

THE HEATHER SOCIETY BULLETIN



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Back in April, during a weekend 'garden visiting' in Cornwall, Maurice and I took the helicopter across to Tresco and spent a day in Tresco Abbey Gardens.

The Gardens are quite beautiful - and the climate is such that they can grow plants in the open which will only survive in glasshouses in most parts of Britain. There were a tremendous number of plants in flower, many of which we had never even seen before but, in one of the beds, we were thrilled to find a flourishing collection of South African heaths. For those members who are well up in these exotic species, we photographed in flower - Erica persoluta, E. speciosa, E. discolor and E. perspicua, but there were many more besides.

What has happened to the Swallows this year? We have nearly finished our Spring potting and there are none around to take over the 'des. res. with all mod. cons.' in the label shed!

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Sunday 12th September at 9.15am in St Andrews hall, University of Reading, Berkshire. An Agenda for the Meeting is enclosed with this issue of the Bulletin.

READING - HOME OF THE 1993 CONFERENCE

The University Town of Reading, the venue for the 1992 Conference, is ideally situated as a base for exploring Royal Berkshire, the Thames Valley and the Southern Chilterns. It is also served by British Rail, bringing London to within 25 minutes, from its Main Line station. Reading was famous for Huntley and Palmer biscuits, alas no more, but the venue for the Conference this year is the former home of the Palmer family.

Elsewhere in Berkshire is Windsor Castle, still open and well worth a visit in spite of the fire last year. Not far from Windsor is the Courage Shire Horse

Centre at Maidenhead and just south of Reading is Stratford Saye House, the family home of the Dukes of Wellington.

Just north of Reading are the attractive riverside towns of Marlow and Henley on Thames, with pleasure steamer trips and motor boat hire available. Between these two towns are pretty Chiltern villages and in particular, Hambledon, which has been virtually untouched by time.

A little farther afield is the City of Oxford. The Colleges are well worth a visit and in addition, of course, the Botanic Garden alongside the River Cherwell.

23RD ANNUAL CONFERENCE ST. ANDREWS HALL, UNIVERSITY OF READING, 10TH - 13TH SEPTEMBER 1993

Full details of the Programme were included in the Spring Bulletin, but for those of you who have not yet booked, the main events are listed briefly below.

Friday 10th	Talk on Garden History of University.
Saturday 11th	Talk & Video of Wisley Gardens. Visit to University Grounds & Visit to Wisley. Talk on National Collections at Windsor.
Sunday 12th	AGM & Talk on New Heather Cultivars. Discussion - Plants to associate with heathers. Visit to the lovely gardens at Windsor.

On Sunday evening members are invited to show a maximum of 10 of their own slides, which they feel would be of interest to other members. If you would like to take part in this option, please advise the Organisers when you send your final payment for the Conference - so that enough time can be allocated.

The costs of the 1993 Conference, which compare very favourably with last year, are as follows:

Friday pm to Monday £125.00

Friday pm to Sunday, incl. lunch £97.00

Non Residents, incl. lunch, dinner & coach trips £25.00 per day.

The final date for payment is 31st July 1993. If you have not yet booked, please write with a £2 booking fee, to Mrs Josey Stow, Widmour, Limmer Lane, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP12 4QR.

DEATH OF MISS M. E. L. WILLIAMS

At the beginning of April 1993, Lavender Williams died at her home at St. Tudy, near Bodmin, North Cornwall.

She was the daughter of P D Williams, of Lanarth, near St. Keverne, who was celebrated as the discoverer, in 1909, of the rare hybrid heather, *Erica x williamsii*, which carries his name, and after whom the cultivar 'P D Williams' was named.

Lavender said that her father always instilled in her the need to keep her eyes open for unusual plants. She was rewarded on 14th October 1924 by the discovery on Crousa Downs, about a mile from Lanarth, of another plant of *E x williamsii*. Her father sent specimens

to Kew and to Dr G C Druce at Oxford, where they are preserved in the herbaria. Lavender described it as a very miserable plant, which did not survive the winter. She said it had darker flowers than 'P D Williams' (her father's plant).

Lavender lived at Lanarth until 1939, when she moved to Hampshire. For the last 27 years she has lived at Frad's Meadow, St. Trudy, where she has been able to pursue her great interest in botany and gardening. P.G.T.

1993 YEAR BOOK

Due to a setback in his recovery from serious illness, the Year Book Editor, Bert Jones, apologises for the fact that the 1993 Year Book will be a little late. As soon as it is ready it will be despatched in a separate mailing.

THE SLIDE LIBRARY

The slide library, under the management of our Chairman David Small, has undergone a radical reorganisation in recent years, resulting in a markedly better general quality and content. However, there is still room for improvement and expansion and I, as the present librarian, would welcome a new intake of good quality slides relating to heathers and heather culture. The photographic competition of the 1991 Conference at Bury St. Edmunds provided proof that we have excellent photographers among our members and I am appealing to them and to others, to contribute some of their slides which they consider to be suitable for inclusion in the library. Similar appeals have been made in the past, with limited success and I sincerely hope that there will be a better response on this occasion, as I am anxious to raise the standard of the library still further - to a level commensurate with the quality of support to which our lecturers are entitled.

The library is in nine sections, as detailed in the following. They cover practically all aspects of heathers and heather culture:

1. **WILD HEATHERS** Practically the whole of Europe, from Iceland to Spain is covered.
2. **GARDEN DESIGN** Examples of various garden applications of heather plants, heather beds and layouts.
3. **CALLUNA VULGARIS** The wide diversity of *Calluna* cultivars is illustrated.

4. SUMMER FLOWERING

HEATHS All the summer flowering heaths are treated in a manner similar to the *Calluna* cultivars.

5. WINTER FLOWERING HEATHS

Erica carnea, *E. erigena*, *E. x darleyensis*, *E. lusitanica*, *E. arborea*, *E. australis* and *E. x veitchii* are treated as for the summer flowering heaths.

6. CAPE HEATHS A large selection of Cape Heath species are included and close up shots of florets and flowers stems.

7. BOTANICAL Botanical aspects of plants including sports, unusual features and the anatomy of plants are covered.

8. A DIVERSITY OF HEATHERS

Slides dealing with heather plants which do not fall naturally into the other sections' headings.

9. MISCELLANEOUS

If you can help, please send your slides to: Miss J Sharpe, Heather Society Slide Librarian, 3 Selby Road, Fulford, York YO1 4RD

Jeane Sharpe

RHS AWARDS OF GARDEN MERIT - That nearly didn't make it!

Members might like to know something of the vicissitudes of this RHS Award in so far as it concerns heathers. The Award of Garden Merit is, basically, for plants which are - excellent for ordinary garden decoration, of good constitution and available in the trade, or at least available for propagation - a wide scope. 1. Prior to 1981, some 37

heathers had been given this award. 2. Late in December 1980, the RHS called for recommendations to be sent to the Director by 25th January; all earlier awards were cancelled. Major General Turpin and I concocted a list, but little happened until two years later, when I was formally asked for my advice on the heathers to be included; suggestions to be in by 20th January 1984. General Turpin and I produced another list of 100! However, the RHS then formed a Committee to look into all the awards it made, so all these efforts were frustrated and nothing was published. 3. In July last, I was asked to submit another list to present to a subcommittee of Committee B on Tuesday 15th September. Here again notice was short for so responsible a task, aggravated by the request coming at a particularly busy time (which included being away from home). But, the meeting was just after our Conference, giving me the chance to consult more people over the Conference weekend - which I did.

I had started by listing possibilities, marking those which had the original AGM and those recommended 10 years ago, together with similar ideas from trials etc. This came to 230 cultivars and the aim was 100! I passed the list to various nurseries and members, others saw it at Dundee and gave their opinions. General Turpin's opinion was that it was an impossible task when so many plants qualified, and indeed other members must have chosen 200 of my 230.

In order to be at the RHS on Monday evening, in time for their usual reception before the Great Autumn Show, I had to

leave the Conference on Sunday afternoon and I planned to spend Monday summarising the various recommendations. BUT - I had left my attache case, with all the relevant papers, at Dundee!

David Small came to the rescue and faxed nearly all I needed to reach the RHS at 9.30am on Tuesday and the final list had to be ready by eleven o'clock to be copied for the Committee. In the RHS library I made a list based on the tentative 100 I had drafted and adding dozens of others that had been put up.

The sub-committee were all old friends and we could not have had a more sensible and useful discussion and in the end my tentative 100 proved to be generally what they wanted - occasionally modified by the additions. One such addition was *Erica ciliaris* 'David McClintock', which I had not thought it seemly for me to include, but they all insisted it should be in. The list finally totalled about 100 but pity that sub-committee who have hundreds of other plants to advise on - and all subject to the approval of Council, so it is premature to say just what will end up listed.

One way that the list was kept within bounds was to exclude cultivars that had not been in the trade long and so might not be sufficiently proven, even though technically they could be considered. Thus a number of superb heathers must await a later recommendation which, in principal, can be made at any time; nevertheless one or two new ones were included. Two cultivars at least were excluded because they were not in the Plant Finder; if only I had not left my copy of the Smalls' Handy Guide to

Heathers in Scotland, I could have shown that they were well known. Because of that, *C.v.* 'Jimmy Dyce' was left out and so was *E. cinerea* 'Yvonne', to represent the schizopetalous group.

Another principle which was applied was that proven newer and better cultivars should supersede old and tried ones. Thus, for example, *C.v.*'s 'HE Beale' and 'Peter Sparkes', however good and tried they were, were ousted by 'Annemarie': 'Red Star' was deemed too new. *E x darleyensis* 'Silberschmelze' went out in favour of 'White Perfection' and *C.v.* 'Alba Plena' for 'Kinlochruel'. 'White Coral' may eventually usurp even that favourite!

A curious feature of the choices is that the great majority have never before had any award from the RHS. This is partly because they have never been put up for consideration, but we really should make an effort to show how fine some of the new ones are.

I wonder, had we had more time to consult and prepare, if the result would have been very different? My feeling, my hope, is that it would not - given the invidious and thankless difficulty of making the choice. But I would have preferred less rush!

David McClintock

SOUTH AFRICAN BOOKS AND SEEDS

Lynne and Neville Brown of 'Cape Seed & Book Suppliers' PO Box 23709, Claremont 7735, Cape, South Africa offer books on South African Botany, Horticulture, Natural History and Travel - and seeds of South African Wildflowers.

SCRAP BOWL - Snippets of news from Members

ERICA CILIARIS 'DUNCAN STEVENS'

John Bridgland from Zone 12, asks if anyone has this cultivar or knows of it; he bought his plant from a nursery at Barnstable about 10 years but has since lost it. He describes the foliage colour as grey-green and the flower colour, amethyst.

'WHITE FLOWERS WHERE THE SNOW LIES LONGEST'

I would like to make a comment on 'white flowers where the snow last longest' ('Farn und Blütenpflanzen', Bulletins 15 & 18).

At first I was inclined to regard the statement that *Calluna* often has white flowers where the snow lies longest as pure nonsense. A publication of good repute however shouldn't write rubbish should it? Having accepted the statement as true, thoughts on a possible explanation turn up immediately.

Feldberg is an area of south-west Germany, bordering France and Switzerland. It is highland, the highest level 1484m according to my world atlas. On north facing slopes the snow can certainly stay for a considerably longer time than the 4-5 months which are usual in Donald Mackay's garden.

It is known that plants can change their chemistry under influence from the environment. White is no colour, but is a lack of the substances that give colour to

flowers. I think it is possible that the plants, under extreme conditions, can stop the production of these substances. In that case, a plant moved to a more normal place should turn to common heather colour.

Magnolia stellata flowers on bare branches early in the spring and as we all know, the flowers are white. Not seldom, come a few flowers later in the summer, and they are more or less pink. This is another manifestation of the same phenomenon, which is called in Swedish 'edafisk' difference. Plant chemistry is complex and I am no chemist, but there are people who can explain what I have touched on here. If this is the reason why *Calluna* on Feldberg flowers white, is another question - but at least it is a theory. Brita Johansson - Sweden

REPELLING HEATHLAND INVADERS

Extracts from an article by Chris Howkins in the Surrey Advertiser - which was sent by Gwen Eggar from Zone 11.

It has been a full season for the Heathland Project to assess its various attempts at reclaiming valuable habitats. Surrey heathlands offer a wide range, with heather, gorse, birch, bracken, purple moor grass and wavy hair grass. Each has its own character and its own special wildlife dependent on it. Thus, each needs preserving but not one at the expense of the other. The one that is disappearing fastest is unfortunately the rarest and the most valuable and that is the open heather. In the old days much of the open heather resulted from grazing the commons and that is what is being tried again ...

Cattle, horses, goats and sheep have all been put to work in Surrey. Any notion that they would mow off the lot, for better or for worse, was soon dispelled. The different animals proved to be selective feeders and not necessarily upon the desired plants. Furthermore, their choices varied with the season and with the maturity of the plants on offer ...

New Forest ponies were an obvious choice and were tried on Horsell Common and Prey heath. It was soon found that they went out of condition without supplementary feeding and with that, the danger was that the waste would enrich the soil too much. The solution was to alternate their grazing between heath and grass land which involves extra work and extra expense. Was it worth it? The ponies avoided the pines, weren't enthusiastic about birch and left other saplings till the winter but, came up trumps against one major problem - purple moor grass. On damper sites this can swamp out all other ground cover, but the ponies loved it and even cleared up the leaf litter in the winter, as this is our only deciduous grass.

With the pines it is cattle that prove effective. On the Flashes at Frensham they not only enjoyed the seedlings but destroyed saplings up to two metres high. Not bad going for a grazer as opposed to a browser.

The chief browsing animal is of course the goat. Now, if goats would clear invading scrub that would be wonderful, but anyone who has helped with heathland reclamation already will know just how determinedly the birch sprouts again. Goats enjoy birch. The herd put on Horsell Common included a male who

was especially adept at rearing up to catch saplings between his front legs and holding them down with his body while he chomped off the tops. New sprouts were kept mown off ... The conclusion reached so far is that goats would be valuable in the early stages of reclamation but need to be moved before they turn to the heather.

Sheep seem to graze everything, taking the heather down to ground level. It was hoped that they would graze the sprouting birch stumps to death, as has happened in Yorkshire. Indications are encouraging and as invading birch scrub is such a serious problem in Surrey, this could be good news. The sheep chosen were the ancient Hebridean breed which could thrive on such sites.

By learning how to use the animals effectively, by grazing the right plants in the right place at the right time, we are learning how best to use our limited conservation resources. The animals do have to be fenced in of course but people who enjoy walking the open heaths should not be disturbed by this. Their rights of access are recognised.

Restoring Lowland Heaths

The Heathland Countryside Management Project, to which Chris Howkins refers in his article above is at present confined to the lowland heaths of S.W. Surrey. I described its beginnings in Bulletin No 16 1992. A programme of 'Tasks' - clearance of young pine and birch, removal of nutrient rich litter and sowing heather seed - is circulated to volunteers, who may be available for the occasional Sunday at any time of the year. A total of 759 volunteer hours was

recorded in 1992, but it was apparent that progress had been too slow, due partly to erratic help, and experiments were begun using natural grazing under the supervision of Chris Chinn. The animals settled down well: five lambs appeared, increasing the flock to 12, and a Hebridean calf was also born on the lowland heath! Goats have been the most helpful animal. Unfortunately complaints were received from members of the public on the principal of erecting on common land - albeit as a temporary measure and allowing access through the provision of gates or stiles. So electric fences are now being tried, as being more discreet and easily moved from one area to another.

Pamela Lee, Zone 11

FROM USA MEMBER - WALTER WARNICK

Some time ago, Walter received a letter from Heather Society member, Anne Parris, who is now 86 years old and living in Australia. Bearing in mind that the Conference this year is to be held at Reading University, Walter thought that part of that letter might be of interest to readers.

Anne Parris says: "I went up to Reading in 1925, when it was still a University College, taking external London Degrees, but during the long vac. of 1926 (at the same time as I got news of passing my first year) I learned Reading now had its University Charter. At the time I was a farm pupil in Kent and the hugest joke to the farm workers - "What? A woman studying to be a farmer? Ha! Ha!". So, when I learned that Reading was now offering Agricultural Botany Honours

(or Agric. Chem. Hons) as well as the pass degree in pure Agriculture, I chose the former, altho' it meant an extra year for a four year course; and lucky I did. A fellow woman student, who topped all the men in the pure Agric. exams, failed to get a job at all. My dear old father had told me that now women had the vote I could do any career I liked!! Little did he know. However - to cut a long story short, I eventually got a job at Aberystwyth University for 4 years until I married.

The point is, in those days, St Andrews was a women's hostel. I myself was at St George's. Men were in St. Pat's, Wantage Halls and St. Davids. Now all student hostels are mixed, 60 to 70 years on!"

PROFILE OF COUNCIL MEMBER

DHE (BOB) ROPE

I was born in Shrewsbury in 1924; my father was a doctor and my mother, before her marriage, was a theatre sister at Gt. Ormonds Street Childrens' Hospital. I have one brother who is a doctor and lives at Rickmansworth and a sister who now lives in Beverley N. Humberside. I was educated at Arnold House Preparatory School near Colwyn Bay and afterwards at Shrewsbury School.

In 1942 I left school and joined the Royal Marines and served with them until I was demobilised in 1946. Later that year I took a job with the British Sugar Corporation - in the accounts

department of their sugar beet factory at Allscott, Salop. After three years I was transferred to the sugar factory at Colwich, Nottingham, to work in the agricultural side of the sugar industry and the following thirty two years were enjoyably spent advising farmers on all aspects of sugar beet cultivation; harvesting and machinery, deliveries to the factory etc. in short - a liaison between the farmer and the factory.

In 1981 I left British Sugar, when the factory at Nottingham was closed down; I then worked as a grain buyer for a local corn merchant for four years. This job became unsuitable after my first hip replacement operation and I took early retirement.

Joan and I were married in 1951 and we lived in Ashbourne and then Derby for a short spell, before moving into our present bungalow in 1956. We have no children.

The soil in this area is a light, coarse particle sand and naturally acid, but when we moved here we had no interest in heathers and our garden was created from an area of gorse and bracken, to roses (about 300) shrubs, herbaceous and vegetables. During the process of making a garden I was persuaded to apply a dressing of sugar beet factory lime. This is a by-product of the sugar beet extraction process - an average sample containing approximately 40% Calcium Carbonate plus a small amount of Phosphate and Potassium and other trace elements; this product is sold to farmers to counteract the acidity in the soil. The sugar beet crop requires a pH of about 7.5, a normal dressing being about 10 tons per acre and I had a six ton lorry

load to put on about 1/4 acre - and the bungalow occupied a large part of that. I knew at this stage that a good lawn should be slightly acid, so rose beds and vegetable plots had a heavy application; in parts of the garden this material is still in evidence after 33 years or so!

In 1967 a local heather nurseryman, Arthur Annabel (who is still propagating heathers today) made an introductory offer of six cultivars, through the local Garden Society; these plants flourished. Two years later we bought further plants of the same varieties and others and - we were on our way - gradually replacing shrubs, roses and herbaceous borders to make way for more and more heathers, all the time regretting that earlier application of lime. We have tried various materials to reduce the alkalinity of the soil, this has only been partly successful; a small part of the garden still registers a pH of about 8 and is now planted entirely with *E. vagans* which tolerates the conditions reasonably well. After two hip replacement operations and now age 67, I am reluctant to consider incorporating sulphur to a depth of three feet (I would have thought that any material incorporated to this depth on our light sandy soil would be lost and gone forever) the vegetable garden is entirely planted with winter flowering *Ericas* and they are flourishing.

We joined the Heather Society in 1971 and the first event we attended was a visit to Ness Gardens, arranged by one of the earlier stalwarts of the Society - John Ardron. We attended the first Conference at Grantley Hall and have continued to be fairly regular attenders of these very worthwhile and friendly

weekends.

I have been a member of Council since the 1981 AGM. My main hobbies over the years have been the two 'G's', gardening and golf - and I served on the Committee of Ravenshead Garden Society for a number of years; five of them as Chairman. I was on the Committee of Coxavon Golf Club for twenty three years; eighteen of them as Chairman of the Green Committee. I was Captain in 1969 and also honoured to be a past Captain, and recently President, of Nottinghamshire Golf Captains' Society. I have more recently taken up indoor bowling.

GROUP NEWS NORTH EAST

25th October 1993, 7.30pm - Group AGM. Dorothy says that she hopes to have 'a bumper fun page' for the Autumn issue of the Bulletin - so 'watch this space'.

MIDLANDS

When the Midlands Group folded we decided that it would be nice to keep in touch with old friends, by meeting up once a year. This year Maurice and I would like to invite ALL Midlands Group members to a buffet lunch, on Saturday 14th August at 12.30pm, at Greenacres Nursery, Bringsty. Bringsty is on the A44, 2 miles east of Bromyard in Herefordshire (Tel. 0885 482206). Even if you have never been to any of the meetings, we will be very pleased to meet you and we can send a map to anyone who would like one. It is probably too much to ask for the weather to be as lovely as it was last time we invited members to Bringsty, but we should have an enjoyable day catching up with all the news and the heather garden should be looking good at that time. The one thing we ask is that you let us know you are coming by the 7th August, so that we know how much food to provide. Daphne Everett

SOUTHERN

The Group met on Saturday, 27th March 1993 in the lecture room at the RHS Garden, Wisley. 26 members were present and we enjoyed a truly excellent lecture given by our Chairman,

Mr David Small. David spoke about his visit to Spain in 1982 with Mr David McClintock and Dr Charles Nelson (ref: Year Book 1983 "Iter Hispanicum Ericaceum" by David McClintock). He showed slides of many wonderful places and of the plants he saw during the expedition. Not least among these was *E. andevalensis* and he brought us up to date on this fast disappearing species. He said it has so far not proved garden-worthy in this country. The other David of the expedition was with us, enjoying the talk.

David went on to talk about his visits to Germany, particularly to Kurt Kramer's nursery at Oldenburg. (ref: Year Book 1992 "Visit to Germany and Holland, March 1991") We heard first hand of the pioneering work being done by Herr Kramer and David brought along examples of some of the plants introduced by him. He also brought a slide of a Kramer hybrid *E. x stuartii* 'Pat Turpin' and Pat Turpin and Cherry were in the audience to see it.

The members put on a wonderful show of heathers in our competition - the rear of the lecture room was alive with colour. Our judges, Mrs Anne Small and Mr Desmond Perry, were loathe to make choices - so good were the entries. Mr John Tucker took the prizes for the best display of foliage, and the best flower arrangement, and was the overall winner; this will entitle him to hold the Turpin Trophy for a year from September 1993. I won my first prize in a flower show with a vase of heather in flower, single variety.

On Sunday April 18th 1993, 15 members visited Chelwood Vachery in East Sussex and the tour was again led by Mr John Ashwood. We saw the new heather plantings which were looking full of promise for later seasons. The heavy black plastic coverings and gravel of previous years has been completely removed and lots of leaf-mould has been dug into the heavy soil. The *Erica carnea* were almost over but there were some fine examples of *E. erigena* in glorious bloom ('Superba' and 'Alba' prominent among them). There were a number of *Erica x veitchii* 'Pink Joy' decked in flower and some *E. arborea* 'Alpina'. The heather garden contained a wide selection of summer varieties representing all the hardy species. There is clearly much to look forward to in this very lovely and well kept part of the estate.

We went on to other parts of the 25 acre gardens. Among the shrubs we spotted some

bushy *vacciniums* with their heather-like bells. Daffodils and narcissi were growing prolifically among the trees but mostly it was the eye-catching *camellias*, *azaleas* and *rhododendrons* that caused the cameras to click.

It was warm when the sun came out but otherwise a coolish breeze made us fasten our coats. The tea and biscuits which Mr Ashwood provided at the end of our tour were therefore doubly welcome. We lounged, talking in the timber-framed recreation building for some time after the garden visit and Mr Ashwood suggested that we should return next year in May, when different plants will be in flower. The offer was gratefully accepted.

Oh, I almost forgot, Mr Ashwood also invited us to help ourselves to heathers left over from the new plantings. What agonies of restraint there were, as with gleaming eyes we each one remembered how little room we had left in our gardens for new plants! We look forward to next year.

FUTURE EVENTS

Wednesday June 23rd 1993 - Behind the Scenes at Kew. A tour of the alpine and herbaceous section of the Kew Royal Garden has been arranged. We meet just inside the main Entrance, which is in Kew Green, at 12.45pm prompt. On the map, look out for nearby Kew Bridge. There is free car-parking around Kew Green and a large overspill car-park just beyond. I anticipate little trouble parking mid-week in June. Good public transport connections exist, using London Underground to Kew Gardens Station or British Rail to Kew Bridge Station.

Normal entrance fees for the Garden are payable at the gate. We move from the gate to the Alpine House where we are due to meet Mr Mike Sinnott, Assistant Curator, Herbaceous section, at 1pm sharp. Mr Sinnott has kindly agreed to lead the tour, which will last for about two hours. Among other things, we shall see the nurseries and plants grown for conservation rather than display. On this occasion, I should be grateful if those intending to join the party would let me know by the beginning of June, so that I can inform Mr Sinnott.

No doubt some members will wish to start earlier, perhaps to see the heather garden or South African ericas in the Temperate House. Joan and I propose to linger at the Main Entrance for 5 or 10 minutes from 10am and we shall be

happy to link up with other members then. We contemplate an early lunch at the cafeteria. However, I shall return to the main gate to meet new arrivals at 12.45pm.

Sunday July 11th - we have a visit to Great Comp, Borough Green, Sevenoaks, Kent. Meet in the car-park at 1.45pm for a 2pm start. This unique and lovely garden was created by Mr Cameron, who is a member of the Society, and his late wife. The last occasion when the Society visited Great Comp was in 1987, when the Annual Conference was held at Hadlow. Great Comp is situated in Comp Lane which leads off the west side of the Wrotham Heath - Mereworth Road. There will be an entrance fee of 2.50 and cups of tea and cake will be available for a small charge.

Saturday 21st August - A joint visit with the South West Group is planned to Heatherwood Nurseries, Wimbourne in Dorset. Details are given in the South West Group section of the Bulletin. I am grateful to Phil Joyner for organising this event. A sketch map is available.

Sunday September 26th - a visit is planned to Merrist Wood College of Agriculture and Horticulture, Worplesdon, Guildford, Surrey. Meet at the College at 1.45pm for a 2pm start. This will be a conducted tour and there will be an opportunity to purchase items from the College plant shop.

If you would like a copy of our Southern Group Newsletter with sketch maps of 1993 visits, please send a s.a.e. to me.

Future events for your Diary:

Saturday June 25th 1994 - A joint visit of Southern and South West Groups to Windlesham Court Nursery, Surrey. Sunday August 14th 1994 - Champs Hill, Pulbrough, West Sussex.

All good wishes Allen Hall, 18 Albury Avenue, Cheam, Surrey Tel. 081 393 6380

SOUTH WEST

The first meeting of 1993 was on Saturday 3rd April at the Lytchett Matravers Village Hall in Dorset and it was fortunate that this was an indoor meeting as it was wet and windy outside. Members gathered together for an illustrated talk from John Bridgland.

John has given many talks to local horticultural societies over the years, not only on heathers but on fuchsias and other subjects as well; he has not only shown slides but has also given demonstrations on propagation. This

time, John's talk was orientated towards the tree heaths and he brought along examples which he passed among the audience. John then proceeded to show slides, many of which were taken in his garden.

The talk was followed by refreshments 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. Jennifer Turrell. 2nd Maureen Clark. 3rd Anne Pringle.

Class 2. A vase or bowl of heathers shown for foliage effect. 1st. Jennifer Turrell. 2nd Anne Pringle. 3rd. Phil Joyner.

The overall winner was Jennifer Turrell and she was presented with the Burfitt Bowl. My thanks go to John Bridgland for the talk, Lorna Farrow for judging the Table Show and the ladies who provided and helped with the refreshments.

The second meeting of the year was on Saturday 8th May, and was held in deepest Dorset. Members met at Broadlands, the garden of Mr and Mrs Michael Smith, in Hazelbury Bryan, near Sturminster Newton. Broadlands is open at certain times under the National Gardens Scheme but on this occasion Mr and Mrs Smith opened their garden especially for our group. The afternoon was sunny, but with a strong breeze. Broadlands nestles under the North Dorset Downs and the garden is 2 acres of trees, shrubs and herbaceous borders on an acid soil. The garden has several pools with marginal plants and also an island bed of heathers and conifers. The garden is divided into various 'rooms' and surprises were around every corner. Many of the shrubs and plants were in flower and there were a range of plants for sale. Mr and Mrs Smith kindly provided tea and biscuits to round off an enjoyable afternoon.

There now follows descriptions of the local group meetings for the rest of the year:

Saturday June 26th 2.00pm - Sir Harold Hillier Gardens and Arboretum in Hampshire. A guided tour has been arranged, starting from the car-park at 2.15pm; some members will remember the September visit during the 1990 Conference. The garden is famous for its vast collection of plants, some of which are very rare.

RHS members should bring their membership card, as this will allow free entry for one person - otherwise admission is currently 2.50 per person (2 for senior citizens).

Refreshment is available in the tea room of Jermyns House in the gardens and Hillier Nurseries have a plant centre adjacent to the car-park. The gardens are situated in Jermyns Lane, between Ampfield and Braishfield, about three miles north-east of Romsey and are well signposted from major routes.

Saturday July 3rd - Sunday July 4th - Southampton Balloon and Flower Festival, 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 enter.

Saturday August 21st 2.00pm - This will be a joint meeting with the Southern Group, to Heatherwood Nurseries, at Ashington near Wimbourne. Ron and Virginia Squires, who have been proprietors of the nursery for many years have recently retired and have passed the running of the nursery over to their son Peter, their daughter Anne and Peter's wife Pauline. The nursery is well known for the making of the Minster brands of potting compost and for the adjacent garden which surrounds Ron and Virginia's bungalow. This garden has been recently refurbished and will be the highlight of the visit. As on previous occasions when we have been so warmly welcomed by the Squires family, we will be given a tour of the compost making facility prior to going round the garden. The nursery is reached by leaving the A31 Wimbourne by-pass at the junction with the A349 Wimbourne - Poole road and briefly travelling towards Poole until turning right into Merley Park Road. The nursery is about a mile along Merley Park Road and is on the left hand side.

An additional event on this day is a kind invitation from Val and Alan Davis to visit their garden, which is near Heatherwood Nurseries. Val and Alan will be expecting members at 15, Rosamund Avenue, Merley, from 12.00 noon. To reach Val and Alan's house, continue along the A349 Wimbourne - Poole road (see above) until the traffic lights. At the traffic lights turn left into Queen Anne Drive and then shortly afterwards turn left into Remstone Road. Continue along Remstone Road and take the fourth turning on the right into Merley Gardens, then the third on the right into Rosamund

Avenue. Please bring picnic lunches and chairs as I am anticipating a sunny day.

Finally - would members please remember that if they require further details of the above visits, would they send me a s.a.e. Phil Joyner - Tel 0703 864336

DIARY OF EVENTS

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|--------------|---|
| June 23 | Southern Group - Visit to Kew |
| June 26 | South West Group - Hillier Arboretum |
| July 3/4 | South West Group - Southampton Balloon & Flower Fest. |
| July 11 | Southern Group - Visit Great Comp |
| August 10/11 | IRHS Show & Heather Competition |
| August 11 | Heather Society Council Meeting |
| August 14 | Midlands Group - Buffet lunch |
| August 21 | South West Group - Heatherwood Nurseries |
| August 21 | Southern Group - see South West Group News |
| Sept. 10/13 | HEATHER SOCIETY CONFERENCE |
| Sept. 20 | CLOSING DATE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO AUTUMN BULLETIN |
| Sept. 26 | Southern Group - Visit, Merrist Wood College |
| October 25 | North East Group - AGM |

