

Bulletin of The Heather Society



Volume 8, number 6.

Autumn 2015

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volume 8 number 6

Bulletin Editor: Daphne Everett



charity registered in England & Wales no. 261407

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DIARY 2015 & 2016

21 October	Council meeting, London
30 November	Closing date for <i>Heathers</i> 13 (2016 yearbook).
2016	
15 January	Closing date for Spring 2016 <i>Bulletin</i>
17 February	Council Meeting, London
March	Yorkshire Group (date to be confirmed)
May	Yorkshire Group (date to be confirmed)
5–10 July	RHS Hampton Court Palace Show
9–12 September	Annual Gathering & AGM, Perth

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

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IMPORTANT NOTICE

From this issue The Heather Society's *Bulletin* and other documents (such as AGM papers) will be delivered to members by an email notification. Members who do not have access to the internet (and email) will continue to receive printed copies.

Forewords

Another Conference has come and gone – set, this time, in beautiful Connemara. Susie Kay had (as usual) arranged a weekend of interesting talks and visits. Even five inches of rain falling on the first day couldn't dampen our spirits (too much). Quite apart from the opportunity to see heathers in the wild and to visit lovely gardens, the annual gathering is a wonderful chance to meet up each year with old friends – and sometimes – some new ones. And if I could give an award for a kind action, over and above the call of duty, it would go to our Chairman - who hired a people carrier to drive seven lucky members from Dorset to the ferry port at Holyhead (via Herefordshire, to collect us), then, from Dublin, all the way across Ireland to Connemara.

Daphne Everett

dandmeverett@gmail.com

RHS Hampton Court Palace Show

The Society was once again the well-deserved recipient of a Silver Gilt medal for its beautiful display garden

at the RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show. The stand was designed to show the public some of the many ways that heathers can be used – window boxes, troughs and tubs, topiary, borders and, very importantly, as a food source for bees. Sharp-eyed viewers might even have seen part of the stand briefly on television, while Carol Klein was talking to the camera about bee-friendly flowers. Sincere thanks are due to David Edge and his team for their hard work and expertise on the Society's behalf.

Open letter from David Edge

Thank you very much to everyone for kind words regarding the RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show. In return I would like to thank all those members who have so kindly congratulated the Forest Edge team ... perhaps Gold next year!

In addition I express my gratitude, not only to those members who so generously gave of their time, but also to my staff, Trish and Sam, for their commitment in planning and constructing such an interesting display – it would have been impossible without them.

Building a stand I have found can be a stressful time, requiring much patience and understanding, this can be translated as biting one's lip, and Trish I am sure is well practised in

this, as I stand back with the occasional 'suggestion'.

Whilst the plan was for a heather lawn, and using tree heathers and grasses as a backing, the rest 'came together' on the previous Friday, when we built the stand on the nursery. Unfortunately with the season being about two weeks behind this year, and the show being one week earlier, blossom was not so plentiful, especially on *Daboecia* which we tend to rely on. However *Erica cinerea* and *E. tetralix* cultivars managed to save the day to a degree. It is only close to the show that the decision can be made as to what plants are looking their best and can be displayed.

Modern technology came into being as Trish photographed the forerunner at the nursery on her ipad and even drew every pot on a diagram so that it could be replicated in the show marquee.

Sam suggested log roll as an edging and we then discovered the 'national shortage' as we hunted for this product, eventually found in different heights at a local garden centre. This edging gave a good effect and blended well with the heathers.

The final show display was put together by Trish who went to great efforts to ensure every plant on the stand was perfect; no dead bits, flower looking its best and every pot either hidden by another, or top-dressed with bark to hide it.

Whilst we always plan for a good display we also try to get the message conveyed that heathers have a multitude of uses - in gravel, pots, beds, topiary, hedging etc. etc. The lawn may have been a step too far but it gained a lot of attention and questions and whilst it proved that it could be done, its practical use and installation may be questionable.

We were fortunate to get some TV coverage and also an interview with Gardeners World. Hopefully the result will be to draw the public's attention to the Society and popularise 'our plant'.

One customer told of the sorry situation with the 9cm *Daboecia* that she had bought the year previously. She explained that the branches were now looking very bare, apart from some young growth at the tips. She had watered and cared for it well, she said earnestly, as she described its position on the sideboard!!

Again my thanks to all those members who supported and who gave of their time to man the stand.

Society news & events

Annual Gatherings Past & Future

They came, they saw, they got wet!!

Owing to circumstances beyond my control, the four days that members collected in Leenane, Co. Galway, Ireland, proved to be the wettest in Connemara since records began. In my own rain gauge I

recorded almost **10 inches** of rain, beginning on Thursday 10 September and finishing Monday 14 September.

But everybody put a cheery face on and braved the elements. All had heeded my warnings concerning appropriate dress for the occasion, i.e. a good raincoat, wellies and an umbrella. Then the midges came! We managed all of our visits and had three very informative talks together with a theatrical experience.

The Gathering for **2016** will take place in Scotland. The venue is Perth and the hotel is The Royal George in the centre of the city. The dates are 9 – 12 September 2016. The cost will be about £290. All the details are in the brochure available at [Perth brochure](#).

We hope to have visits to The Riverside Development and Glendoick on Saturday, as well as Perthshire Heathers nursery. On Sunday, after the Annual General Meeting, we shall visit Drummond Castle. The full programme will be published in February in the Spring 2016 *Bulletin*.

Now is the time to fill in the form on the flyer to reserve your place for our visit to Perth. Please send your completed form and booking fee (£5 per person) to The Administrator (address on inside back cover). Bear in mind that spaces are likely to be taken very quickly and you would not want to miss out on the opportunity of attending our annual gathering.

Susie Kay

Society's business

Phil Joyner
Hon. Secretary

Annual General Meeting 2015*

The Annual General Meeting of The Heather Society was held on Sunday morning, 13 September 2015, at The Leenane Hotel in Connemara, Co. Galway, Ireland, during the weekend of the Annual Gathering. The Chairman, David Edge, welcomed the attending members. He went on to say that the issue of most importance to the Society continues to be that of falling membership numbers.

The Chairman described an effort to gain new members by the Society having yet another presence 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 Gilt Medal. However, the revised website is now up and running, under the direction of Council Member Dave Brown, with an on-line facility for the payment of membership fees, so perhaps more members will be gained via that route. David Edge concluded by thanking Susie and Alan Kay for organising the Conference, and the Council members and the Administrator for their hard work.

The presentation of the draft 2014 Annual Report and Accounts by the Hon. Secretary, Phil Joyner, and the Hon. Treasurer, Richard Canovan,

resulted in two questions from the floor each of which was answered appropriately. Amendments to two clauses within the rules were passed: 1) to allow for subscription payments to be made on dates other than 1 January and 2) to allow the Administrator to become a Council Member. The meeting agreed to the recommendation by Council of the appointments of Prof. John Griffiths as President and Daphne Everett, Pamela Lee, Alice Knight, Kurt Kramer as Vice-Presidents as well as, *ex officio*, President of NAHS.

The Chairman, Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer, David Edge, Phil Joyner and Richard Canovan respectively, accepted nomination for a further year. Phil Joyner and Susie Kay were re-elected to Council under the three-year rule. John Hall, who had been co-opted to Council since the previous AGM, was also elected to Council. Ian Duncan Grant has retired from Council.

Finally, the Conference Organiser, Susie Kay, announced that the 2016 Conference would be held in Perth, Scotland, 9–12 September with the Annual General Meeting being held sometime during that same weekend.

(*The 2015 AGM minutes are available on the Members Only area of the website.)

A request to help at the 2016

RHS Hampton Court Flower Show

The Heather Society has put on a display, with a sales stand, for the last

three years at the RHS Hampton Court Flower Show within the Floral Marquee. The display has been designed and erected by the Society's Chairman, David Edge, and his nursery staff and manned with the support of David, his staff and a handful of members – mainly council members.

The Society has applied to put up a stand at the 2016 RHS Hampton Court Flower Show, for display during the period 5–10 July. In order to run the stand and give a break to those members manning the stand a minimum of three persons is 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. Could 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. The manning of the stand involves selling heather plants and chatting to members of the public about growing heathers. Don't be put off if you think your knowledge is limited, as you have your own experiences to relate. The opening times, to the public, are 10:00am 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 elsewhere in this Bulletin. Please indicate which day(s) you would be able to attend.

Phil Joyner
Hon. Secretary

Tippitiwitchet Log Charles Nelson

New members

We welcome the following members who have joined since **July 2015**

Alastair J. Bonar, Godalming
Diane Findlayson, Warlingham
Noriko MacIntyre, Weybridge
Karen Robbirt, Woking

2016 yearbook, *Heathers* 13

Contributions in the form of articles, long or short, for next year's yearbook, *Heathers* 13, will be most welcome. Submission deadline is extended to 30 November.

2016 subscriptions

The annual subscription rate is as in 2015: £20 for UK residents and £25 for elsewhere. Members who pay by standing order (UK) or who have joined through PayPal need not take any action.

Subscription reminders are being sent to members whose current subscription lapses at the end of 2015.

... and finally

It has been a peculiar year in the garden: we had winter-flowering plants including Christmas roses and *Clematis cirrhosa* in bloom in July! Now, the *Erica manipuliflora* are delightful; both the long swaying stems of 'Bert Jones' and the very stiff, stubby stems of an as yet unnamed plant from Crete are covered with honey-scented blossom. *E. erigena* 'Golden Jubilee' struggled in the summer heat but has a new flush of foliage. Meanwhile, the swallows have flown south, the geese have arrived from the Arctic, conkers are glossy on the footpath, and everywhere there are dyed heathers. Like pumpkins and bonfires, they have become part-and-parcel of autumn.

Group News

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

Home Counties Group

A pleasant, warm autumn morning greeted arrivals for the Sunday 27 September event at RHS Wisley. It was good to see so many familiar faces as we gathered outside the cafe. Two (then) non-members, Alastair Bonar and his wife, swelled the party. John

Hall had already prepared with his stall at the Hillside Centre. Would his offer of heathers entice new members?

We were led by Andy Collins to the National Collection. On arrival at Howard's Field we were joined by two more guests, Blair and Noriko Macintyre. Andy outlined a brief history of the collection and told us about the problems caused by local wildlife, such as rabbits nibbling away at young heather shoots. Alastair had brought his copy of the Proudleys' *Heathers in colour*. Walking around the beds it was good to be reminded of the heathers that were grown in the early 1970s but rarely see nowadays, except in the National Collection.

After lunch we gathered up at the Hillside Centre. I demonstrated three batches of seed sowing. Seed from *Erica mammosa* (yellow form) was first soaked in the proprietary smoke solution, obtainable from Kirstenbosch as filters. The seed was transferred to a coffee filter before drying and then silver sand was added to give an even sowing on to the compost. The compost was a mix of Arthur Bowers ericaceous compost, horticultural grit, silver sand, Cornish grit and perlite. This was soaked before sowing. Following sowing, the seed was covered with a sieved mix of these ingredients. To discourage the growth of liverwort it was suggested to spray the surface of the compost with Mogeton® following sowing.

Two more trays of seed were sown *Calluna vulgaris* seed from heathland in Scotland, and *Erica terminalis* (from 'Thelma Woolner'), though not using the smoke solution. All the while Phil Joyner kindly video-ed the event.

After a few questions, a quiz was held. One of the five questions was "Which letter of the alphabet is not featured as the first letter of any South African species of *Erica*?" (For the answer see p. 12). Two entries had the correct answer. There were four winners who successfully answered four of the five questions. The trays of seed were shared among the winners. I showed a few slides of heathers at Wisley, The Heather Society field trip to Galicia, the Society's stand at RHS Hampton Court show, South African ericas, and rooted cuttings and seed propagation.

John's offer of a selection of heathers to anyone who joined the Society was taken up by Noriko and by Alastair. Altogether around 15 members and guests attended, whilst a number of visitors to RHS Wisley popped into the Hillside Centre to buy plants from John Hall's stand.

Barry Sellers

Yorkshire Group

The final meeting of the year took place on Saturday 26 September, at RHS Harlow Carr. We only had three meetings this year, in March and September, plus a visit to the Himalayan Garden in June. This was due to the secretary concentrating on

visits to the local hospital rather than organizing heather visits. Fortunately these have ended and as attendees at the annual gathering will confirm I am now fit and well.

I have agreed to organize four meetings in 2016, in March and May, at RHS Harlow Carr, depending on room availability, and a couple of visits, one to the Himalayan Garden at Harewood House and the other to Rose Cottage. We still only have six members but live in the hope that someone will join us one day.

On Saturday, we discussed the Annual Gathering and brought President John and Valerie up to date with information about it, and how enjoyable it was. They had been unable to attend, indeed John was in pain and suffering with back problems, no doubt due to too much gardening. It was lovely to see David Plumridge's photographs, which are excellent – especially the ones taken in sunshine.

RHS Harlow Carr looks excellent as usual. The winter heathers look particularly good, even though not in flower. Regrettably the heathers here are not pruned as regularly as Society members would wish. When fitter I did this as a volunteer. The winter heathers cope with the lack of pruning better than the summer ones, which I find get leggy. Consequently they tend to be treated as "annuals" and, having been planted, stay in a bed for approximately three years, then it is cleared and replaced. This may be

because manpower is required for pruning at the busiest time of the year, but I suspect there is regular need for change to encourage visitors to return. Also the soil is neutral pH clay so does not grow *Calluna* to their best advantage. It will not grow *Erica cinerea* or *Daboecia* at all. I have tried in the past, and was firmly told by Geoffrey Smith: "Lass, if I cannot grow them, you never will!"

Jean Preston

North East Group

Summer! What Summer? Up here in the Heather Society's far-flung outpost we started off with what we hoped looked promising, but it quickly all went pear-shaped and, whilst we had some lovely sunny days they were spoilt with a very cold north-east wind coming off the North Sea. This was followed by a wet and windy spell, or as the Met. Office say - 'changeable'. Whatever! It's not been good, but the heathers seemed to like it as they have thrived and we've had a really good colourful show.

It was the Annual Flower Show at Ponteland on Saturday, September 12 but, unfortunately, neither Geoff or I are able to compete any more, and, at the time of writing this, I have had no feedback as to how many exhibits there were in the Heather classes. I just hope there were enough to keep the Heather class alive, as there is a danger that it could be axed. If only the gardening programmes on

television would introduce and promote these wonderful plants.

Sadly, I have to report the death of one of our stalwart members, Dorothy Wild, who was ninety four. For many years she was on the committee of the North East Group and she could always be relied on to put several entries into the Heather classes at the Ponteland Flower Show. Her prowess was buttonholes and she always carried off the 1st prize in this section. She will be sadly missed.

Dorothy Warner



Dorothy Wild

Dorothy Wild, a long-time member of the Society, sadly passed away in June this year. She joined The Heather Society in November 1979 and was a very keen member of our local group, attending trips and events as well as being a regular exhibitor at the shows. She was a remarkably energetic lady – a traveller, when trips abroad were unusual, a keen walker, hiking in the Himalayas in her early eighties, an accomplished musician, still playing in an orchestra in her nineties – and driving her car. She was a dedicated and active church member, but above all an extremely generous benefactor to several charities. She packed so much into her 94 years.

David Plumridge

Daboecia National Collection® at Holehird Gardens Brenda Leese

Holehird Gardens near Windermere in the English Lake District has nine heather beds of varying shape and size. Two of the largest are the summer heather beds which occupy a prominent position above the meadow and give a magnificent colourful display in September/October. Following The Heather Society's visit to the gardens as part of its Annual Gathering in 2011 it was suggested that we should consider establishing a National Collection of *Daboecia* at Holehird. I jumped at the chance to build on the smaller number of *Daboecia* plants which were mixed in with the larger numbers of *Erica* and *Calluna* in the summer beds. I was therefore delighted to receive a letter in December 2014 from Plant Heritage saying that our collection had been awarded full status as a National Collection® and that I was the Collection Holder. So what happened between 2011 and 2014 to achieve this?

Firstly we had to increase our numbers of *Daboecia* taxa and this was achieved by buying in new and missing cultivars from the specialist nurseries. Currently we have 52 taxa and hope to increase this number as new ones come into production. Plant

Heritage has revised the rules for National Collections: initially we had to have 75% of the taxa listed in the *Plant finder*, so were delighted, if a bit puzzled, when the numbers of taxa in the *Plant finder* of 2014 was far fewer than those in the 2013 edition. We had achieved our 75% at a stroke! The rules are now different and a reasonable number of taxa, agreed with Plant Heritage, are required.

Each taxon has to have three plant specimens though we are aiming for five where possible to account for losses. Each one has to be labelled and numbered. Holehird is well known for its excellent labels so this was no problem. However, each individual plant had also to be labelled and numbered. I devised a simple numbering system ranging from 001 to 052 with the individual plants numbered 001a, 001b, etc. Since we already had the metal labels for each taxon, the assigned number on a plastic tab has been stuck to the back. Labelling each plant was more of a problem and is still underway. If each individual plant (there are at least 156 in the summer beds) had a visible label the appearance of the beds would be spoilt: Holehird is, after all, a show garden. So, we are using standard white plastic garden labels in a small plastic bag, and burying them next to the plants! It remains to be seen how long these will last, but they will be dug up from time to time to check.

I am also compiling a database, with photographs and description, of each cultivar, but this is in the early stages. However, the herbarium of pressed flowers is going well and it is pleasing to report that most of the flowers retain their colour after pressing. Finally, we have had some small success with propagation. Those cuttings that survived to potting on are doing well and we hope to have some available for sale in due course. During the winter 2014–2015, many of the *Daboecia* plants gave us understandable concern as they appeared to be completely dead! However, after many anxious weeks, most of them have recovered and appear to be doing well.

The National Collection has added a new and welcome element to caring for the heather beds at Holehird. It is also generating interest from visitors to the garden and can only help in the wider promotion of heathers as colourful and useful garden plants.

The unpredictable heather Brita Johansson

Is there any species which has more variations than *Calluna vulgaris*? And has been used in so many ways? It is indeed a remarkable plant.

A heather lover is familiar with the great number of cultivars of *Calluna* as well as of other heather species. Seedlings and sports pop up in our

gardens, some of them find their way to the market. But apart from such happenings to normal plants, strange things happen both in seedling beds and in potted plants. They may happen in the garden too but deviations are easier to discover in plants which are under close observation.

My friend Börje Sörensson sows big boxes of *Calluna* seeds every year. A couple of years ago he started sowing *Erica tetralix* and *E. vagans* too. I am specially pleased that he works with *E. tetralix* as no one has done any work on this species. The seedlings show great variation. Time will tell.

The cover of *Heathers* 9 (2012) shows some of Börje's seedlings from 'Velvet Fascination'. The big box was filled by small plants looking like a forest of mini-spruces, in red and yellow, but not a single grey one, despite the fact that the seeds came from a hairy plant. I have the same experience from my own seedbeds. Hairiness is obviously not readily passed on to the next generation.

Still stranger, however, is that, in a whole box of seedlings from *Calluna* 'Peggy' all the plants have very small leaves, some so extremely tiny that I needed a lens to discern the leaves. 'Peggy' is a golden, unusually coarse plant. The seedlings were a mix of green and golden. Some of these plants have spent the winter in my garden and survived. One of the green plants now has buds. I will be curious to see if the flowers will be normal or

very small.

Handy guide says that the lovely *Erica x williamsii* 'Gold Button' has lilac flowers but the only time I have seen any flowers on this plant, the flowers were white. On the other hand, my two plants of Kurt Kramer's white bud-bloomer *Calluna* 'Melanie' had pale lilac flowers. I got new plants but they had also lilac flowers. And imagine my surprise when recently I discovered on a small plant of *Erica tetralix* 'Pink Star' a white flower. FILLED – double! It came out from the side of a shoot, not from the top, quite similar to a flower of *Calluna* 'Kinlochruel'. I could hardly believe my eyes.

I have been growing *Erica x williamsii* 'Ken Wilson' for years and rooted many cuttings. It is known to lack the usual coloured spring tips which occur in hybrids and I have never seen any. Until this spring! When I opened one of my cold frames in May, I looked with amazement on six young plants of 'Ken Wilson' which had the most striking clear yellow tips, very beautiful. And the colour lasted for a long time. What's the next?

Calluna 'Judy Wiksten'

Brita Johansson has registered the name 'Judy Wiksten' for a newly selected seedling *Calluna*: reg. number C.2015:08. Heliotrope (H12) single flowers, September and October in

Sweden, with bright yellow foliage all the year. An upright, bushy plant, to 30cm tall, 30cm across in four year. A selection from open-pollinated, mixed seed, raised by Sten-Börje Sörensson, Hönö. "Judy loved heather and she loved Sweden. She deserves to be commemorated by a beautiful Swedish plant."

Trials and tribulations

Richard Canovan

After an exchange with some heather friends back in the spring about *Erica erigena* 'Irish Silver' I looked back to see if I had any record of my acquisitions. It brought back how I started as a novice as regards heather horticulture but with an academic interest in heaths. Both were evident in how I selected the best heaths and heathers for my purposes. Having little experience, I drew on the results of the Harlow Carr Trials report and supplement. My visits to gardens and pictures in magazines and books built on this very useful information. Good new cultivars were being added. At that same time, in late 1982, Denbeigh Heather Nurseries launched an invaluable draft Heather Society Cultivar Enquiry Service, a precursor to the *Handy guide*.

The first observation has to be the number of nurserymen (89), not just in the UK, but a few in Ireland, continental Europe, USA and Canada.

How times change! But I also note that very few nurseries offered my choices, often only three or fewer, suggesting that the Harlow Carr results had not been as influential on nurserymen or the market more generally as may have been expected from the effort put in and the quality of the report. Only one offered 'Irish Silver', where I got a single plant (the other given me by Diane Jones, Otter's Court). The same was true for another *E. erigena* 'Glaucia' and *Erica tetralix* 'Hailstones'. These and other cultivars I acquired, some for friends, all fulfilled their expectations or bettered them, supporting the trials. Most are still going strong!

I then open my summer *Bulletin* and read the great news: John Hall's article on the AGM trial that he has organised with the RHS. There have been others such as Boskoop, which largely supported Harlow Carr for the older *Erica carnea* cultivars. There have also, of course, been various RHS assessments over the years for the highest Award of Merit and First Class Certificate. It will be useful if these are drawn into the report on the results such that really good oldies and better new varieties are identified. When I looked at the list, however, it felt more like a commercial promotion than a trial. To take one example, if this really was a trial then it would be essential to compare *E. × darleyensis* 'Winter Treasure' with 'Irish Treasure' as well as 'Phoebe'. Also my reaction was that

such cultivars as *E. erigena* 'Maxima' must be included.

To take up our Chairman's piece in the same *Bulletin*, on where the market is going, that requires impartial information for the customer. Because of the dramatic reduction in suppliers in the last 30 years and the job they have with getting garden centres to understand the qualities and requirements of heaths and heathers, the market needs to be better informed. Also on Lizzie Judson's "supermarket rant" I can add my own after I went to the Wyevale Garden Centre in Hungerford in July for seed trays with tight lids for propagating some cuttings, to find they only sell them in the winter. The market is not competitive enough: a glance at their Chairman's statement in Trellis Capital Limited's 2013 report reveals that one of their three pillars of growth remained sector consolidation (after several re-brandings, they became part of the Terra Firma Capital Partners III L. P. private equity group, then rebranded again last year as Wyevale Garden Centres Capital Ltd). One result is the same offer everywhere regardless of local conditions. This business model is clearly flawed.

One of the 1983 nurseries, Barncroft, near Stoke, offered two lists, a green label list of generally available cultivars and a white list of those not routinely propagated but which could be for orders of 10 or more plants. The latter included many good plants from

the trials. Selling directly to the public is another way to get good heathers available. At a recent event at Wisley, John had the idea of a potting mix and cutting material for kids to propagate. If peat disappears from the retail trade a commercial cutting propagation service may be a proposition for members. Hopefully the messages from John's RHS trials will be taken up better than those from Harlow Carr – then the effort put into Hampton Court will bear fruit and our Chairman's optimism will be fulfilled.

Future change to the post of Administrator

Council wishes to inform members that Charles Nelson has given notice of his intention to retire after the 2016 AGM from the post of Administrator, in which he has worked tirelessly since 2006. We are fortunate that at the recent Gathering in Connemara, Allison Fitz-Earle offered to take on the post and Council has since gratefully accepted her offer. Charles, meanwhile, will be co-opted to Council at the October 2015 meeting and Council is grateful that he has offered to remain honorary editor of the yearbook and registrar for the foreseeable future.

Phil Joyner
Hon. Secretary

Answer to the question on p. 6 — Y.

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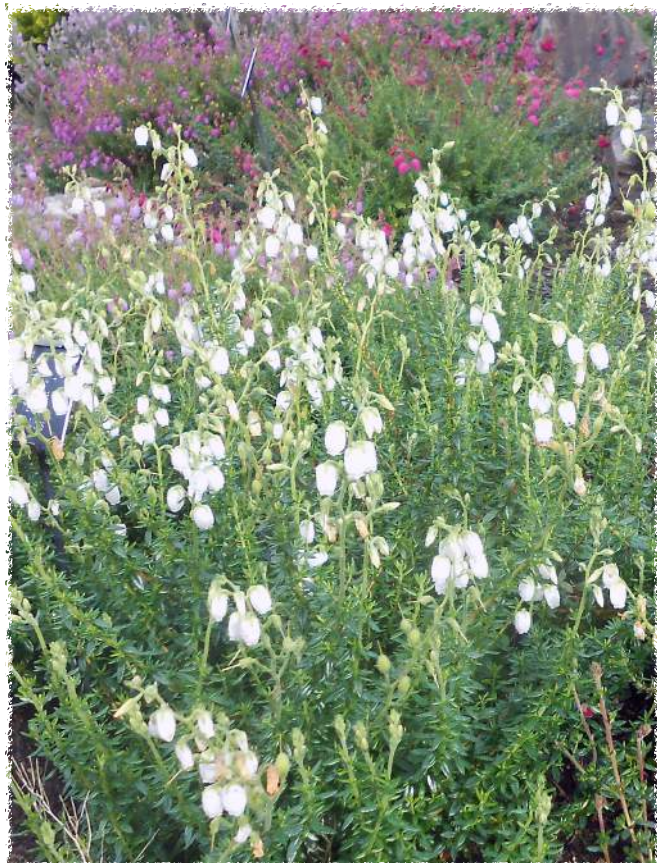
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Front [from top] A TV celebrity visiting the Heather Society stand at the RHS Hampton Court Palace Show: see p. 1 (Phil Joyner); *Daboecia* at Holehird (Brenda Leese); *Calluna vulgaris* 'Judy Wiksten' in Sweden: see pp 10–11 (Sten-Börje Sörensson).

Back: [upper left] *Daboecia* 'David Moss' at Holehird (Brenda Leese); "What? It's not raining!": members enjoying heathers on Roundstone Bog, Connemara, during the 2015 Annual Gathering (John Plowman).



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