

# THE HEATHER SOCIETY BULLETIN



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*Another very successful Conference is over. Organisers Josey and Arnold Stow, and the staff of St Andrews Hall, looked after us very well. One of the Conference visits was to the new heather gardens at Wisley, which have come on wonderfully since Maurice and I were there two years ago and Andy Collins is still busy expanding. (The gardens that is - not Andy!). There is much friendly rivalry between Andy and Norry Robertson from Cherrybank and it has been interesting during the last two Conferences, to have the opportunity to see and compare the different styles of the two National Heather Collections.*

*Did anyone see the Channel 4 programme 'The Secret Life of the Fax Machine'? Amazingly the Fax machine was invented by a Scottish crofter, as long ago as 1843 (over 30 years before the telephone) and in the early experiments cattle jawbones were used for hinges and HEATHER was used for springs. Wonders never cease!*

## AGM REPORT

The Chairman welcomed Members to the 1993 Annual General Meeting, held this year at the University of Reading. He reported positive progress in many of the Society's involvements. The National Collections continue to be enlarged, with Wisley and Cherrybank growing roughly the same number of cultivars at the moment; 731 at Cherrybank and 726 at Wisley. *However Andy Collins pointed out that this figure has now been exceeded at Wisley Ed.* The RHS have expressed a wish for the Society to help with specialist advice in the heather gardens at Wisley. The British Heather Growers (a commercial organisation) and the Heather Society are liaising in order to facilitate their common aim of good heather culture.

The Chairman thanked the Officers, Council Members, Group Leaders etc. for their work during the past year with particular mention of 'Year Book' Editor, Bert Jones, who is recovering slowly from serious illness and the Society's new Slide Librarian, Jean Sharpe. He also informed us that, in May, our President David McClintock was presented with the Linnaean Society's H.H. Bloomer Award for Services to Botany.

In the Hon. Secretary's Report - Pamela Lee reported a re-organisation of some of the Committees, with the formation of a fourth, to deal with Policy Planning and Public Relations. The Technical Committee has been concentrating on the production of the International Register. The transference of David McClintock's copious card

records to computer has now been completed; over 3000 heather names have been recorded at the moment. The Technical Committee is also reviewing the 'Preferred List' of heathers with a view to adding any outstanding new introductions. The Finance Committee have been discussing, among other things, the new Charities Act; the Society must ensure that it is run in accordance with the rules. The Hon. Treasurer, Des Oliver reported on the finances of the Society, in his usual light-hearted way and it was announced that Des has decided that the coming year will be his last in this Office.

Tributes were paid to two retiring Council Members - Major General P J Turpin CBOBE and Mr GP Vickers. Pat Turpin has been a member of Council for 15 years, most of them as Chairman of the Society, and Peter Vickers for 22.

Reference was made to the 1994 Conference which will be held in Yorkshire and also to the 25th Heather Society Conference to be held in 1995. This occasion coincides with the bicentenary of Glasnevin Gardens (the gardens of the University of Dublin) and the Society has been invited by the Director of the Gardens to hold its Conference there. Dr Charles Nelson has offered to make all the necessary arrangements, which will probably consist of 3 days based in Dublin, followed by a field trip to Connemara to see some of Ireland's heathers.

At the close of the meeting, Mr John Tucker from Southern Group, was presented with the Turpin Trophy, for gaining the highest number of points in the Southern Group's Competitions this year.

## 1994 CONFERENCE

The 1994 Conference will be held from Friday 2nd to Monday 5th September, at Askham Bryan College of Horticulture and Agriculture at York; full details will be given in the Spring Bulletin. A booking fee of £2 may be sent to Mrs B Mayne, 16 Poplar Avenue, Kirkby Moorside, York, YO6 6ES. Telephone - 0751 31865.

## ROYAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY SHOW

A Report on the Heather Competitions held on August 10th & 11th

The display of heathers at the RHS summer show was the best of recent years, with 79 entries, consisting of 91 vases and baskets of heather. This gratifying increase owes much to the campaigning of our President, Mr David McClintock, but the high quality of the exhibits must be entirely attributed to the Competitors. Many visitors to the Show stopped to admire and I eavesdropped on a number of conversations in which complimentary remarks were being made. I understand that the heather display appeared in a London ITV report of the Show.

All the entries were good, but at the outset of this report I feel I must comment on the first-prizewinning decorative basket (Class 10) which was entered by Mrs Bowerman of Champs Hill. This was one of the best I have seen, which is saying a lot because the entries to the Southern Group Competitions are always

very good. The theme of this elegant display was gold and white. This was achieved by the judicious use of golden foliage heathers bearing white flowers (*calluna*, *cinerea* and *daboecia*) and I detected the foliage of a golden *carnea*. The arrangement was set off with orange tinted holly leaves and delicately decorated with pale green *skimmia*, which had cream berries just turning red. It was a show-stopper!

Now to report on the other fine entries:

Class 1. 3 distinct heathers, one vase of each. 4 entries.

- 1st. Mrs C M Bowerman, *E. cinereas* 'Eden Valley', 'Pentreath', 'Alfred Bowerman'
- 2nd. Mrs C M Bowerman, *E. cinereas* 'Purple Beauty', 'C D Eason', 'Contrast'.
- 3rd. Mr D McClintock, *Daboecia cantabrica* 'Waley's Red', *E. vagans* 'Pyrenees Pink', *Calluna vulgaris* 'Sunrise'.
- 4th. Mrs M Chapman, *Calluna vulgaris* 'Sunrise', *E. vagans* 'Cream', *E. cinerea* 'Katinka'.

Class 2. *Erica vagans* one vase. 14 entries.

- 1st. Mrs M Chapman, 'Cream'.
- 2nd. Mr D McClintock, 'White Rocket'.
- 3rd. Mr D McClintock, 'French White'.
- 4th. Mr R Cameron, unnamed variety.

Class 3. *Calluna vulgaris*, single flowered, one vase. 9 entries.

- 1st. Mr D McClintock, Seedling.
- 2nd. Mr D McClintock, Seedling.

- 3rd. Mrs M Chapman, unnamed variety.

Class 4. *Calluna vulgaris*, double flowered, one vase. 5 entries.

- 1st. Mrs C M Bowerman, 'Tib'.
- 2nd. Mrs C M Bowerman, 'County Wicklow'.

Class 5. *Calluna vulgaris*, single or double flowered variety.

- 1st. Mrs M Chapman, unnamed variety.
- 2nd. Mrs C M Bowerman, 'Elegant Pearl'.
- 3rd. Mrs M Chapman, 'White Mite'.

Class 6. *Erica cinerea* one vase. 13 entries.

- 1st. Mrs C M Bowerman, 'Champs Hill'.
- 2nd. Mrs J Hall, 'Eden Valley'.
- 3rd. Mrs C M Bowerman, 'Margaret Bowerman'.
- 4th. Mr D McClintock, unnamed variety.

Class 7. *Daboecia* and species. 12 entries.

- 1st. Mr R Cameron, 'Alba'.
- 2nd. Mr R Cameron, 'Praegerae'.
- 3rd. Mr R Cameron, 'Globosa'.
- 4th. Mrs C M Bowerman, 'Charles Nelson'.

Class 8. Any heather species or hybrid, not included above, one vase. 8 entries.

- 1st. Mr D McClintock, *E. manipuliflora* 'Heaven Scent'.
- 2nd. Mrs J Hall, *E. manipuliflora* 'Heaven Scent'.
- 3rd. Mrs C M Bowerman, *E. manipuliflora*.

Class 9. Any heather judged for foliage effect, one vase. 8 entries.

- 1st. Mrs M Chapman, *E. arborea* 'Albert's Gold'.

- 2nd. Mr D McClintock, *Calluna vulgaris* grey seedling.  
 3rd. Mr D McClintock, *E. arborea* 'Albert's Gold'.  
 4th. Mrs C M Bowerman, *E. arborea* 'Albert's Gold'.  
 Class 10. Decorative basket, bowl, or vase, heather to predominate. 3 entries.  
 1st. Mrs C M Bowerman.  
 2nd. Mrs C M Bowerman.  
 3rd. Mrs J Hall.

This year's summer competition must be considered a success. The competitors thought it great fun, the visitors to the show were obviously impressed and the Society can feel pleased with a considerable boost in publicity. Calling all Members: Have a go yourself next time!

*Allen Hall - Southern*

## OBITUARIES

### ELIZABETH ANNE MCCLINTOCK

It is with great sorrow that we have to announce the death on 16th September 1993, of Elizabeth Anne McClintock, wife of our President.

Anne, as she was known to all her friends, had suffered from chronic asthma for a number of years. After a particularly bad attack on September 15th, she died peacefully from heart failure during the following night.

David and Anne McClintock had known each other from childhood. They married during the 2nd world war and celebrated their Golden Wedding in 1990. Earlier this year they held a 155th, joint

birthday celebration.

Although Anne was not a member of the Society, she took a deep interest in David's work and was a member of the Wild Flower Society. She was interested in both art and music, and was very involved in the activities of their local church at Platt.

We send David our deepest sympathy in his great loss.

*David Small - Chairman*

### ARTHUR ANNABEL - 1925 - 1993

Arthur Annabel lived in the Mansfield area all his life, apart from his war service when he served with the Royal Tank Regiment and the RAMC and was involved in the D Day Landings.

For 20 years Arthur worked for the Metal Box Company, but in 1968 he gave it up to start a small specialist nursery, concentrating on growing heathers and dwarf conifers. As his interest in heathers developed he wrote articles for National Garden Magazines and broadcast on Radio Nottingham on all aspects of propagating and growing heathers. He exchanged correspondence and plant material and enjoyed personal contact with many well known heather personalities, both at home and overseas. Arthur's other great interest was his work for the Samaritans, and he later became Director of the local Branch. Ill health over the past 10 years prevented him taking a greater part in the activities of the Heather Society.

*Bob Rope - Zone 6*

## SCRAP BOWL Snippets of News from Members

### RECIPE FOR VENISON

*With thanks to the member who sent me the recipe and apologies - as I didn't put her name on the cutting when I received it. Ed.*

I don't favour marinades for wild venison, as they disguise the heathery taste of the meat. Roasting cuts - saddle, haunch and top leg - are tender anyway, and for casseroles, long slow cooking is the best tenderiser. Always trim venison carefully of all gristle and fat before cooking - the fat can make the meat taste rank rather than gamey - but be sure then to baste with good dripping, butter or fruity olive oil. Enhance the moorland aroma of the meat by rubbing with crushed juniper berries, thyme and rosemary before roasting and grilling and lay it on a bed of heather or bog myrtle if you can get hold of them. A tablespoon of whisky in the tin does no harm. Roast 10-15 minutes to the pound, plus 10-15 minutes over, at 200 deg. C.

### EXPOSURE TIME FOR CUTTINGS UNDER A LIGHT TUBE?

This winter I have propagated more than a thousand heathers under 2 light tubes in my sitting room. I have given them light for 12 hours each day and night and that works quite well. I have also exposed a few *callunas* to light, day and night and they have made buds and flowers, in that stage they grow very slowly.

If cuttings are rooted at an average temperature of 18 degrees Celsius, 10 - 20cm under the light tube, how long can they take light before developing buds and flowers? I guess it is different for *callunas*, *carneas*, *darleyensis*, *daboecias* and so on. I will propagate under light tubes next winter too and I want to get maximum growth. Jens Kjaerbol - Denmark

*Mr Kjaerbol has great plans for the first 'heather park' in Denmark. Has anyone any experience of growing heathers under light tubes or any advice which could be passed on to him? Ed.*

### AN EXCERPT FROM 'THE YEW TREE' BY HAL HARTWELL JR. P.28

"The ancient Irish alphabet ... all its letters were named after trees. It was called the Beth-Luis-Nion ... Each vowel represented a quarterly station of the year..... U (heather) the summer solstice. ... This order of trees is implicit in Greek and Latin myth and the sacral tradition of all Europe" D McC

*David McClintock is still appealing to members who had plants of E. bocquetii to let him know how they are faring? Ed.*

### OTHER NAMES FOR CALLUNA

I agree with Bert Jones (and most people) that the only language to correctly identify a plant is Latin and that everyone writing about plants should give the Latin names at least in brackets. To underline the risk of confusion if only popular names are used, I counted the

common names which stand for *Calluna vulgaris* within the German speaking part of Europe. The German name 'Heide' has the same meaning as the English word 'Haeth'.

Names derived from 'Heide'	56
Names alluding to habit and flower colour	8
Names originating from where it grows	7
Names indicating the way it is used	32
Names which seem to be transferred from other plants	27
Names borrowed from other countries	17
Other names	33
A total of 180 names in one language!	
Praise be to Latin.	

*Brita Johansson - Sweden*

## HEATHER LAWN?

While walking on the moors I came across areas of turf-like close cropped heather (mainly *calluna*) which has given me an idea of trying to make a heather lawn. I wonder if any member has tried using heather in this way and if so, what varieties and treatment are needed - given that a lawn will get some wear and tear?

*David A Glue - ZONE 6*

*We do not have a heather lawn, but we do have a heather path which is planted with the prostrate Calluna 'Caleb Threlkeld', however, I must admit that there are stepping stones along the path which take some of the wear. After we have had the garden open for an afternoon for charity, 'Caleb' is left looking rather frayed at the edges, but he soon perks up and the effect is so pleasing that we intend to plant another path with either Calluna 'Clare Carpet' or 'White Lawn'. Ed.*

## FROM - THE SCOTTISH DAILY POST - SOON AFTER THE FALKLANDS WAR.

The Nation has rejoiced as our Forces have come home from the battle for freedom in the Falklands. But for 255 men and women there is no homecoming. For them there is no tomorrow.

The Sunday Post, on behalf of our family of readers, has decided to add our tribute to those of the task force who did not come home. That's why in November an RAF aircraft will lift off from an airfield somewhere in Britain with a very special cargo - white heather plants. There will be one for each of the fallen - to be planted on a lonely field in the Falklands as a living memorial and proud tribute. The civil Commissioner has arranged a simple ceremony; a short prayer will be said, then a piper will play a lament for the fallen. A simple bronze plaque telling the story of the white heather will mark the spot.

We realise of course that many of those who would wish to, will never be able to see the field of white heather in the Falklands. So, on the same Sunday another white heather memorial will be dedicated. Again there will be 255 plants and it will be an exact replica, even to the bronze plaque - only it will be in Scotland, in a well known beauty spot whose location has yet to be revealed.

*Stan Dayus - Zone 7*

*When Stan found this article in his records and handed it over to me, an up-to-date ending to the story was obviously required. A telephone call to The Sunday Post revealed that the Scottish Memorial heathers are planted in the gardens in Princes Street Edinburgh, where*

they are looked after by Edinburgh Parks Department. Unfortunately the plants frequently have to be replaced, as they are irresistible to tourists, who dig them up and take them home as souvenirs. Ann Thompson of the *Sunday Post* tells me that the garden is much appreciated by those visitors who lost family and friends in the Falklands War and there are always posies, wreaths and poppies left to their memory. Ed.

**FROM THE DAILY  
TELEGRAPH -  
22 SEPTEMBER 1993**

English Nature, the Government's advisor on conservation, launched a £150,000, three-year programme yesterday to save what remains of lowland heathland. Less than half the heathland that covered England in the 1930's exists today, lost to the encroachment of forests, arable use or housing. There are now only six areas with extensive lowland heaths - the Breckland of Suffolk and Norfolk, the Suffolk Sandlings, Surrey, Hampshire, Dorset and the Lizard, Cornwall.

Dr Rick Keyner, head of the programme said: "They are now under threat from invading bracken, scrub and trees, and too little management. We are alarmed at the prospect for wildlife."

The programme aims to raise awareness of the importance of lowland heaths to nature. Dr Keyner said: "It is not just heather and gorse, a unique range of fascinating and rare plants and animals lives there." Dr Keyner said some of the country's rarest birds, including the Dartford Warbler and Nightjar, nest or feed mainly or exclusively on heaths. Dr Keyner said:

"We are providing the £150,000 in grants to support heathland management projects."

**LETTER FROM HARLOW  
CARR BY T. ALBERT JULIAN**

*Reprinted from 'HEATHER NEWS' the Newsletter of the North American Heather Society.*

"A Last Report on the Trial Heathers at Harlow Carr before they disappeared".

Since my article in the 1980 Year Book the *Calluna* plants have deteriorated progressively. Unlike most of the *Erica* species new growth was not induced when mature stems were damaged or broken over the years. In consequence the sparse untrimmed extension growth of the surviving stems produced open straggly plants allowing coarse invasive grasses to overwhelm them, often to extinction. From my notes on the other species it would appear that the life span of most *Calluna* cultivars is less than for most of the other species. Some of the plants which were planted in 1984 in the *Calluna* reference collection (in the Harlow Carr Gardens proper) are showing signs of ageing. They will have to be replaced soon so it seems reasonable to assume that most *Callunas* growing in the conditions which prevail at Harlow Carr will have a useful life span of approximately ten years and perhaps less for the dwarf cultivars of dense growth.

After trimming ceased, the five plants of *Daboecia x scotica* 'William Buchanan' merged to form a healthy looking mound and were in first class condition. Most of the *Daboecia cantabrica* plants were cut

to the ground by the severe frosts of the 1981/82 winter and the final relatively healthy but neglected condition of the survivors was due to the regeneration which followed.

There were a few *E. vagans* losses caused by the severity of the 1978/79 and 1981/82 winters and the occasional heavy snowfall which flattened the plants to the ground. The ones that recovered grew with abandon to heights and spreads of 4 feet or more. The most vigorous cultivars which come to mind are 'Lilacina', 'Holden Pink', 'Rubra' and 'Grandiflora'. Tree heaths *E. arborea* and *E. x veitchii* 'Gold Tips' were cut to the ground during the winter of 1981/82, but they were completely recovered by rejuvenation. They were about 7ft. high with a spread of 5ft. in 1992. Fortunately there have been no heavy falls of snow in recent years and so the branches have remained intact. When in flower on sunny days the air in their vicinity was filled with the delightful scent of honey. After recovering several times from the effects of severe frosts, the *E. x lusitanica* plants eventually succumbed in 1980, confirming their inability to withstand the Yorkshire climate.

The winter-flowering *E. carnea* and the *E. x darleyensis* cultivars performed magnificently to the end. There was the inevitable competition between plants during the later period when trimming had been discontinued and those of *E. carnea* 'Springwood White', 'R B Cooke' and other vigorous cultivars spread into adjoining plants. There was little encroachment on to the adjacent paths, probably as a result of the repeated applications of the weedkiller. It was

quite remarkable that at no time did bare patches appear on the large expanses of growth.

At the end there were only a few patches of colour from the surviving *E. cinerea* plants. However, mention must be made of 'C G Best' which was in first class condition. Little was to be seen of the *E. tetralix* plants in 1992. They had been weakened by the droughts of very dry summers and those that had struggled through the severe winters were unable to cope with invasive weeds.

*E. ciliaris* 'Maweana', 'David McClintock' and 'Aurea', the summer flowering hybrids, *E. x watsonii* 'Dawn', 'Gwen' and 'Rachel' and *E. x williamsii* 'Gwavas' were a revelation. They are not regarded as the hardiest heathers but they had thrived following their winter setbacks, vigorous growth keeping most weeds at bay.

Weedkiller 'Casoron G' had been applied annually during the period 1977/87 and it was not known how long the soil toxicity would persist. For two years the roots of the sickly looking weeds which appeared had not been able to penetrate for more than about one centimetre. The toxic effects of the Casoron which had penetrated to this level gradually disappeared and the weeds became more vigorous and had more or less taken over the plot by 1992.

Heather seeds began to germinate in 1989 and a few seedlings displaying interesting characteristics were selected and potted on. Unfortunately they did not live up to their early promise. One in particular comes to mind, a possible seedling of *C.v.* 'Alportii'. At first it seemed to have more abundant and superior



flowers than its parent, but this was not confirmed in following years. It displayed (to coin a phrase) juvenile exuberance.

The potential for discovering new worthwhile seedlings was so considerable as plants of so many cultivars were growing in a relatively small area. So it was arranged for the Bell Heather Scholar to select the promising seedlings and plant them in the adjoining nursery. Unfortunately she resigned before the project could be started and it was not possible to make alternative arrangements.

## PROFILE OF COUNCIL MEMBER DAVID MAYNE

(One of the Organisers of the 1994 Conference to be held in York)

David was born in December 1924 in Finchley, North London, his father was a carpenter, joiner and Building Manager. He was one of four children, three girls and the baby of the family - David! He attended the Church of England School in Barnet.

When David left school he trained as an Electrical Engineer and served in the Fleet Air Arm in Scotland during the Second World War. During his time there he met Beryl. They married in 1948 and have two sons.

During his working life he was involved in electrical installations for schools and factories etc. and was also Plant Electrician for Philips Optical Division at one time. This job included designing and maintaining a small Company Garden, "A wonderful place to disappear to when the factory got hectic"

says David.

David first became interested in heathers after a holiday visit to Ireland in 1971. He joined the Society in 1975 and was co-opted on to Council in 1985. For many years David and Beryl helped to run the Society's Stand at RHS Shows at Vincent Square.

In 1987 David was made redundant and he and Beryl took the opportunity of moving from Barnet, where they had lived since they were married, to a bungalow in North Yorkshire (near the moors which they both love). Since moving there David has found that heathers grow much better in Yorkshire soil than in the sticky clay of North London. His hobbies are gardening and photography and since his move he has become very much a part of the local community; he is Chairman of the local Horticultural Society and is much in demand for talks on heathers. "I don't know how I ever found time to go to work!" he says.

David and Beryl continue to give their time to the Society unstintingly - even travelling down from Yorkshire to Worcestershire, purposely to assist the Midlands Group at the Malvern Spring Show.



## GROUP NEWS

### NORTH EAST

Our first venture for the summer season was our annual visit to Houghall for their Open Weekend on May 15th/16th. As usual we had our Heather Society Stand and it was good to meet our yearly friends again. The weather was not too good, cold and mainly dry but not much sun. Straight after this event we went on holiday with our caravan up the West Coast of Scotland and came back just in time to go on our Annual Outing to Threave Gardens in Dumfriesshire, on the Solway, on June 5th. Threave House was at one time privately owned but now belongs to the Scottish National Trust and is the garden which is used to train all the gardeners for the SNT. We had an exceptionally fine warm day, with brilliant sunshine all day and the rhododendrons and azaleas were at their best with their heady perfume. There is quite a slope to the gardens and from the top of the orchard the view was magnificent. Greenhouses were overflowing with plants, many from tropical climes, and the many seats in the garden were gratefully used to ease aching feet! A splendid high tea was enjoyed in the garden restaurant before the coach brought us home.

At our AGM last year it was agreed that we follow in the footsteps of our Southern cousins and organise car outings during the summer months. The first one was on July 11th to Raby Castle in County Durham. Early Sunday morning skies didn't look too promising but, true stalwarts that we are, we set off in time to get to Raby Castle for 12 noon, wondering how many, if any, cars would turn up. The nearer we got to Raby, the better the weather became and by the time we arrived the sun was shining in a blue sky. Best of all seven cars arrived - and - who should be among them? Yes - Dave and Beryl Mayne!

After a picnic lunch in view of the Castle, we made a tour of the gardens; these really were delightful. Each was surrounded by a fairly high hedge on three sides but the fourth was open, leaving a beautiful view of the Castle from the garden. The roses were at their peak, the herbaceous garden was in full flower, but we noted with disappointment that there were few heathers and those they had needed much attention to say the least. The greenhouses

were interesting together with the fruiting areas, and a tea-room was very welcome.

Two of our members did a tour of the Castle which they said was well worth seeing. Raby Castle is the home of Lord Ravensworth and the surrounding parkland is famous for its deer. We were lucky enough to be close by when the Landrover went round dropping off feed for them and we saw about 70, with their young, at quite close quarters. An added bonus and a great thrill!

Our next car-outing was a visit to the nursery of our member Bill Crow. This was an evening visit on August 18th and this time we had six cars with, yes, you've guessed, Dave and Beryl with two friends who were staying with them. Many thanks for your support. Other members also brought friends, so it was another successful 'do'. The weather was not so kind, a very dull and chilly evening, but Margaret, Bill's wife, kindly dispensed tea and biscuits which fortified everyone for going round the nursery. We had a choice of over 1000 heathers, pinks, bedding plants, shrubs and trees and everyone went away with plenty in their car boot. Thanks to Bill and Margaret for a good evening.

Our next event will be our AGM which will be held in St. Matthew's Church Hall, Ponteland, at 7.30pm on Monday October 25th.

At the Ponteland Flower Show this autumn there are three classes for heathers. Syd Courtney and I did very well between us, collecting several first, second and third prizes. Up the Heather Society!

*Dorothy Warner*

### MIDLANDS

About twenty members from around the Midlands met at our nursery at Bringsty on August 14th, for a reunion buffet lunch. It was lovely to see old friends once again and as on a previous visit some years ago, the weather was warm and sunny and we were able to sit and chat and eat in the garden. It would be nice if we could make this an annual event, so if anyone would like to host it next year please let me know? We can all bring something towards lunch, as we used to do at our Social Evenings at Winterbourne.

*Daphne Everett*

## SOUTHERN

A tour of the alpine and herbaceous section of the Kew Royal Botanical Garden took place on Wednesday June 23rd 1993. A few members arrived early and saw the South African heaths in the Temperate House - the main display is the winter but some plants were in flower and were worth seeing. It was a wonderful summer day with plenty of sunshine and a refreshing breeze. We had an early lunch at a shady table outside the cafeteria and then linked up with other members as they arrived for the tour.

Thirteen members took part and Mr Mike Sinnott, Assistant Curator, Herbaceous section, led the tour around his section. Mr Sinnott, along with other senior managers at Kew, is dedicated to the conservation of the world's flora and it became very evident as the tour progressed that this philosophy is put into practice in the garden. Kew is one of the oldest botanical gardens, being founded in 1759 and has some 38,000 taxa - about one tenth of the world's plants are represented here. The garden enjoys mild winters but has a relatively low rainfall at about 600 mm per year. Considerable use is made of compost - both plant and animal waste (including horse manure from the stables of the Household Cavalry) - which helps the soil to retain moisture.

We went first to the Queen's House where the garden is laid out to conserve both 17th century style and plants. The 'nosegay' garden features ethno-botany, i.e. plants for people. From there we went to the rock-garden which is being progressively reconstructed in a 10 year programme. A geographical theme has been adopted for the new garden with continents and countries being represented. Plants from isolated island communities - which are often unique - will also be featured.

We saw flower beds in radiant colour and Mr Sinnott explained that many of them consisted of endangered plants from other countries. Very often the Trade becomes interested in such plants and by making them available to the public, help to conserve them.

We visited the Alpine House, which is designed to enable the gardeners to control the environment; provision is made for a considerable amount of natural ventilation. A number of ericaceous plants are featured in the house, including a fine example of *Erica sicula*. Afterwards we went to the glasshouses and

potting areas where much hard work goes on behind the scenes. These are areas not normally open to the public. Members enjoyed the privilege of walking around and talking to gardeners there.

Our thanks to Mr Sinnott were fittingly profuse. We even thanked him for his lecture about not using peat and on practical alternatives to it. We were able to assure him that we were aware of the need to conserve the dwindling peatlands (and indeed heathlands) of Britain - much of Eastern Europe has lost this heritage.

On Sunday July 11th, 16 members visited Great Comp, Kent. This unique and lovely garden was created by Mr Cameron, who is a member of the Society, and his late wife. Mr Cameron met us on our arrival and graciously took us to see some of the salient parts of the garden. When he and his wife took over the property in 1957 it extended to 4.5 acres, they later extended it to 7.5 acres and developed the whole garden unaided; only in the last year or two has he taken on staff to assist. Great Comp has a long history. Part of the estate was owned by a Crusader, who left it to the Church. The word 'comp' comes from the Latin 'campus'. The present house dates from around 1600 AD. Immediately prior to Mr Cameron, Great Comp was owned by a Mrs Maxwell who promoted women's interests; in particular, the first women's cricket team played regularly here.

On Saturday 21st August 1993 there was a joint visit with the South Western Group which Phil Joyner will describe. I want to put on record however the thanks of the Southern Group who attended a really excellent outing.

On Saturday April 9th 1994 Joan and I wish to invite members to visit us at our home. Arrive any time after 12.30 pm when a buffet lunch will be ready. Although not essential, it would assist catering if you could let us know you are coming - Tel: 081 393 6380.

NEWSLETTER & SKETCH-MAPS I hope to have a newsletter complete with sketch-maps of the venues, available from January 1st 1994. Please send a stamped addressed envelope if you would like a copy.

Allen Hall

## SOUTH WEST

On a sunny Saturday afternoon in June, members gathered in the car park of the Sir Harold Hillier Gardens and Arboretum for a

guided tour. The gardens boast a vast collection of trees and plants, some of which are very rare; the Curator, Barry Phillips, made himself available to take people round. Barry took us on a tour which allowed us to take in plants of current interest and which finally ended up in the heather garden close to the tea rooms. I am very grateful to Barry Phillips for giving up a Saturday afternoon to provide us with an informative tour.

During the first weekend in July, the local group manned a stand at the Southampton Balloon and Flower Festival. A display of flowering heathers in bowls was the backdrop for John Bridgland and Henry and Anne Pringle to share their knowledge of heather culture with the general public. Unlike last year, when we were knee deep in mud, the sun shone and if anything it was a little too hot in the marquee. My thanks go to my willing helpers who make this Society Stand possible.

On a Saturday in late August members of both the South West and the Southern Groups met in the garden of Val and Alan Davis in Merley near Wimborne. Val and Alan had invited us to eat our picnic lunches in homely surroundings and members of both groups took advantage of this venue to renew old acquaintances and make new ones. Once again we were lucky with the weather, with the threatened rain turning to sunshine. Val and Alan have only been in their current home for about 2 years and they have transformed the front garden into a fine collection of heathers and the back garden into a collection of shrubs and perennials. I wish to thank Val and Alan for their hospitality, it was greatly appreciated.

From Merley we moved on a couple of miles to Ashington, where we were to spend the rest of the afternoon at Heatherwood Nurseries. Ron and Virginia Squires, who owned and managed the nursery have now retired but still live adjacent to the nursery. Ron's son, daughter and daughter-in-law now run the nursery. Peter Squires met us and showed us around the compost making facility, which produces the Minster brands of potting compost, well known in the trade and with amateurs. The various ingredients for the many grades of compost were shown to us, together with the mixing and bagging methods. After this tour Ron and Virginia met us and took us into the garden surrounding their bungalow. The garden has

been revamped since our previous visit and now boasts an improved water feature but still exhibits the broad sweep of heathers, conifers and other shrubs - all looking extremely colourful. Ron and Virginia spent quite a time talking to us and sharing their enthusiasm for their garden, then Virginia provided us with generous refreshment. I must express my thanks to Ron, Virginia and family for welcoming us to their nursery and making such an enjoyable afternoon.

The first meeting of 1994 will be at Lytchett Matravers Village Hall at 2.00pm on Saturday, 26 March, where a talk is being arranged. We will also have our annual two class Table Show:

Class 1. A vase or bowl of heathers in bloom.

Class 2. A vase or bowl 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. 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 a charge will be made to cover expenses.

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

*Phil Joyner*

## DIARY OF EVENTS

23/24 Nov.	RHS Show & Heather Competitions.
24 Nov.	Heather Society Council Meeting
1994	
15 January	CLOSING DATE FOR MATERIAL FOR THE BULLETIN
26 March	South West Group, Heather Competition, Lytchett Matravers
9 April	Southern Group, Buffet Lunch, Allen & Joan Hall
25 June	Southern Group, Joint visit with South West Group to Windlesham Court Nursery.