







A Registered Charity No. 261407

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Cover illustration *Calluna vulgaris* by Brita Johannson

I am sure that many members remember the winter of 1962/63 - when the snow arrived just after Christmas and stayed until March, or even later. So the fact that, on 20th February 1963, about fifty people braved the weather to attend the inaugural meeting of The Heather Society, was quite an achievement. Our first President, Fred J Chapple, (whose heather is still popular today) travelled all the way from his home in the Isle of Man for the event. Our present President, David Small, (the 5th in line) has written a foreword to commemorate this historic milestone.

40th Anniversary of The Heather Society

David Small - President

Much has happened in the heather world since those early beginnings in 1963 when some of the famous names in heather history met to form the Society. At that meeting were Fred J Chapple, Sir John Charrington, P S Patrick, D F Maxwell and Constance Macleod to name a few. Their aim was to form a Society where like-minded people could meet and share experiences in heather gardening.

So what are some of the landmarks we have achieved in those forty years.

20 February 1963 Inaugural meeting in London to form the Society in answer to a letter from Sir John Charrington in the *RHS Journal*.

25 September 1963 First General Meeting with Fred J Chapple as President and Sir John Charrington as Chairman.

1963 First *Yearbook of The Heather Society* - edited by P S Patrick.

1964 First heather display at a RHS Fortnightly Show.

1965 Formation of Local Groups

1967 The *Bulletin* is created to provide topical information - edited by

Constance MacLeod

1968 First Field Trip to see heathers in the wild in western Ireland.

1970 The *Heather Society* appointed as International Cultivar Registration Authority.

1970 First *Pocket Guide to Heather Gardening* - by Geoffrey Yates.

1971-75 Harlow Carr Heather Trials

1972 First Weekend Conference.

1977 First attempts at 'man-made' hybridisation by Anne Parris, a member of the Society.

1977-84 First Administrator - Ken Farrah
 1992 First *Handy Guide to Heathers* - by David & Anne Small.
 1999 First Field Trip to South Africa.
 2000 First publication of the *International Register of Heather Names*.
 2000 First of the Booklet Series is published. (With so many older experienced members it was decided we should split our publications into three categories. The *Yearbook* should cater for 'learned' articles, the *Bulletin* on topical information and the Booklet Series would concentrate in providing information for newcomers to the world of heathers).

2003 Field trips to the Azores and South Africa.

We have seven members who joined in the inaugural year and are still members to this day. I think they deserve a mention: H. C. Delves, H. L. Nicholson (a Council member for many years), Mrs. D. Prance, J. N. Rayner, T. L. Underhill (the well-known author and TV presenter), G. Williams and G. Yates (author of the *Pocket Guide* series).

Much has been learned in those forty years but there is still much more to learn and as technology becomes more accessible to small societies like ours I'm sure we will learn at an ever-increasing rate.

2003 Annual Gathering of the Heather Society

32nd Annual Conference of the Heather Society,

5th - 8th Sept, 2003. The Ramada Jarvis, Chester

Programme

Friday, 5th September

4.00pm Registration and afternoon tea.

6.15pm Bar open.

7.00pm Dinner.

8.30pm Conference opened by our Chairman, Arnold Stow, followed by a talk from a former Curator of the Ness Botanic Gardens, Peter Cunningham. Peter will not be talking on Ness as he feels that the subject of Ness will be well covered on the Saturday. However he will be talking on a topic closely allied with our interests and the title of his talk will be "Ericaceae - A Family Affair".

9.30pm Bar open.

Saturday, 6th September

8.00am Breakfast.

9.15am The AGM.

10.15am Coffee

10.45am Leave by coach for Ness Botanic Gardens, the gardens of the University of Liverpool situated on the Wirral. The gardens and associated facilities cover 62 acres and are of international repute. As well as containing heathers the gardens are of interest in all seasons. Although the gardens are open to the public the gardens are involved in research, conservation and public education.

- 11.15am Arrive Ness to be greeted by Ken Hulme, a former Director of the gardens. Ken will give a presentation on the gardens. A guided tour of some of the features of the garden will then follow the presentation.
- 1.30pm A picnic lunch will be provided by the hotel.
- 2.30pm Wander at leisure in the gardens.
- 3.30pm Afternoon tea in the refreshment facilities in the gardens.
- 4.45pm Leave Ness for the Ramada Jarvis.
- 6.15pm Bar open.
- 7.00pm Dinner.
- 8.30pm Open Forum, your chance to ask any questions on Heathers, and *The Heather Society*.

9.30pm Bar open.

Sunday, 7th September

- 8.00am Breakfast.
- 9.15am Talk by Prof. John Griffiths 'What's Happening in Heather Hybridisation?'
- 10.15am Coffee
- 10.45am Leave by coach for Okells Nursery at Duddon Heath near Tarporley. Okells Nursery is a specialist wholesale heather nursery with a retail garden centre outlet.
- 11.15am Arrive at Okells Nursery where we will be given an introductory talk on the nursery and then shown around the nursery.
- 1.30pm A picnic lunch will be provided by the hotel.
- 2.30pm A garden visit (several gardens are currently being evaluated as to their suitability for a visit).
- 3.30pm Afternoon tea.
- 4.45pm Leave the garden and return to the Ramada Jarvis.
- 6.15pm Bar open.
- 7.00pm Dinner.
- 8.30pm Open Forum, another chance for everyone to join in and solve other members' problems.
- 9.30pm Conference closed by our Chairman.
- 9.35pm Bar open.

Monday, 8th September

- 8.00am Breakfast.
- 9.30am Depart the Ramada Jarvis.

The times in the above programme will be subject to amendment and the timing of the group photograph will be announced during the Conference.

Cost of the Conference

Residents for the whole weekend.	£213
Residents leaving Sunday afternoon	£169
Residents leaving after Sunday dinner	£188
Non-residents, Friday evening	£31
Saturday, all day	£57
Sunday, all day	£57

For non-residents the Friday evening includes afternoon tea and dinner. The Saturday and Sunday includes the lectures, visits, lunch and dinner.

Accommodation, dining and lecture facilities have been arranged at the Ramada Jarvis hotel. The hotel has an indoor pool, a sauna, a solarium and a garden. The hotel is in Christleton on the outskirts of Chester within easy reach from junction 12 of the M53 and the nearest railway station is in Chester. Chester boasts a wealth of Roman history and medieval architecture and is well worth the visit. The Welsh Borders, Central and North Wales are within easy reach and the area is full of attractions so why not have a holiday in the area around that weekend. Please note that the AGM will be held on the Saturday morning and there are two Open Forum sessions one on each of the Saturday and Sunday evenings. Delegates may wish to prepare questions before the Open Forums and if so then Phil Joyner will be pleased to collect those questions during, or prior to, the gathering. This gathering is the opportunity to meet old friends and make new ones and there will be plenty of time to relax and discuss our favourite subject.

Bookings may now be made by sending £2 (per mailing) to: Phil Joyner, 84 Kinross Road, Rushington Manor, Totton, Southampton SO40 9BN

Cheques should be made payable to *The Heather Society*, the booking fee is non-returnable and not a deposit on the cost of the Conference. Please note that the latest date for full payment is the **7th July, 2003**. Members are reminded that payment by VISA or MASTERCARD credit cards is acceptable. The accommodation is limited to 14 single rooms and 12 twin/double rooms. If all the booked rooms are taken then there may be the possibility of booking more rooms otherwise subsequent bookings will be accepted as day visitors and those persons will be asked to arrange their own bed and breakfast accommodation. In this case a telephone number for the area's Tourist Information Office will be provided to aid bed and breakfast enquires. A cost per night for the use of the hotel around the Conference weekend may be obtained from Phil Joyner who will be pleased to answer any queries relating to the 2003 Conference by telephone or e-mail (Tel: 023 8086 4336 evenings and weekends, E-mail: pjoyner@supanet.com).

International Conference 2004

The International Conference will be held at the Hilton Hotel Coylumbidge, near Aviemore from August 20th 2004.

Set in the magnificent surroundings of the Spey Valley this will be a gathering not to be missed. We shall visit the Cherrybank Gardens in Perth to see the Scottish National Heather Collection and also The Spey Valley Heather and Heritage Centre nestling in the shadow of the Cairngorm Mountains where the owner David Lambie will later take us for a guided tour onto the moors.

We shall enjoy a Highland Banquet complete with Piper and whilst the full itinerary is obviously not yet finalised, there should be opportunities for a visit to a whisky distillery and also a glassworks, apart from time to spend in Pitlochry to view the famous dam and see the salmon fish ladder and the tempting shopping opportunities!

Erica Quest - South Africa 10-26 October, 2003

We are planning another Heather Society trip to see the fabulous flora of the western Cape in October. We have made the itinerary as flexible as possible so that it includes something for everyone irrespective of whether you have been to South Africa before. The programme is likely to be as follows but on most days it will be possible to 'do your own thing'.

10 October: Fly to Cape Town.

11 October: Arrive in Cape Town and transfer to Monkey Valley Resort, Noordhoek. This luxury resort is situated amidst one of Cape Town's oldest Milkwood forests, directly below Chapman's Peak Drive, overlooking the stunning 8km long, white, sandy beach of Noordhoek. (Accommodation for 3 nights) (www.monkeyvalleyresort.com)

12-13 October: Visiting *Erica* sites in the Cape Peninsula, (e.g. Table mountain, Kirstenbosch, Cape Point,) nurseries and penguin colony etc.; approximately 100 *Erica* species in the Peninsula, many flowering at this time. Recommended walk to Constantiaberg, Noordhoek Peak and Muizenberg Mountains in the Silvermine Reserve. (*E. urna-viridis*, *E. pyxidiflora* (Peninsula endemics); *E. depressa*, *E. heliacaba*, *E. nevillei* etc.)

14 October: Early transfer to the Beach House Hotel at Kleinmond, overlooking the lagoon. (accommodation for 2 nights) (www.thebeachhouse.co.za) Visit Fairy Glen (low altitude path) and The Three Sisters Peak (*E. pillansii* – possibly late for flowers) for the very fit (*E. fervida*, *E. sitiens* etc.)

15 October: Visit nearby Kogelberg area; Kogelberg Trail (full trail 24 km) for the fit; Harold Porter Reserve and/or easy walk in Kogelberg or relax in Kleinmond.

16 October: Transfer to Auberge Burgandy Hotel in Hermanus, near the old harbour and market square. (2 nights) (www.auberge.co.za) Visit Fernkloof and Waterways Nursery; Babilionstoring Shaws Pass (*E. dulcis*) for the very fit.

17 Oct Thys de Villiers farm (see *Yearbook of The Heather Society* 2000: 4) for endemic species such as *E. shannonea*, *E. oligantha* etc..

18 Oct Early transfer to Klippe Rivier Country House in Swellendam (2 nights) (www.klipperivier.com) Visit Bontebok Park for *E. filamentosa* and *E. prolata*; Stormsvlei area for *E. pezziza*.

19 Oct Garcia's Pass for *E. ixanthera* (for those fit enough); Marloth Nature Reserve

20 Oct Transfer to The Greyton Lodge, Greyton for 2 nights. (www.greytonlodge.com) Meeting with Fritz Volk (producer of *Erica* identification CD); walk to see *E. ovina*.

21 Oct Lower slopes of Riviersonderend in Genaadendal / Greyton offer relatively easy walking – *E. perlata*, *E. pannosa* etc

22 Oct Transfer to Belmont Hotel in Ceres. (2 nights) (www.belmonthotel.co.za)

22-23 Oct Bokberg in Kouebokkeveld for *E. thunbergii*, *E. virginalis*, *E. bokkeveldia* etc; Skurweberg Pass (turn-off at top of Gydo Pass into Upper Olifants valley - 1200 metres reached by bus with easy access to some 30 species including *E. abietina*, *E. inflata*, *E. denticulata*, *E. totta* etc); base of Matroosberg for *E. maderi*, *E. cerets*, *E. arachnocalyx*.

24 Oct Travel via Bainskloof (*E. abienta* subsp *aurantiaca*) and Franschhoek Pass (*E. ventricosa*) en route to Alphen Hotel in Constantia (1 night) (www.alphen.co.za), a national monument and one of the most elegant of the old Cape wine estates.

25 Oct Visit Cape Town / Kirstenbosch before transfer to Airport for departure.

As this trip is open to all members of the Society, the trip has been costed from Cape Town to Cape Town, flights being separate. We are offering two levels of accommodation, generally the differences are sea-facing vs. garden or mountain-facing or shower vs. bath plus shower. The trip is costed in South African Rand and so the following prices are approximate. The actual rate of exchange to be used will be that offered by the bank at the time of payment.

- Standard accommodation in twin-sharing or double rooms - £1700 per person

- Standard accommodation in a single room - £1970

- Superior / deluxe accommodation for twin / double sharing - £1825 per person

- Superior / deluxe accommodation in a single room - £2160

The price includes accommodation, breakfast, packed lunches, portage, entrance fees etc. together with our guide Ross Turner. It does not include the evening meal. These will be charged to your room and you will be expected to settle your account before we leave the hotel.

Payment will be made in three instalments:

15 March: £170 per person (twin share), £250 (single), £185 per person (luxury

double/twin) (This payment will be non-refundable should you change your mind).

15 June: £115 per person (twin share), £170 (single), £145 per person (luxury twin/double).

15 August: The remainder.

Anyone interested should contact David Small - email: heathers@zetnet.co.uk or telephone/fax 01449 711220 as soon as possible.

From the 1972 Yearbook

A Blossom there Blows that Scoffs at the Snows

Donald Grabbie, Eddlestone, Peebleshire, Scotland

We were looking for wading birds but found instead Snow Buntings and [a plant similar to] *Calluna vulgaris* 'Hirsuta Typica'. It was on the Morayshire coast that we came across this beautiful heather on the north edge of a large Forestry Commission plantation, growing in nearly full shade, in large clumps, under scattered Scots pines. The lovely grey foliage presumably evolved over hundreds of years to counteract the exceptional dry and exposed conditions of sand dunes. It seemed to have adapted itself to its new shady and sheltered situation without difficulty, and was thriving and still flowering in mid-October.

C.v. 'Hirsuta Typica' is one of my favourite foliage heathers. Once beyond its early youth it grows well with me and is a delight throughout the year even in flower, unlike many of the foliage varieties. I can admire the coppery foliage of *C.v. 'Cuprea'* from my bedroom window with the contrasting '*Hirsuta Typica*' behind, and the bright green of *E. carnea* '*Springwood White*' in front. One morning I noticed '*Cuprea*' had lost its charm. Without waiting to finish my dressing I rushed barefoot across the damp grass expecting to discover some calamity had struck down my plants. In fact the flowers had merely opened - and spoilt the whole effect!

You may have difficulty in following my train of thought, but this brings me to the question of pruning. Nowadays one is often told to prune annually; this, I believe, is too sweeping advice. Roe deer got me thinking about pruning some years ago. I had two trial plants of *C.v. 'Orange Queen'* for which I had high hopes. One was pruned fairly hard by roe, the other was untouched. The next summer the first grew away slowly, was uninteresting and did not flower; the other was quite a good orange, grew well and flowered. The following summer the pruned plant grew dense and upright, became bright yellow with a green tinge, and still did not flower. The other grew lax and wide, the foliage was dull green with a slight yellow tinge, and it flowered well. At this stage I do not believe even an expert could have told they were the same cultivar; habit, foliage and flowering were so different.

This taught me to prune most ('*Hirsuta Typica*' is an exception) of my foliage heathers annually and lightly because this reduces the flowers and also usually seems to help the colouring of the foliage. Heather grown for their flowers may, or may not, flower better when pruned in my garden. This year I pruned *C.v. 'Alportii'*, but I missed some. Those unpruned flowered very much better than the pruned plants. Strong growers like *C.v. 'H. E. Beale'* if pruned annually when young certainly produce magnificent long spikes for cutting, but I am not sure for how many years they will keep it up.

I do not usually prune *carneas* but I did prune one patch of '*Springwood White*' last May. In early October we had 14 degrees of frost and a lot of new shoots were browned, but unpruned plants were untouched and in fact no other heath was damaged.

What happens in the wild? The day before we found "*Hirsuta Typica*" my wife and I walked to the top of the Lairig Ghru Pass in the Cairngorms, the 4,000 ft range of hills in the Central Highlands. Once above the trees the heather grows evenly as it does on most hillsides, below the tree line the character of the heather changes completely. The beautiful old self-sown Scots pines are widely spaced and the heather grows in large clumps, each plant being seen as a separate mound perhaps three feet across, making this small bit of countryside perhaps the most beautiful in Scotland which, to a Scot, means the most beautiful anywhere.

Why does the heather grow so differently above and below the trees? There has been no burning for years as the area is a Nature Reserve and no fence divides it, so grazing cannot cause the difference. Can it be the pruning of wind and frost? Even widely spaced trees might allow snow to settle deeper and so protect the heather from the searing winds in winter. A day or two later

we saw the effect of runs through a flat-bottomed glen; large areas of heather on the flats on either side of the river were a dismal sight, being completely browned presumably by frost draining from higher ground or freezing mist rising from the river, indicating how readily *Calluna* can be damaged. Incidentally, plants of *E. cinerea* and *E. tetralix* were quite unaffected.

So in my cold and exposed garden pruning produces various results: sometimes more flowers, sometimes less, usually brighter foliage, occasional frost damage, always a change of habit. Old plants may act differently to young ones, and results may be different in warmer gardens. In the wild, reduced pruning produces a beautiful scene more interesting than the ever-open hillsides of heavily grazed, burnt or weather-pruned heather. I believe there is still much to learn.

In *Bulletin* No. 14 the Editor suggested a method by which members can help in a research project into pruning and feeding. I hope many will participate, thus helping the Society to build up over the years a real fund of knowledge based on wide experience. Those who help will probably have to keep careful notes; it is only too easy to forget, or even to remember incorrectly. But in doing so much is learnt and new beauty seen, and, what is more, it is fun.

Thirty years on there are still debates on whether or not to prune heathers. One of our heather gardens at The Bannut, is almost 18 years old, and still doing well; I put this down to regular pruning. In the 1976 Year Book, Peter Vickers wrote a report on the Heather Trials, which took place at Harlow Carr from 1967 to 1975. On the subject of pruning, Peter wrote (among other things) that plants in the grey foliage group, such as 'Hirsuta Typica', greatly benefited, "as the fresh young growth which is stimulated by pruning gives a fresh feathery appearance to the plant". The great David McClintock, on the other hand, was an anti-pruning man. What are your views? Please write and share them with us. Ed.

The Joy Of Finding A Heather Garden

Geoffrey Yates

I was inspired to take an interest in heathers by a small planting in the rock garden at Crail House in the 1960's which was designed by the landscaper to represent a stream coming out of the limestone in the Derbyshire Hills. The real impetus to heather gardening was given by John Letts with his masterpiece at *Foxhollow* in Windlesham.

I have little doubt that there are still a few gardens with similar style, but I do not know of them. I have to admit that I became disenchanted when the nursery trade started growing for impulse sales using plastic tunnels and producing soft plants which eventually became riddled with botrytis, various die-back diseases, and gaining a reputation for being difficult to grow. It seemed to me that very few nurseries were producing hard grown plants with the natural sturdy constitution of heathers properly grown in the old fashioned way.

Fellow enthusiasts will not be surprised to hear how delighted I was to find

a real heather garden on a visit to see friends at Auchlochan House, Lesmahagow. This is an estate developed by a charitable trust around a mansion house, which at one time probably belonged to the owners of the local coalmines. After local authority ownership as a residential home which apparently failed it was bought by a Mr. & Mrs. Brown who opened a Christian Residential Home with the main purpose of providing homes for retiring missionaries returning home with nowhere to live. From this has grown a comprehensive development in the form of a very impressive country estate comprising residential apartments, sheltered housing, nursing home all supported by a very large staff amidst grounds which are beautifully maintained.

We stayed overnight with a Mrs. Hamilton at Kerse Farm, Lesmahagow who runs an excellent B & B on the edge of the village also with an excellent heather garden in the old-fashioned style. Mrs. Hamilton's B & B is ideally situated very close to the motorway and a very good overnight stopping off place on a long journey to Scotland. At least somebody in that part of Scotland is still making excellent use of heathers in landscaping projects which I find very encouraging. Various TV pundits are now forecasting the return to favour of heather and conifer gardens as people get fed up with a dismal outlook in the winter in gardens dominated by the modern craze for 'hardy' plants.

We are about due for a renaissance in heathers, if only the growers would grow them hard and supply plants which do not contemplate failure and are not so soft as to succumb to every disease that afflicts them. Obviously somebody is growing them well if the two gardens mentioned are anything to judge by. It would be very cynical to suggest that modern garden centres couldn't care less and actually prefer plants to die, but the return to favour of the old fashioned smaller specialised nurseries who offer good advice and use traditional growing methods will return heather gardening to its rightful place in popularity.

Profile of Council Member -Richard Canovan

A statistic in the post-war baby boom I was born in Stockport. My family moved to London and I started school in 1951 in Norbury Manor infants. After my primary years it was to Mitcham County Grammar where my greatest interest was in Art and Geography but I developed a fascination with chess to go with my pastimes of painting, railways, philately and sport, before leaving school and entering our Civil Service.

Not going to university after school resulted in a tremendous educational experience that was to change me forever. The Open University was a major innovation pioneering in distance-learning education and, being one of its earliest students, I was to share its interdisciplinary approach at a momentous time. In Social Science it was a time of the population explosion, radical change with new theories, the rise of Marxism, emergence of monetarist economics, the quantitative revolution and much more, all as the post-war political consensus was collapsing. In Science, our understanding of the evolution of our landscape was turned upside down by the dramatic development of plate tectonic theory, which transformed the Earth Sciences.

One week it was policy on the Cern project for European nuclear research, the next analysing elementary particles in bubble chambers - all at home! Geography was no longer about physical determinism and regional description but spatial analysis and systems.

But it was not just study, there was a very active social life with several societies, including the OUGS, which fostered my interest in geology. Out of this intellectual ferment were to develop new academic interests as diverse as economics, geochemistry and public health. My belief in sustainable development started here and came from an unlikely source as my OU friend encouraged me to become a Young Tory so we could meet more as we lived hundreds of miles apart. She introduced me to Ecological Conservatives based in Portsmouth promulgating the very policies that were not to develop for another 15 years. It also meant some early mornings and late nights to watch and listen to the radio and TV programmes.

But the OU was not then recognised in the Civil Service nor for a higher degree, so I took another degree. With the help of some hydrology, my environmental and earth science were to develop further into Quaternary science. The Ericaceae generally were more relevant to palaeoecology than palaeoclimatology, being light demanding, so their pollen was evidence of forest retreat and clearance. But they, and especially *Calluna*, were found to identify the start of the drier Bronze Age in peat formations. It was fascinating analysing these, ocean and ice cores.

Hand in hand with this my deep interest in urban planning developed along with urban history, urban climatology and transport. But these were to take a back seat after the degree as I then participated in a research project which saw me specialise in dendroclimatology for a time. This took me to the Okstindan ice cap in Norway and I experienced my first August snowstorm! Only in the heath birchwoods were there any *Calluna* but further south near Vagamo some more colourful examples were to be found. Living as an academic community in a mountain hut for weeks was an interesting experience for all of us that will never be forgotten. Mo i Rana football club kindly allowed us access for a weekly shower, men in the home team's and the women in the away team's before returning to the alpine tundra!

After that, another specialised course gave me the opportunity to learn about the archaeological as well as the ecological and climatological history of our vegetation. This led me towards conservation and landscape design, complementing planning and, of course, heathers, and I flirted with landscape architecture.

In the 1970's my horticultural interest had revolved around roses and I was a member of the Royal National Rose Society from 1973 to 1980. Then several developments occurred at the same time. On moving to Wiltshire I had little time for gardening being a part-time student with all these activities as well as with my Civil Service job so one of my rose catalogues was of special interest. It offered a range of heathers described in a book as labour saving, so as well as my favourite roses I ventured into the unknown.

My garden was solid clay but that did not worry me. Digging and sedge peat would change that. Having little time or expertise in design my first heathers were planted in dreadful conditions in a simple manner with most space being left for lawn. *Erica vagans* 'Mrs. D F Maxwell', *Erica carnea* 'Aurea' and *Erica x*

darleyensis cultivars 'Darley Dale' and 'Silberschmelze' were among the first and were glorious for bloom with *Calluna vulgaris* 'Sunset' for foliage colour. Friends and relatives found them exciting and were encouraged to venture themselves.

Membership of the Society was not long following but I did not actively participate for several years. Perhaps the biggest impetus to heathers in the early days, on top of academia, was the Proudleys' book but the reports on the Harlow Carr trials were also read with interest. Belatedly I undertook a soil pH test and was disappointed at the high alkalinity but this was quickly replaced by amazement at how well the early plants coped, especially the *Calluna*. *Erica x veitchi* 'Exeter' was an early casualty of a severe winter spell but I was encouraged to try more. I had also acquired several conifers and was pleased with the combination. Slowly the roses disappeared. I had been converted. Wary of my unsuitable conditions I did not plan large areas but undertook a series of small-scale plantings.

One of the first people to help me was Pamela Lee who brought me some *Erica scoparia* 'Lionel Woolner' plants. My first Conference was Gregynog in 1988 and proved a most interesting experience. The numbers attending were so great that some of us, including me, had to be put up in a nearby farmhouse. Not only was it the jubilee but two of the talks were fascinating for me: Diane Jones on garden design and John (then Dr.) Griffiths on hybridisation. Pollen analysis had taken on a new meaning for me! A new world was opening in heathers and I am now among those benefiting from it. It had been tremendous meeting so many people informed on heathers and was to be the first of many Conferences for me.

In the following few years I was entrusted with numerous plants for trials by Diane and the late Bert Jones, and David Small to see whether they would grow in my soil. Otters Court was a living example of what could be done and a source of inspiration. An exciting array of plants became available commercially and two conferences had sales of plugs of unusual cultivars I took up and the area I devoted to heathers keeps growing, with new beds every few years.

Meanwhile, from the mid-1980's to the early 1990's, my new economics led not only to interest in land and property markets and development but also finance, and was to find a new use. This was in helping people who, despite low incomes, were unable to be beneficiaries of our welfare system because of its assumption that on each pound of capital over a certain limit they could earn 36% (even now 20%)! This took quite a lot of my spare time but was rewarding. In 1991 it nearly led to a change of career to finance with a job opportunity in Hill Samuel. But I stayed in the Civil Service.

I am a student member of the Royal Town Planning Institute and now studying towards a professional qualification. Again this is a most interesting time as it assumes new political importance and undergoes a major change from its land use focus to spatial policy. But this is not the only area of public policy of interest to me.

All this varied academic activity has led to membership of several alumni and to a concern with the bureaucratisation and cost of higher education. Just as I believe that the users of our planning system should be treated as customers, so should our students paying ever greater fees. To this end, I have become a member of the Council for Academic Freedom and Academic

Standards, which seeks reform including a Higher Education Ombudsman to protect the freedom of academics and students.

Some interests wax and wane with developments but others do not and one is my interest in our weather. A Fellow of the Royal Meteorological Society, my contributions to this field have become few in recent years, but they continue. One shock was being thanked for my assistance with producing the joint Meteorological Office and Society's Meteorological Calendar for 1997. All that had happened was that one of my more spectacular photographs had emerged from a few years earlier! For a generation I kept a Stephenson's screen and other instruments to maintain weather records. Snow fell in London in June 1975 and glaciers were advancing, now global warming is the issue.

Another is my interest in football. A Chelsea season-ticket holder for many years, I did not agree with the creation of the Premiership and spending my money on them. That now goes to my smaller teams, first and foremost Stockport County: the "Hatters" have had an eventful ten years and given me much excitement and agony. But I still follow Chelsea's every move. All my teams have one thing in common - unpredictability!

Yet another is an interest in Bridge. Although rarely playing in tournaments now, I remain a member of the English Bridge Union and still play rubber bridge and teams. I hope it will become accepted as an Olympic sport in which case its popularity will return to that in the 1970's when my activity was greatest. Other activities include good food and music. In sport, it's tennis, golf, cricket and snooker but the latter has grown at the expense of the others. There are only 24 hours in a day although sometimes it seems many more!

Adopt a lamb, save the countryside

Brian Pedley hears how Suffolk's sheep-lovers can help the landscape

With acknowledgments to The Daily Telegraph

With tails flailing as if in celebration of the Suffolk spring, newly arrived twin lambs nudge hungrily against the ewe with the black and white face.

"They arrived last night," says Val Sherwen, who has shepherded the flock since 1996. "The next thing will be to take photographs". In most parts of Britain, one Speckled Face Beulah sheep can look very much like another. But not in Suffolk. Up to two-thirds of the 450-strong flock that grazes heathland to the north of Ipswich have been "adopted" by wellwishers across the county. Some sponsors have given their ewes names, from Rosemary to Be-bop-a-Beulah and Ewe-phoria. For every sponsor, there are updates, anecdotes and snapshots of ewes at every significant stage of life.

"As well as having numbered ear-tags, the sheep all have different markings on their faces, which helps personalise them that little bit more," says Sherwen. "People arrive here with their photo, trying to pick their ewe out from the flock. A number of sponsors have been with us for years, transferring their sponsorship when their ewe dies. "People sponsor them as presents for grandchildren, while some men sponsor ewes for girlfriends," she says. Suffolk Wildlife Trust's Sponsor

a Sheep scheme is not just helping to maintain a flock. Sponsors finance the survival of an ancient landscape that has been torn apart in the past 100 years.

Since the 1930's four-fifths of the open heaths known as the Suffolk Sandlings have been lost to a combination of changing farm practices, forestry and development. Half the remaining heathland was inundated by birch, gorse and bracken as sheep farming declined.

SWT began developing its sponsored flock in 1989 as part of a long-term project to restore the haven of heather and fine grassland that existed in the 19th century. The regular grazing has been so successful that the Dartford Warbler, extinct from the heath since 1920, has now colonised the area. Nightjars and woodlarks flourish along with adders, lizards and butterflies. Suffolk people are funding these successes to the tune of £50 a year for a ram, £30 for a ewe and £15 for a ewe lamb. "The sponsorship now raises more money than the eventual sale of the lambs," says Julian Roughton, a Trust director. "Although the Speckled Face Beulah is well-suited to the conditions on the Sandlings and produces good lambs, the flock is unlikely ever to be financially independent. In helping towards its upkeep, people can feel part of this dramatic wildlife success."

In the coming weeks, the Sandlings flock is expected to grow to more than 800, as lambs continue to be born. Val Sherwen is braced for an influx of sponsors at the Trust's farm centre. "Most people get completely addicted to lambing because it's such an amazing event," she says.

Queries through our Website - (www.heathersociety.org) Answered by David Small

Question: I am looking for any information on *Erica cineria* 'C.D.Eason', particularly on the origins of this plant, and more specially on any information on the founder, C.D. Eason, or any other "Easons" associated with this plant or others?

Answer: 'C.D. Eason' was found in the wild on heathland near Broadstone, Dorset, England and introduced by Maxwell & Beale in 1929.

This plant was named after the finder, Charles Douglas Eason (c.1892-1972), an Australian, who was employed by Maxwell & Beale, a famous early heather nursery in Dorset, England as a propagator. He had three sons and one daughter, David, John b. 1919, William George Rendall and Mary Grace. All have heathers named after them: *Calluna vulgaris* 'David Eason', *Erica cinerea* 'John Eason', *Erica darleyensis* 'George Rendall', *Erica tetralix* 'Mary Grace'

C. D. Eason was also responsible for *Erica cinerea* 'Golden Drop'. The foliage colour of this plant reminded him of an Australian plum jam made from 'Golden Drop' plums.

Question: Is it possible to move a mature heather, about ten years old and five feet by about three feet large? It has become far too large for the garden.

Answer: I am afraid a 10 year old heather cannot be relocated without a severe risk of losing it. If you want to try leave it until the autumn and try to keep as much soil on the roots as possible. Water well after re-locating particularly over the foliage. Water well for the first spring and summer after moving until it has re-established itself.

Question: My name is Kelly Staniforth and I am currently at Sheffield Hallam University, doing a degree in Environmental Management. I am undertaking my dissertation this semester and the topic that I am most passionate about is an investigation into Lowland Heath Restoration. I am conducting soil research at Clumber Park, Notts in order to carry out a feasibility study for lowland heath restoration within the park. I wondered whether there was any information available on restoration techniques, or just any information in general on the topic. I would be most grateful if there is any help available as it would provide some much needed background for my research.

Answer: The Environmental Advisory Unit of the University of Liverpool, sponsored by British Gas published a handbook of techniques in 1988. It is entitled "Heathland Restoration: A Handbook of Techniques" ISBN 0-903545-39-X. It has 7 pages of references which I think you will find helpful.

It would be worth contacting the Suffolk Wildlife Trust who have been running the Suffolk Sandlings Project for a number of years with great success. They can be contacted on suffolkwt@cix.co.uk. They also have a website www.wildlifetrust.org.uk/suffolk

Perhaps the greatest authority on the subject is Nigel Webb who I am pleased to say is one of our members. His book "Heathlands" published in 1986 gives a complete review on heathlands. ISBN 0-00-219419-8. Professor Webb can be contacted on nrw@ceh.ac.uk. He now works for NERC Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, Winfrith Technology Centre, Dorchester, Dorset, DT2 8ZD.

Heather restoration goes Dutch

With acknowledgments to The National Trust – West Midlands News - Autumn 2002

A Dutch company is using heather from the Long Mynd to clean up factory waste - and they are helping to restore healthy heathland at the same time. Old heather needs to be cut or burned to give healthy young heather the chance to come through. On a large area like the Long Mynd, finding the resources to manage this huge task can be a real problem. But now National Trust ecologist, Caroline Uff, has come up with a novel solution. A Dutch biofiltration company wants old woody heather for use in cleaning up factory waste, dirty air and water. The company, Oosterbeek, will pay for the cutting, baling and transport to Holland using local contractors. To date a local firm has cut and baled over 300 big bales, which is equivalent to 20 hectares of heather. "This work not only puts the heather to good use, instead of burning it" explains Caroline, "it also employs local people and improves the wildlife value of the heath".

Group News

Yorkshire

On a perfect Saturday in July twenty seven members drove to Helmsley to visit the Walled Garden. This garden was formerly the walled garden for Duncombe Park, the home of the Earl of Feversham until it was allowed to decay. Since 1992 it has been transformed by a trust set up by the late Alison Ticehurst and we were given a guided tour of the 5 acre garden, explaining its development so far and the future of the garden.

On Saturday, 14th September we held a meeting at Harlow Carr entitled "Alternatives to Peat". This took the form of an "Open Forum" where several members updated us on the present position, the technical committee Chairman's trial of peat free compost and a good discussion ensued. It was interesting to note how many chemists there are amongst the members.

The programme for 2003 starts with a talk on Saturday, 8th March by Brian Hutchinson, former Head Gardener at Castle Howard on "My Favourite Plants" to include his choice of heathers. Then on Saturday, 7th June, Andrew Hart, curator at RHS Harlow Carr will speak about "The Future of the Garden" to inform members of the Society's plans for Harlow Carr. Hopefully it will be a lovely day and he will be able to do so on a walk through the garden.

It is planned that on Saturday 19th July, we shall have Dr. Peter Newton as our speaker to talk about "Heathers and their Soil Requirements" to help us with some of the difficulties that we have encountered in growing various varieties of these plants. We complete the season with a visit to a heather garden, that of Kathleen Dyson in Fixby, Huddersfield on Saturday, 13th September.

Very little activity is taking place at present with heathers in the garden at Harlow Carr, they continued to flower well and will give a good show later this month (January) but until the major landscaping projects are complete no new heather plantings will take place.

Jean Julian

North East

Our AGM in October was the usual pleasant evening, with all the Committee Members being returned to Office. Nine members were present and we again welcomed Dave and Beryl Mayne from Kirkbymoorside, who made a special effort to attend on what was a really filthy day.

There was plenty of chatter during supper, which was mainly about our recent Conference success. Then we ended the evening with David Plumridge showing his slides of their recent trip to South Africa, and I showed mine of the Conference.

At this point I usually give you a list of forthcoming dates for your diary, but we have not been able to have a Committee Meeting due to an accident I had just before Christmas. I fell and broke my left knee-cap, which put me in hospital for a fortnight, but I am getting re-habilitated and am doing well. A letter will be sent to all Group-Members at a later date, but our usual date for our Annual Outing will be **Saturday May 3rd**.

Dorothy M Warner

East Midlands

A meeting of the East Midlands Group is planned for 2 pm. **Saturday October 11th 2003** when Dr. E Charles Nelson will present an illustrated talk on "Heathers of the Atlantic Islands". Dr. Nelson intends to include the flora of the Azores in his talk - a topical subject in view of *The Heather Society* tour of those islands in

June 2003. (Incidentally it is not too late to book a place on the tour.)

Dr. Nelson barely needs introduction to members of the Society since he has made many contributions to the *Yearbook* and is its current editor. However, it is worth reminding ourselves that he is a distinguished botanist with a special interest in heathers, an author, and a well-known lecturer on the international circuit. He is a frequent visitor to the Atlantic Islands, and no one is better qualified than he is to speak about the heathers which grow there.

I regard this as a prestige event and, for this special occasion, request people proposing to attend to inform me at least six weeks beforehand i.e. by 1st September 2003. If insufficient people register by then, I shall cancel and so request that people indicating an interest provide me with telephone numbers and addresses so that I can inform them if we do not meet our minimum requirement. Of course members of all groups and their friends are welcome. My telephone, address and e-mail address are given on the inside back page of the Bulletin.

The venue of the Chapter House at the Church of St. Mary in Charnwood, Loughborough, proved very acceptable for our meeting in 2002 and I have booked it again for this event. I will provide full travel details in the summer bulletin. Suffice it to say now that the venue is very accessible by road and rail – and indeed by air.

As on previous occasions, tea will be provided.

Allen Hall

Home Counties

Three events are planned for the Home Counties Group for 2003, details will be given shortly in a newsletter. The first is scheduled for Sunday 16th March when we will visit the heather garden of Audrey and David Sprague in Dorking, meeting at The Running Horses public house in Old London Road, Mickleham at 12.00 noon for lunch (bar snacks available).

It is planned to arrive at Audrey and David's at 2.15 p.m. - their address is Steps, 5 Deepdene Drive, Dorking, Surrey RH5 4AD. Please advise me (telephone 01442 254880, email Derek.Millis@care4free.net) if you intend joining us for this visit and whether you will meet us for lunch, or if you will make your way direct to Audrey and David's.

The second event will be in May, date and venue to be confirmed in the newsletter. The third meeting will be our customary get together at the RHS Wisley Gardens on Saturday 18th October, 11.00 a.m. outside the shop - viewing the heather gardens in the morning, table show and talk in Hillside Events Centre in the afternoon.

Wishing you all the best for the New Year with plenty of good growing weather.

Derek Millis

South West

As I write this SW news during the first week of this new year we have experienced a very wet winter so far and very few frosts. On New Year's day, the river beyond my back fence had made its way into the bottom of the garden to a depth of about three inches, but fortunately this situation only lasted for about four hours and, unlike three years ago stopped short of the glasshouse. However *Erica lusitanica* which had just started flowering found itself growing in a pond. But now, several days later, its all change and we have our first taste of winter with low overnight temperatures and some snow flurries. Anyway with thoughts of better weather and longer days, please find below a description of each of the first two meetings of 2003, the content of which I hope you will find of interest. The intention is to have at least one more meeting in the summer or autumn and that will be described in the next *Bulletin* and in the circular.

Saturday 22nd March - This will be the annual indoor meeting at the Lytchett Matravers Village Hall in Dorset. Members should meet in the hall by 2.00 p.m. where I will be giving a Heather related talk and slide show. I hope to touch on several aspects of Heather growing including propagation. After the talk we will have our usual chance to have a chat over tea and cakes. There will also be the two class Table Show:

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

Class 2 A vase or bowl of heathers shown for foliage effect.

Prizes will be awarded and the Burfitt Bowl (currently held by Jennifer Turrell) will be awarded to the exhibitor with the most points overall. Lytchett Matravers is situated six miles from Poole and one 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 adjacent to the hall in front of the playing fields. A charge will be made to cover hall hire and other expenses.

Saturday 10th May - On this afternoon we will gather together from 1.45pm in the car park of Exbury Gardens near Beaulieu in the New Forest, for entry to the Gardens at 2.00pm. As far as I can remember *The Heather Society* has only visited these famous Hampshire Gardens once before and a very long time ago. A guide has been arranged to show us the plants, shrubs and trees of particular interest at that time of year. Regrettably heathers are not well represented in the Gardens and those that are will be between flowering. However Rhododendrons and Azaleas will be in flower at this time: these are what Exbury is famous for and they will be a glorious sight. Why not make the visit last all day? Enter the garden from 10.30am and take a leisurely stroll before the guided tour. You can have lunch in the Smithy Restaurant adjacent to the car park or eat at the picnic tables close to the car park. Parking is free but entry to the garden will cost £5.50 with an additional charge for the guide.

Afternoon tea will not be booked but the tea rooms are available for all to use. The Gardens are in the village of Exbury near Beaulieu and on the southern edge of the New Forest. The gardens are reached by leaving the M27 at junction 2 and travelling south-east along the A326 Fawley road for about 9 miles and then at the roundabout on the outskirts of the village of Dibden Purlieu turning right onto the B3054 road signposted Beaulieu and Exbury. After travelling a mile over heathland turn left off the B3045 and then almost immediately turn right onto the Exbury road and follow that road to the Gardens. The Gardens are adequately signposted from the A326. If you wish to buy plants then there is a plant centre adjacent to the car park.

Further information on the meetings described can be obtained by sending me two SAEs at your earliest convenience. I would be grateful if you could ring me or e-mail me about 10 days before the meeting, if you intend to come (TEL: 023 8086 4336 E-MAIL: pjoyner@supanet.com). I finish this report by thanking you all for your support during the year 2002 and I hope for your continued support during 2003.

Phil Joyner

NEW MEMBERS IN 2002

Zone 1

FORSHAW Mrs. M F, March Hares, 8 Mount Frost Drive, Balbirnie Park, Markinch, Fife, KY7 6JQ.

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SYME Mrs. H, 8 Glamis Road, Kirkcaldy, Fife, KY2 6LL.

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Zone 3

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HOLBEN, Ms H, 43 Lancelot Court, Victoria Docks, Hull, HU9 1QD.

McCLINTOCK Mr. A, Clarendon House, 19 Cavendish Road, Brincliffe, Sheffield, S11 9BH.

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Zone 7

ARMITAGE Mr. R D, 11 Myatts Field, Harvington, Evesham, Worcestershire, WR11 8NG.

HEADINGTON Mr. L, 15 Throckmorton Road, Alcester, Warwickshire, B49 6QA.

Zone 8

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PENRY Mr. E W, 37 Hendrefoilan Avenue, Sketty, Swansea, SA2 7NA.

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GOODING Mr. I J, 11 Clareville Road, Caterham, Surrey, CR3 6LA.

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KING Mr. J V, 20 Eltham Hill, Eltham, London, SE9 5JX.

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WOLSKI, Mr. R, ul. Srebrna Dębowa 18, Konstantynów Łódzki, 95-050 Poland.

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Zone 10

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TROON Mr. J V, 90 Becmead Avenue, Kenton, Harrow, Middx. HA3 8HB.

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PHILLIPS Mr. & Mrs. G C, 20 Urie Crescent, Stonehaven, Kincardineshire, AB39 2DY.

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McNEILL Mr. S & Miss L, 11 Hornsey Garth, Wigginton, York, YO32 2GS.

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Zone 9

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Zone 11

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