (once the home of Lord Byron) and when we arrived we were welcomed by the owner, Mr Frank Groome. We were taken on a tour around his beautiful garden, covering some 15 acres, which included a superb heather garden, completely reconstructed in the last 20 years; this was looking at its very best on such a lovely day.

After lunch in the garden, we visited the adjacent Crail Nursery which was opened especially for us. We are very grateful to the nursery managers, Mr and Mrs Lunn, for looking after us so well and for giving up so much of their

valuable free time to make us welcome AND to Mr & Mrs Groome for their great hospitality.

At Bob and Joan Ropes' house at Ravenshead, where we were invited to tea, we were joined by Albert Julian and Jean Sharpe who had travelled down from Yorkshire to join us. Bob and Joan have a lovely heather garden and the most immaculate lawns we have ever seen; tea and cakes on their terrace in the warm September sunshine, completed a most enjoyable day.

Saturday, November 7th is the date for our Social Evening, when members are asked to bring along something for a cold supper; the meeting will start at 7pm. Maurice and I will be bringing slides of the Conference including, of course, Cherrybank Gardens and we will also bring some of Crail House and the Ropes' gardens for those who could not make the visit. Time permitting we can have a little fun with the Cryptic Picture Quiz which David Small set us at the 1991 Conference.

This is the last Midlands Group meeting I shall be organising, so I do hope that on November 7th, someone will come prepared to take over from me. It will be a great shame if the Group folds for the lack of someone to run it.

Daphne Everett

SOUTHERN

News of the retirement of Major General Turpin from the office of Chairman of the Society, prompts me to pay a tribute to him and Mrs Turpin for their encouragement and support for the Southern Group for many years past. His slides and talks have been a prominent feature in our programmes and we have been very proud that the Chairman was a member of our Group; I have personally much appreciated the kindness and helpfulness of both him and Mrs Turpin. Many are the heather problems that I have had answered by the General during Group meetings - being able to talk to senior members is of course one of the merits of attending the meetings.

On behalf of the Southern Group I extend good wishes to Pat and Cherry, with the hope that we shall continue to enjoy their company long into the future. Visit to Chelwood Vachery - On July 12th 1992, a few brave members of the Group visited Ashdown Forest for a picnic, though the skies were heavy. A few drops of rain did indeed fall, but the air was warm and we feasted both on our hampers and the lovely view over the heath. The sun gradually broke through

and prepared us for a splendid afternoon.

After lunch, other members joined us at Chelwood Vachery where we were greeted by Mr John Ashwood. The Vachery, which is the staff college of BAT Industries, is a late Victorian style house built in warm red brick. It has 80 acres of woodland and 25 acres of gardens. Mr Ashwood led us at a leisurely pace through the heather garden, across the emerald green lawns, along terraces lined with rare shrubs, past beds bright with summer annuals and richly stocked herbaceous borders, down a splendid rock garden, through oak glades dotted with acres and eventually to a colourful bog garden fed from a waterfall. There were many secluded corners, each with something different and from time to time we caught glimpses of distant hills; the house and garden are maintained in first rate condition. During our walk we met not another soul and there were no sounds other than the songs of the birds and the whisper of a gentle breeze in the trees.

Heathers are planted in a spacious walled garden. Mr Ashwood told us that it has 240 varieties and that some 80 more were lost in the droughts of recent years. There is an extensive replanting programme and we saw many healthy looking rooted cuttings in the cold frames. When the heather garden was laid out some time ago, the heathers were planted through black polythene, with a layer of gravel on top. Mr Ashwood said that this had worked reasonably well at first but it was found eventually that the beds were too dry in summer and too wet in winter. The polythene and gravel have therefore been progressively removed and the beds are now regularly mulched with leafmould and chippings; the soil is naturally acid.

At the end of our tour, Mr Ashwood laid on a welcome cup of tea. Some of our members said that the Chelwood was one of the finest gardens they had ever visited and there was a spontaneous request for another visit next year. I have subsequently arranged a return visit for April 18th 1993.

Playboys and Pensioners - It was August 12th, it was the rainiest day of the year, it was the summer outing of the playboys and pensioners! We were nine in number and we enjoyed our day.

Major General Turpin described the heather garden at Cannizaro Park, Wimbledon, in the 1983 Year Book. He said "The Park was named after Francis Platemone, Duke of Cannizaro,

its Sicilian owner in the early nineteenth century. Later, the property passed into the hands of E K Wilson." It is now a public park owned by the London Borough of Merton and the house has become a hotel with a restaurant which opens out to a terrace in the park.

General Turpin described the heather garden as covering 1.5 acres on a sunny south-western slope. The light, acid soil is over a well drained sand and gravel subsoil. He listed some of the summer heathers then planted there.

The outlines of the garden are as described, but the garden is now much neglected and indeed has been for some time, according to our members Joan and Peter Hancock. Great swathes of grass now grow where the heather once prospered. Nevertheless there was much colour because some of the large drifts of heather still remain and were in glorious flower. We debated what the surviving varieties might be and wondered that they had survived at all through recent years of drought! From Major General Turpin's article and our observations I deduce that among the survivors are *Erica cinerea* 'P S Patrick' (spectacular racemes of brilliant purple) some pale lavender *cinerea* possibly 'Hookstone Lavender', *Erica vagans* (bushy and prolific) either 'St. Keverne' or 'Mrs D F Maxwell' and certainly some 'Holdens Pink'; traces remained of 'Lyonesse'. There were two varieties of *E. x watsonii* at the bottom of the slope (recognisable because the anthers had awns). From Major General Turpin's description these must have been 'Dawn' and 'H Maxwell'. *Daboecia cantabrica* was in evidence - some 'Alba' and another variety which might have been 'Praegerae'. *Calluna vulgaris* was represented by the double white 'Alba Plena', which was growing well and there was some pale pink double heather which could have been 'County Wicklow' or 'Radnor'. Some varieties of *Calluna vulgaris* were not fully in flower and were thus difficult to identify, but this genus has not generally done well. All in all the visit had much to interest us and to dull the edge of our disappointment at the decline of a once lovely garden.

If the heather garden in Wimbledon has declined, the one at Pembroke Lodge, Richmond Park has gone altogether. But, we admired the summer annuals, we climbed Henry VIII's mound to enjoy panoramic views to the west and catch a glimpse of St Paul's to the east - and we had apple turnover and tea in the restaurant.

LAST EVENT OF 1992, Sunday November

1st - The National Trust Garden, Sheffield Park. This visit was described in the Summer Bulletin. Convene in the car park at 12.45pm for a 1pm start. Sheffield Park is situated on the A275 road, south of Wych Cross.

Saturday March 27th 1993 - Indoor Meeting at Wisley. The group will convene at 1.45pm outside the main entrance for a 2pm start. This will allow members to visit the Garden first if they wish - a tour of the garden is not included in the formal arrangements. RHS Wisley is on the west side of the A3 London to Guildford Road, about a mile south of the M25, Junction 10. Mr David Small, Chairman of the Heather Society, will present a lecture 'Exploring in Europe'. Mr Small has already made distinguished contribution to the Society and is well known outside our circle as a writer and lecturer, he is also a nurseryman, with perhaps the largest range of heathers for sale in Britain. Don't miss this opportunity to meet our new Chairman!

As in previous years, there will be a heather competition, but this time we can show off our winter heathers in the following classes: -

1. Best flower arrangement in which heathers predominate; 2. Best vase of heathers in flower, single variety; 3. Best vase of heathers chosen for foliage.

There will be a modest prize for each class. The Southern Group Challenge Bowl will be awarded to the best overall display; the bowl to be held for one year from September 1993. There will be tea afterwards.

Sunday April 18th 1993 - Chelwood Vachery. By special request, a return visit to Chelwood Vachery, Nutley, Uckfield East Sussex. Meet in the car park at 1.45pm for a 2pm start. The Vachery is situated on the west side of the A22 road, between Wych Cross and Nutley. Mr John Ashwood is again hoping to lead the tour and we are likely to see the new heather plantings.

I hope to have a news sheet summarising next year's visits, ready for issue on January 1st 1993, this will include sketch maps of the locations. If you would like a copy please send me a stamped addressed envelope - my address is: 18 Albury Avenue, Sutton, Surrey, SM2 7JT. Members of other Groups are of course welcome to have copies of the newsletters.

Allen Hall

SOUTH WEST

Another programme of visits has now been completed and soon we will be looking forward to the programme for 1993 - but more of that later. The first meeting of 1992 was reported in the summer Bulletin, so I will continue with the report on the second meeting.

On the afternoon of Saturday, 23rd May, members gathered together in the garden of Highbury in West Moors in Dorset. The garden is featured in the 'Yellow Book' and we were kindly invited to visit by the owners, Mr and Mrs Stanley Cherry. Sadly, Mrs Cherry died at Christmas but Mr Cherry bravely continued with his commitments and the visit went ahead as planned.

The afternoon was one of glorious sunshine and high temperatures but the maturity of the garden provided members with shady relief from the heat. Highbury Gardens was first laid out in the early part of the century and Mr and Mrs Cherry took over in 1966; since then they have established a collection of rare and unusual plants. Mr Cherry spent all afternoon with us discussing his many treasures and although the garden was only 1/2 an acre, a couple of hours were spent taking in all the content. At the end of the afternoon, Mr Cherry, with the help of one of his garden boys, provided refreshment at the picnic tables in the orchard. In addition that afternoon members were pleased to welcome Ben and Lola Gardner, members of the North American Heather Society. Ben and Lola had been touring some of the gardens of Southern England and had expressed interest in meeting some of our members.

The third visit of the year was to the garden of Bryher in Bromham in Wiltshire. This was another 'Yellow Book' garden and we were kindly invited to view it by Mr and Mrs Richard Packham. The afternoon was another sunny and hot one, similar to that of the previous visit, and Richard Packham had invited me to bring some water as well, as by then little rain had fallen during May and June.

The garden consisted of a very long border of herbaceous plants and shrubs and several smaller borders all containing plants mainly grown for their foliage effect, although there were plenty of flowers as well. There was also a scree area with a pond and many alpine and towards the end of the garden were a couple of glasshouses with plants for sale. Needless to say, members took the opportunity to purchase

plants! Mr and Mrs Packham spent time with us, giving us a history of the garden and the plantings.

About 1 1/2 hours it was time to move to the garden of Des and Sybil Perry at Market Lavington, just below the northern edge of the Salisbury Plain. Des and Sybil have hosted many a visit by the local group over the years and have always provided us with superb hospitality; this afternoon was no exception. Sybil provided us with a marvellous spread of refreshments and many cups of tea and members were able to relax and enjoy a leisurely end to the afternoon. Des has many heathers in the garden, both summer and winter varieties and members were able to indulge in their favourite topic.

On the weekend of Friday 3rd July - Sunday 5th July the rains came! Unfortunately this was the weekend of the Southampton Balloon and Flower Festival, and the site was soon turned into mud. However, undaunted, the local Group manned the Heather Society Stand, imparting information to the public and generally 'flying the flag'. I would like to thank John Bridgland, Joan Vicary and Henry and Anne Pringle for helping out, without them the event would not have been possible.

The rest of July and August remained changeable and although the watering of the heathers was now minimised, outdoor events began to suffer. The fourth visit of the year was on Saturday, 22nd August, as the weather began to turn unsettled. Members met for a picnic lunch in the garden of Bill and Joan Vicary in Foxhills on the eastern edge of the New Forest. The picnic lunch had to be moved indoors because the heavens began to open and Bill and Joan made us feel most welcome with cups of tea and coffee. During the 'drier' spells members looked around the garden and enjoyed the display of heathers, shrubs and fuchsias. Later in the afternoon members moved 'down the road' to my garden in Totton and once again had to perform the ritual of dashing back indoors. My wife Lin and my mother provided refreshment and despite the weather members had their afternoon out and their chance to chat with old, and in some cases new, friends. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the people who so kindly invited members to their gardens. The survival of the local groups relies on their hospitality and their kindness.

Next Meeting: Saturday 3rd April 1993 - 2.00pm. This is the annual indoor meeting at

Lytchett Matravers and a speaker is being arranged, together with the 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 Jennifer Turrell, 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. We meet in the Village Hall on the west side of the High Street, just north of the Rose & Crown Inn. Ample parking is available to the hall and a charge will be made to cover expenses.

Finally, may I remind members that if they require further details on next year's programme - would they please send me 2 SAE's during January 1993.

Phil Joyner

DIARY OF EVENTS

1992

- 29 October North East Group, AGM & Slides
 1 November Southern Group, Visit to Sheffield Park
 7 November Midlands Group, Social Evening and Slides
 24 & 25 Nov. RHS Show & Heather Competition, Vincent Square
 24 Nov. Heather Society Council Meeting

1993

- 15 January CLOSING DATE for Material for Spring Bulletin
 16 & 17 Feb RHS Show & Heather Competition, Vincent Square
 16 February Heather Society Council Meeting
 27 March Southern Group, Competitions and Lecture.
 3 April South West Group, Competition and Lecture
 18 April Southern Group, Visit Chelwood Vachery