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# Bulletin of The Heather Society

## volume 8 number 3

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### DIARY 2014 & 2015

22 October	Council meeting, London
25 October	Home Counties Group, meet at RHS Gardens Wisley
31 October	Closing date the <i>Heathers</i> 12 (2015 yearbook).
2015	
15 January	Closing date for Spring 2015 <i>Bulletin</i>



For contact details of the Society's Officers, Editors, Group Organizers, and Administrator, see inside back cover.

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### Forewords

*The news that the next Gathering is to be in Connemara took me right back to 1983, when we visited it with a small group led by Charles Nelson – and made me realise how much technology has taken over our lives since then. When the telephone rang in the little hotel where we were staying, they would wait for the right number of rings before answering it, as each ring was for a different establishment. Primitive you might think, in these days of instant communication, but it worked at the time, and, when they phoned someone they were sure to get a HUMAN BEING on the other end. While we were there we had a small money query. Well, that was no problem, even on a Sunday morning. The owners just phoned the bank manager at his home for advice!! Swings and roundabouts I suppose.*

**Daphne Everett**

### Chairman's piece

Since returning from the Heather Society Conference at Llanberis, I have appreciated more how important these annual gatherings are. Apart from the local group meetings they are the only occasions when members from across the country have the opportunity to get together, to socialize, meet friends face to face, and have gossip/discussions about heathers and other varied topics.

Whilst the world turns to electronic communication methodology, it

cannot replace such sociable occasions, with the opportunity to sit in a relaxing environment (drink in hand), discussing the ways and means of the Society with other members. Personally the Conference provides me with an enjoyable weekend break away from home and the nursery, an attractive change of scenery in areas of the country I would not normally visit, plus the benefits of being waited on hand and foot.

Returning to other matters, the Society can only function with the input of members' time. If you can provide the occasion to attend our four Council meetings a year and maintain computer contact/response, you could be the person we need. A knowledge of heathers is not important or necessary, the only requirement is being of 'sound knowledge'. A broad range of experience brought to meetings is of greater benefit to the Society, will add to its diversity, and ensure its continuing viability.

**David Edge**

### Society news & events

#### What's new for the Heather Society Internet in 2014

We are taking the opportunity to update our website and have created a Facebook presence to further enhance our appeal to the internet audience.



## Website

There are two driving factors requiring attention with the website. There is an on-going need to reduce the delivery costs of member's entitlements. The increase in membership fees this year still does not cover the costs, particularly of postage. There are also some problems with the website when trying to access it *via* touch-screens on tablets.

To resolve these problems we are re-designing the website and adding a

secure **Members Only** area to enable the following functions:

- ☉ Access to new and past *Bulletins* and past *Yearbooks*
- ☉ Cutting exchange scheme
- ☉ More detailed advice and guidance on heathers and cultivation
- ☉ Join online
- ☉ Contact details update for existing members (via secure access functions)
- ☉ Add ability to pay for services via PayPal using credit and debit cards

For those of you with internet access and registered email IDs, you will be able to gain use these new features via a login panel. Initially you will need to set a password to be used in subsequent logins. The intent here is for those with internet access, *Bulletins* will be available in softcopy immediately. As at present, hardcopy (printed) *Bulletins* will be sent to those without internet access. Yearbooks will remain hardcopy sent by post.

It is hoped to get the new website operational by the end of November. The change will be unmistakable; it has a different look and feel! Hope you like it.

## Facebook

For those who follow social media, you may find the new Heather Society Facebook page of interest. Its Facebook name is "Heather Society".

It is used for links to interesting heather events and comments. Anyone can post heather-related events or other information on the page. When you have information or news which you feel may be of interest to other heather enthusiasts, please post it.

**Dave Brown**

## Very Important – Email addresses

Does the Society have your email address, and the correct one? **Please, check the address label on this mail – if we have an email address for you it will be in the upper right corner of the label. If there is no email address there and you do have one, please let us know**

**now!** By email to The Administrator at [theheathersociety@phoncoop.coop](mailto:theheathersociety@phoncoop.coop) or use the contact form on our website. Thank you.

## Annual General Meeting 2014

The Annual General Meeting of the Heather Society, was held on Sunday evening, 14 September 2014 at the Royal Victoria Hotel, Llanberis, during the weekend of the Annual Gathering.

The Chairman, David Edge, welcomed the members. He said that the issue of most importance to the Society remains falling membership numbers. Unfortunately, the increase in membership fees has exacerbated the situation. He expressed his gratitude for donations and a legacy which have bolstered funds. The Chairman described an effort to gain more members, by the stand at the RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show. He, and his staff, constructed an exhibit within the Floral Marquee under the banner of The Heather Society and gained a Silver Medal. However, the Chairman said that the website was still the primary source of new members and was now being brought up to date, under the direction of Council Member Dave Brown (see above). One of the added functions will be the on-line payment of membership fees. The Chairman concluded by thanking Susie and Alan Kay for organizing the Gathering, and council members and the Administrator for their hard work.

Following the approval of the previous AGM Minutes, the President, Professor John Griffiths, expressed the Society's appreciation of the Chairman, David Edge, both for his work in publicizing the Society and for providing the display at the RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show.

The presentation of the 2013 annual report and accounts by the Hon. Secretary, Phil Joyner, and the Hon. Treasurer, Richard Canovan, resulted in three questions from the floor, each of which was answered appropriately.

The meeting agreed to the appointments by Council of Prof. John Griffiths as President, and of Vice-Presidents Daphne Everett, Pamela Lee, Alice Knight, as well as, *ex officio*, the presidents of Gesellschaft der Heidefreunde (Kurt Kramer) and the NAHS (Karla Lortz to end of 2014).

David Edge, Phil Joyner and Richard Canovan accepted nomination respectively as Chairman, Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer, for a further year. David Edge and Andy Collins were re-elected to Council under the three-year rule.

Finally, the Conference Organizer, Susie Kay, announced that the 2015 Annual Gathering would be held at Leenane, Connemara, Republic of Ireland, between Thursday 10 September to Monday 14 September (see following item). The 2015 AGM will be held during the Gathering.

**Phil Joyner (Hon. Secretary)**

### Annual Gatherings 2014 & 2015

Twenty four members came to Llanberis for this year's event. Once again the weather was kind and increased our enjoyment of garden visiting and a train ride through Snowdonia.

I would like to publicly thank Charles Nelson, who always has suggestions for speakers, David Edge for his generous donation of plants and all the members of Council who help to make a very pleasant weekend. We are a "heather family" and it is always wonderful to meet up for exchanges about plants, gardens and ericaceous matters each year.

With this *Bulletin* you also have received a flyer for next year's meeting. The location is Connemara, making this phase 2 of our Celtic explorations.

As it is a distance to travel, an extra day has been added to the itinerary. The programme is almost planned. I hope to provide excellent speakers and visits with maybe a surprise along the way. You could include attending as part of a holiday in the West of Ireland, which has many attractions making it a top tourist route. There is a new initiative called "The Wild Atlantic Way", a route all along the Ireland's Western Seaboard stretching some 2,500 km. It is possible to dip in and out of this route at any point; and a few days touring along this route will give you a wonderful experience.

**Dates:** 10–14 September 2015

**Place:** Leenane, County Galway, Ireland

**Cost:** approx. £300 (excl. travel)

Should you require any more information about travelling to Leenane, please contact me at susiek@gofree.indigo.ie or by telephone to 00353 95 43575.

The usual number of rooms has already been reserved at The Leenane Hotel, situated at the head of The Killary, Ireland's only fjord. A stunning location to stay, with good food and even seaweed baths for those moments of relaxation.

Council strongly advises you to sign up very soon for this event by filling in the form in the flyer and sending it together with £5 non-refundable deposit to The Administrator, address on back cover of the *Bulletin*.

Come and be part of "The Heather Family" in a truly magical location.

**Susie Kay**

### Digital projector

We are very grateful to our former Honorary Secretary, Jean Preston, for the donation of a digital projector for use at the Society's conferences and meetings.

### 2014 Gathering and Conference

This year the Conference was based at The Royal Victoria Hotel, Llanberis, North Wales. The weather was perfect, the scenery was spectacular, the hotel

was very good and the company was, as ever, like a big family get-together.

There will be a full report of the Conference in the next yearbook, so this is just to give those of you who weren't there, a flavour of the weekend (see back cover for photos).

On Friday evening we had a most unusual talk by John Harold of the Snowdonia Society, about Welsh 'tundra'. The areas on the mountains, like Snowdon, way above the tree line, where the willow trees are so tiny, that the fungi tower above them.

Our Saturday morning visit was to Plas Brodanw, once the private garden of Sir Clough Williams-Ellis (of Portmeirion fame, which has been brought back to pristine condition by the dedicated present head gardener. Then, most unusually for a Conference weekend, we spent the afternoon enjoying the scenery on a steam train – on the newly opened line from Porthmadog to Caernarfon – with cream scones on the way – just in case we were hungry after a big breakfast and a soup-and-sandwich lunch!!

Garden historian Bettina Harden entertained us in the evening with a talk about the Nanhoran Estate, her home on the Llŷn peninsula, which has been in the the same family for over seven hundred years. This is a beautiful late-eighteenth century garden, which is open to the public by appointment only.

On Sunday we were very lucky to be shown around the amazing Plas

Cadnant garden by its present owner, Anthony Tavernor: a man of great enthusiasm and imagination and, it must be presumed, a very deep pocket. The garden, which has been developed since 1996, is open to the public on certain days (see website for details). The afternoon was spent at Bodnant Gardens, one of the great gardens of Wales.

With the Chairman's usual efficiency, the AGM was soon dispatched, and the evening concluded with some interesting talks by several members.

Once again, Susie arranged a wonderful weekend – although how she manages to arrange for lovely weather as well, is a secret I would really like to know.

**Daphne Everett**

### **Request for help at the 2015 RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show**

[For David Edge's account of RHS Hampton Court Palace Show 2014, see p. 00]

As you are probably aware the Society has put on a display and sales stand for the last two years at the RHS Hampton Court Flower Show, within the Floral Marquee. The stand has been designed and erected by the Society's Chairman, David Edge, and his nursery staff, and run with the support of David, his staff and a handful of members, mainly Council members.

The intention is, RHS permitting, to put up a stand at the 2015 Hampton Court Flower Show during the period 30 June to 5 July. In order to run the stand and give a break to those members on the stand a minimum of three persons are required, two to man the stand at any one time and one person to go off and have a break. The Society is allocated free entry tickets on each of the six days so this is an opportunity for free entry to the Show and an opportunity for a look around the site during the breaks. This may be especially appealing to those members within easy travelling distance of Hampton Court and so I request contact from interested members who will be willing to put their names forward, so that a rota can be created to cover the six days. Manning the stand involves chatting to the members of the public about growing heathers and selling heather plants. Don't be put off if you think your knowledge is limited as you have your own experiences to impart. The opening times, to the public, are 10am to 7.30pm (4.30pm on Sunday) although those persons manning the stand can enter the site earlier.

Please contact me if you are interested in helping using my contact details printed on the inside back cover of this *Bulletin*. Please indicate which day(s) you would be able to attend.

**Phil Joyner (Hon. Secretary)**

### **New members**

We welcome the following members who have joined since June.

**Ron Derham**, Jesmond, Newcastle Upon Tyne.

**Julian Bosdari**, Castle Cary, Somerset.

**Rachel Chilton**, Tilehurst, Berkshire.

### **2015 yearbook & 2014 CD**

The next yearbook, to be issued about February 2015, is still "open" for contributions from any member. Please send your articles and photographs to the Hon. Editor before the end of October, as usual.

**2014 Members' CD:** many thanks to everyone who contributed pictures for the CD which is enclosed with this *Bulletin*.

**Charles Nelson**

### **Subscriptions 2015**

With this *Bulletin* is enclosed subscription renewal information – *if nothing is enclosed your subscription is not due to be renewed for at least another 12 months. The subscription rate is as in 2014: £20 for UK residents and £25 for all others.*

**For UK residents**, payment by standing order is the Society's preferred method. If you do not already pay by standing order, please either complete the form enclosed and *send it to your bank (not to the Society)*, or use the information yourself to set up a new standing order by internet

banking. NB standing orders should be paid to Lloyds Bank.

**For all other members**, not resident in the UK, other instructions are provided.

### **Group News**

*All members are welcome to attend any of the local group events*

### **Home Counties Group**

Saturday 25 October: meet at RHS Gardens Wisley at 11am to walk around the National Heather Collection. At 2pm there will be a talk by Mercy Morris about Plant Heritage and the Plant Guardians scheme. Please contact Barry Sellers, for more details, if you intend to come.

**Barry Sellers**

### **Yorkshire Group**

Due to complications in Jean's family no visit was organized this year, but the autumn meeting at RHS Garden Harlow Carr went ahead successfully, all be it with few members. It is sad that there are insufficient of us to organize a speaker, regardless of the cost involved. However we always have a good discussion on heather growing and heather topics, plus a walk around the gardens to see how the heather plants are faring.

We will only be allowed two free visits to the Bramall Learning Centre in 2015 and these on condition that the room is not required for paying guests. As we are such as small group we can

manage in the smallest room, the Sunley Room or even meet in one another's homes if necessary.

We usually pick a Saturday afternoon in March, May and September with a visit possibly on a weekday in July or August, but this may change in 2015, with the visit-out being in May and in the summer. I have requested a couple of dates for meetings from RHS Garden Harlow Carr, and once I know them I will ask the Administrator to advertise them on the Society's website (www.heathersociety.org).

**Jean Preston**

#### North East Group

How quickly the annual events seem to come round now. The Ponteland Parish Flower Show was held on Saturday 13 September 2014 but, unfortunately, I was unable to go (the first I've missed in over 30 years). However, Geoff was there, so he gave me a full report of the proceedings.

All classes had been well supported but, sadly, there were only eight exhibits on the heather stand – five specimen spikes, two buttonholes and one basket. Gone are the days when one had to stage early in order to get a space

I do hope everyone has enjoyed our lovely summer after such a poor start and just hope the winter will be kind.

**Dorothy Warner**

❖❖❖

#### Henry Pringle 1919–2014

I regret to inform members of the passing away of Henry Pringle, at the age of 95, on 20 June, 2014.

Whilst Henry was a keen supporter of the Society right up to his death, regrettably his wife Anne had ceased to be a knowing supporter of the Society, due to the onset of Alzheimer's, about three years ago.

Henry and Anne Pringle were stalwart supporters of the SW Local Group, attending many of the meetings which, in the Group's heyday, numbered three or four a year. For many years we put up a stand at the Southampton Show, later the Southampton Balloon and Flower Festival, and Henry and Anne were always there, without fail, to help drum up support for the Society.

Henry and Anne had a large garden in Woodlands, on the eastern boundary of the New Forest. Their house overlooked one of the forest lawns grazed by the free-roaming ponies and cattle, and, in the autumn, the pigs put out for pannage. As you can probably imagine there was a constant battle to keep out the deer and high hedges were very much a feature of the garden. Henry grew a collection of heathers and his soil type was such that he was able to grow the whole range. Henry was very much a hands-on gardener, maintaining the whole garden well into his nineties with, apart from Anne and family members, little other help. He grew

large plots of vegetables, propagating all his vegetables from seed, but he loved his heathers, taking many cuttings. The heathers he grew were sold at local markets, car-boot sales and the local church and horticultural society plant sales. Most of the proceeds from the sales were put to good use in the upkeep of the nearby Netley Marsh Church, of which Henry and Anne were devoted members of the congregation.

I extend the Society's sincere condolences to Anne, her children and grandchildren for their sad loss.

**Phil Joyner**

#### Tippitiwitchet log Charles Nelson

#### Symbolic flowers stamps

Royal Mail issued a new set of six "post & go" stamps illustrating "Symbolic Flowers" on 17 September. Post & Go stamps are ones that are purchased from self-service machines in main post offices, and can also be obtained by collectors from Royal Mail. The stamps feature artworks by Julia Tickey. One of the stamps portrays "heather" – *Calluna vulgaris*. The explanation of its inclusion is as follows: "The poppy and forget-me-not have both long signified remembrance, with the latter particularly associated with love, while wearing a sprig of heather is still said to bring good luck."



The set is a mish-mash: spear thistle, of course, represent Scotland, while cultivated flax "the floral symbol of Northern Ireland, honours the historical importance of the nation's [sic] linen industry. Wales is not represented – a daffodil is in the "Spring Blooms" set of "post & go" issued earlier in the year. That leaves the dog rose (*Rosa canina*), and it seems to represent England although the English emblem is the Tudor rose.

#### Irish Princess™

#### and similar trade marks

Recently I have been contacted by several members asking what cultivar of *Daboecia cantabrica* bears this name. The answer is **none**, or, more accurately, **several** (but their correct names are not used on this label)!

Irish Princess™, like Garden Girls™ and Beauty Ladies™, is a trade mark, a marketing device used by nurserymen to sell these plants – the plants are labelled with the rather uninformative logo in magenta, purple and white. It is owned by Ludger Halmans. You may have seen the Garden Girls™ advert in some magazines recently – there is a picture of some bud-flowering *Calluna* but



neither the name *Calluna vulgaris* nor "heather" is mentioned. You have to guess what is being advertised. The same with Irish Princess™.

When you buy plants so labelled they must be

*Daboecia* but I have only indefinite information about the clones that are included under this mark. As with Garden Girls™ and Beauty Ladies™, several different cultivars are being sold under the "umbrella" Irish Princess™. Indeed, it is possible for this trade mark to be used on any "agricultural, horticultural or forestry products ... seed, natural plants, and flowers".

Trade marks are specifically excluded from the *International code of nomenclature for cultivated plants*, but they are being used more and more in sales pitches, a trend started in the USA and now, alas, being adopted in Europe. A trade mark, unlike a cultivar name, gives *no guarantee* of accurate naming, and as far as I can tell the labels used do not include a cultivar name.

Trade marks also can be used on different, entirely unrelated plants. The trade mark Ruby Lace™, owned by a hugh American nursery called Monrovia, is registered for "live ornamental plants" – in plain words,

any plant that Monrovia wants to sell (and it does not have to be in any way ruby or lace-like). The mark has been applied to *Erica verticillata*, as well as a Japanese maple, an oleander, and a honey locust. Confused? *Caveat emptor*: avoid trade-marked plants that don't have a proper cultivar name(s) as well.

### The persistence of *Daboecia cantabrica* Pamela Lee

Just south of my house, the A3 runs through Bramshott Common (Hampshire). The area was used by the Army in both world wars and still has remnants of concrete foundations and tarmac roads.

It is thought that local people donated trees and shrubs to embellish the huts and the hospital (which housed the wounded returning from Dunkirk, etc.). There are shrubs of *Philadelphus* and *Deutzia*, and hedges of Lawson cypress and privet, now grown to enormous heights, as well as naturalized Montbretia, *Allium* and daffodils.

But what is extraordinary is a patch of about 50 plants of *Daboecia cantabrica* – mainly white, with some lavender. Seedlings scattered outside the main group indicate that it is still expanding. They probably came from one plant presented to a soldier in the early 1940s! The patch grows among

ground-hugging brambles and is mown almost annually by the Ministry of Defence, to facilitate army manoeuvres (and cannot be easily seen) but this keeps the plants from getting leggy.

I went to the bigger than ever Wisley Flower Show and chatted with John Hall. He had a magnificent display, part of which illustrated a roof garden. It was the only stand showing heathers.

### RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show 2014 David Edge

Planning for this exhibit began on our return from the 2013 show.

Ideas started to gel in the grey cells as we thought of different formulations for the show stand. The criteria was as previously – to give imagination to the visitors as to the various ways in which heathers can be utilised in the garden. However this time I also wanted to show how they could be associated with other plants.

The concept was formulated – a scenic meadow effect, with a range of white, red, pink and purple flowering *Daboecia* in the centre, linking in grasses and dwarf shrubs. Repeat the display of heathers in gravel, bordered with a *Daboecia* hedge, display a miniature beehive to link the concept of heathers with pollinators, and a

planting of dwarf and trailing heathers to show the diversity of habit.

Plants need to be selected a year prior to the show and trimmed and potted on to ensure they are at their best. Fortunately the date of the Hampton Court Palace show coincides with the flowering season for *Daboecia* and *Erica cinerea*, *E. tetralix* and *E. vagans*.

As the staff were busy with orders, potting and watering, I erected a mock-up stand on the nursery the week preceding the show with stacks of wooden pallets. Trish, Sam and I set to work later laying out a design in order to assess the number and selection of plants needed. Grasses and tree heathers for the background, signs to be written, new black cloth purchased, bags of bark and gravel and leaflets, everything had to be remembered, packed and loaded in the van on the Sunday for the setup.

Sunday morning, and Trish and I were on our way. Arriving at the site at 11.30am, luckily we managed to contrive a parking site just outside the tent entrance by the stand. At this point Trish mentioned that the stand looked larger than the one we had planned on the nursery: catastrophe! I had mistakenly only planned for a 15ft × 6ft stand but the one we now had in front of us was 15ft × 8ft and there was no time to return to the nursery for more plants. I would like to say at this point that we were undaunted but that was not the word in our minds!

Having no choice but to proceed, we dressed the stand with the black cloth and the THS sign, and Trish arranged the plants that I unloaded from the van. Between us we managed to build the back of the display with the tree heathers and grasses, positioned the beehive and container with the trailing *Calluna*, the front corner gravel area with the *Daboecia* hedge and larger heathers at the sides. No pots to be visible, no dead flowers or leaves showing!

The previous year the judges comment was that they were looking for 'undulations'. How were we to do this with the limited amount of bark that we had as a material? We were short of plants and building material. Trish's patience shone through at this point and utilising plants that we had brought for the sales bench she set to work standing plants on empty upside down pots and covering with a thin layer of bark. This finally undertaken we tweaked the plants so that they all looked to the front and positioned the signs. Standing back we were aware that the 'undulation' was on the meagre scale of hills but it was the best that we could achieve.

Finally we had to set up the two sales benches again with black cloth and the remainder of the plants that we had to hand. The appearance, signage and quality of plants on the bench are taken into consideration at the judging so they had to be up to

standard as well. Standing back to assess our work we thought it was 'not bad' and we stood a chance of attaining an award. Looking at our watches we could see that time had passed and it was then 6.00pm – time to get back to the nursery and reload with more stock to replace that we had use on the display bench.

Monday, the first day of the show, is reserved for invited guests and the press, followed by a firework display in the evening. Having previously responded to a request for an interview with Radio Solent we had to be there at 8.20am, so no time to rest! A quick 5-minute slot concluded, we had chance to wander around the show until the judging was completed in the late afternoon, and then manned the stand to answer questions from the meandering 'suited and booted'.

On Tuesday morning we were given our Silver Award certificate and some friendly advice from one of the judges. Yes, the word 'undulations' surfaced again and the comment that they looked for larger ones with a greater density of background planting and more mature planting stock. Oh well, 2015 here we come, and the gold award will look well when we eventually get it!

My thanks to Phil Joyner, Dave Brown, Dianne Jones and Barry Sellers for their support at the show and for answering the multitude of heathery questions.

<b>Chairman</b>	Mr David Edge Forest Edge Nursery, Verwood Road, Woodlands, Wimborne, BH21 8LJ. tel: 01202 824387; fax: 01202 829564; email davidedge@tinyworld.co.uk
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Front [from top] The Heather Society/Forest Edge Nurseries at the RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show July 2014 (P. Joyner); Kurt Kramer's garden, Edeweicht, Germany, 11 September 2014 (K. Kramer); *Erica ciliaris* (Dorset heath) in Connemara, August 2014 (A. Kay).

Back [clockwise from upper left]: Annual Gathering in North Wales 14 September 2014: Bodnant Gardens; Pin Mill and waterlilies; hedge of Corsican heath (*Erica terminalis*) (both E. C. Nelson); Anthony Tavernor (centre) speaking to members in his garden, Plas Cadnant, Anglesey (Daphne Everett).



Contact information / If undelivered please return to



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