



A Registered Charity No. 261407

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Cover illustration *Erica ciliaris* by Brita Johannson

Has anyone else noticed a shortage of hedgehogs in the last few years – or is just a Herefordshire phenomenon? There was a time when the roads were littered with little flattened hedgehog corpses, but I haven't seen one for several years. However there are plenty of badgers about - could there be a link I wonder?

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 also 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 Professor John Griffiths, a Heather Society member, on "What's Happening in Heather Hybridisation?" John, well known for introducing some of the *Erica x griffithsii* hybrids, has talked to the members on several occasions in the past and his talk is always well received.
- 10.15am Coffee
- 10.45am Leave by coach for Okell's Nursery at Duddon Heath near Tarporley. Okell's nursery is a specialist, wholesale heather nursery with a garden centre outlet.
- 11.15am Arrive Okell's Nursery where the Nursery Manager, Anthony Killilea, will give us an introductory talk on the nursery, then show us around.
- 1.30pm A picnic lunch will be provided by the hotel.
- 2.30pm A visit to the Gardens of Arley Hall at Northwich. This visit will not be guided tour so the members will be able to take a leisurely stroll around these gardens which feature a double herbaceous border, walled gardens and topiary. Also on this day an "Autumn Plant Hunter's Fair" is being held in one corner of the gardens.
- 3.30pm Afternoon tea in the refreshment facilities in the gardens.
- 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 may be subject to amendment and the timing of the group photograph will be announced during the Conference. Phil Joyner will be pleased to receive written questions in advance for the two Open Forum sessions.

Accommodation

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. 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.

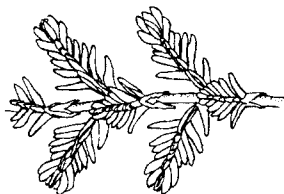
Cost of the Conference

Residents for the whole weekend.	£208
Residents leaving Sunday afternoon	£165
Residents leaving after Sunday dinner	£184
Day visitors: Friday evening	£29
Saturday, all day	£55
Sunday, all day	£55

Please note that at the time of writing only two double/twin rooms remain. However there may be the possibility of booking more rooms but if this is not the case then subsequent bookings will be accepted as day visitors and those persons will be asked to arrange their own bed and breakfast accommodation. For day visitors the Friday evening includes afternoon tea and dinner and the Saturday and Sunday includes the lectures, visits, packed lunch and dinner.

Full payment should now be made to: Phil Joyner, 84 Kinross Road, Rushington Manor, Totton, Southampton SO40 9BN. Please include a £2 booking fee (per mailing):

Cheques should be made payable to *The Heather Society*. Members are reminded that payment by VISA or MASTERCARD credit cards is acceptable. For day visitors a telephone number for the area's Tourist Information Office can 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).



Joan Rope & Des Oliver

All too often these days the Bulletin has to announce the death of a member of the Society and this one is no exception. Apart from those reported by Phil Joyner in the South East Group News, mention should also be made of Joan Rope (from Loughborough) who died in February and Des Oliver (from Kendal) who died in May. They were both active members of the Society for many years and, until health prevented them from attending, rarely (if ever) missed an annual Conference; Des was also the Society's Honorary Treasurer from 1978 to 1994 and Vice President from 1997. The Society was represented at both the funerals.

Grown any good heathers recently? Yearbook 2004

Charles Nelson – Yearbook Editor

The time of year has come when an editor's thoughts turn to what will be available for publication in the next *Yearbook*! Fortunately I do have two articles, on Harlow Carr's heathers, and about escaped heathers on the Oregon coast, in hand but they certainly will not be enough to fill an entire *Yearbook*.

So please, put pen to paper (yes, we will be delighted to receive handwritten articles), or dust off the typewriter (we also accept typed scripts), or compose on the computer, and send your contributions by pigeon, snail-mail, airmail or email. The deadline for *Yearbook* 2004 is 31 October, but the more I receive before that date the merrier I'll be. Don't wait until the deadline, please!

While I am always delighted to receive articles and papers that are entire and complete, some regular features of a *Yearbook* can be compiled from mere snippets sent in by members - the recent publications section is a prime example and I am grateful to various people already for bringing items to my attention. But ... I need lots more contributions.

There is another way that members can contribute without too much effort or time. Have you grown any new or recently released heathers in your garden? How have they performed? Do they live up to their descriptions? Are they any good, in your opinion (and there's no need be polite)? Have they been subject to any pests or diseases? Are they hardy? If you have any comments - praise or criticism - please send these and we will compile them into a "Recent releases" report for the *Yearbook*. We would need some brief notes about your garden too, its location, altitude, aspect, soil, etc.?

For lists of the newer heathers, you can refer to the supplements to the International Register published at the back of the last four *Yearbooks*, but remember that not all new heathers will be included there - you may have heathers we do not know about!

(*Yearbook* articles and notes can be sent to me at this email address: registrar@zctnet.co.uk)

Be kind to Charles but please keep a few interesting articles for the Bulletin too! (Ed)

The Land Where Heather Is Banned!

David Plumridge

We were driving in the vicinity of Lake Taupo in the North Island of New Zealand with our *North American Heather Society* friends John and Gail Safstrom when we were surprised to see a 'little bit of home' by the roadside. John had arranged self-drive tours of New Zealand and Tasmania in March and April. Rita and I were delighted to be able to accompany them. The unmistakable purple flowered roadside shrub was our own *Calluna vulgaris*. Further on as we climbed into the Tongariro National Park with its snow-capped mountains, we were met by acres of heather in full bloom. The swaying pampas grass dotted here and there amongst the heather would have delighted companion grass aficionados! Weren't we lucky to be in the right place at the right time? The guide-books had not prepared us for this, and they didn't even mention the multitude of beautiful tree ferns we encountered at lower levels.

We enquired about the heather at the visitor centre at the Whakapapa Village ski resort. They told us that it had been planted in the late 1800's to create grouse moors. The grouse did not enjoy their new home and died out, but the heather loved it and has swamped the native vegetation! So much so it has recently been placed on the National Pest Plant Accord List. This means that selling, propagation or distribution by nurseries or garden centres could result in prosecution. It is but one of nearly 100 on the list which includes beasts such as the Wandering Jew and coltsfoot, and, of course, the pampas grass.

As if it was not enough to be a 'forbidden plant', *Calluna* has been subject to biological warfare by the heather beetle. The beetles were imported from the UK by in 1992 by Landcare Research. Whilst in quarantine, they found the beetles were commonly infected with a protozoan parasite. This tends to severely debilitate or kill them. This, they say, may explain why outbreaks can be patchy in Europe. This was news to me as the usual explanation for success in beetle activity was mainly due to weather conditions. Anyway, they managed to breed a healthy population and unleashed it on the 'moorland' in 1996. The beetles have been found to survive, but the swathes of heather looked remarkably healthy - so far?

David Small had given us the details of two New Zealand Heather Society members. Cynthia Coe, of Coehaven Nurseries was at Otaki, just north of Wellington. Coincidentally, I had arranged to meet a radio amateur friend, Ralph, who also lived there. It was a great thrill to meet a radio contact from the other side of the world, but that's another story. After a buffet lunch with a get together with local radio men, he showed us a splendid little museum housing a wonderful (to me!) collection of communications equipment. Ralph and his wife Christine then took us to Coehaven Nurseries. They were even more amazed than we were at Cynthia's 10 acre garden. They had not known about this gem which was almost on their doorstep. Cynthia kindly took time from her busy day to show us around. There was a beautiful formal rose garden, exotic trees and shrubs and, of course, heather beds all set in well

maintained lawns. She was sad at not being able to grow *Daboecias* and *Erica vagans* didn't do well, but the cape heaths certainly made up for it. She had a better display than we saw at Kirstenbosch the previous October! Cynthia remarked that Dennis Hughes had just told her about the *Calluna* ban.

Dennis and Margaret Hughes were the other names given by David Small. We visited them at Tampanui a few days later when our tour took us to the southern part of the South Island. They made us very welcome and this visit was another eye-opener! The 'Blue Mountains' family nursery was established 70 years ago and after 30 years, Dennis and Margaret were starting to take a back seat, with their son Chris taking over the reins. The scale of the nursery is such that they have the widest range of plants in New Zealand with about 5,500 cultivars on their stock list, with, for example, over 1000 varieties of rhododendron. They have several of their own varieties and introductions. One of the favourites is a fastigate Douglas Fir which Dennis found at a roadside. Unlike further north, they had several *Callunas* in full bloom and because of their cooler climate they can grow the full range of heathers. This climate has assisted in the success of the nursery, allowing the production of a wide range of hardy stock which they ship throughout the country. They are trying to persuade the authorities that the decorative non-fertile *Callunas* present no threat and should be removed from the list, but they admit it to be a difficult task. Because of the *Calluna* being a 'pest plant', there is confusion amongst the public and the sale of *Ericas* has sadly dropped off. Incidentally, peat is readily available, cheaper than bark, and is used without comment! Before leaving we were shown their fields (yes fields!) of autumn crocus. A magical sight, and again, how lucky to be in the right place at the right time!

New Zealand is an ideal destination for gardeners. Even small towns have well-maintained and stocked parks, often with conservatories housing exotics. Rose gardens are very popular and extensive with good displays even in the warmer North Island. Heathers were not ignored, but it was an in-between season with the *Callunas* having mostly gone over. However cape heaths often provided colour and interest. There should be some excellent winter and spring displays with *Calluna* and particularly *Erica x darleyensis* well budded and ready to go! We found the best heather displays in Invercargill. Here, because of its southerly location, the *Callunas* were excellent, despite being obviously of good vintage. The parks superintendent told us he was planning to renew the beds. He was not aware of the new ban and as he was planning to obtain new stock from the Blue Mountain Nurseries, it will be interesting to see what transpires. Let's hope he will be allowed to plant doubles and bud bloomers!

I would need many more *Bulletin* pages to do our tour justice. Suffice to say we found New Zealand a wonderful country, full of variety and interest with friendly, helpful people. The only downside is it's so far away - it would be so nice to just 'pop back' again next year - even though our own heather is banned!

Web sites:

Blue Mountain Nurseries: www.bmn.co.nz

Biosecurity: www.protectnz.org.nz

Touring NZ: www.purenz.com

Cat Heather

Charles Nelson

No, this is not about how to keep cats from ruining your heathers! It's about the name "cat heather", which sometimes surfaces, as for example in the Autumn 2001 *Bulletin* (see below).

Resorting to Geoffrey Grigson's masterful *The Englishman's flora* (1955: 260), you will find that the name "cat heather" was used in Scotland for, so Grigson states, bell heather (*Erica cinerea*). Alas, he doesn't elaborate. We can also assert that on the authority of Professor George Dickie's *The botanist's guide to the counties of Aberdeen, Banff and Kincardine* (1860), "cat-heather" (hyphenated) was applied in that region to ling (*Calluna vulgaris*). Just to add another twist, Donald Watts, in the recent *Elsevier's dictionary of plant names and their origin* (2000), listed "cat heather", repeating Grigson's record but adding, on the authority of James Britten and Robert Holland's *A dictionary of English plant names* (1886), that in Aberdeenshire cross-leaved heath (*Erica tetralix*) was called "cat heather".

That makes three different species of cat heather! (There is no mention of cat heather in Roy Vickery's *A dictionary of plant lore*, nor in any other dictionary of plant names I have been able to consult.)

The third equation – cat heather = *Erica tetralix* – received confirmation from Nigel White of Pitlochry, who, in conversation with David Small, said that cross-leaved heath was called "cat heather" in parts of Scotland because, apparently, wild cats love to roll in it. A friend of Mr. White had actually seen wild cats rolling in *Erica tetralix* (see *Bulletin of The Heather Society* 6 (4): 13 (Autumn 2001)).

With the help of the BSBI's vice-county recorders for Aberdeenshire, Mrs. Kathy Fallowfield and Dr. David Welch, I set out to try to discover more.

Dr. Welch informed me that older folk in the Banchory area used the name. One keeper he knew well, Jimmy McIntosh of Balnault, Crathie, who looked after the Corndavon beat of the Invercauld Estate, definitely used "cat heather" for cross-leaved heath.

Meanwhile, Kathy Fallowfield, has sent me this:

"I had occasion to mention to one of the retired keepers (aged around 80) who lives in Braemar that I had been asked about cat heather. He told me that he hadn't heard the name since he was a boy, but they always used to call bell heather "cat heather." He had been an employee of Invercauld Estate. He said he had no idea why it was called cat heather and reiterated that it was *Erica cinerea* and that alone."

She also provided two further items. John Jamieson's *A dictionary of the Scottish language* (1846) contained this definition:

CAT-HEATHER, s. A finer species of heath, low and slender, growing more in separate upright stalks than the common heath, and flowering only at the top, Aberd[een].

And there was a further definition:

CAT AND CLAY... the materials of which a mud wall is constructed in many

parts of the south [of Scotland]. Straw and clay are well wrought together and being formed into pretty large rolls are laid between the wooden posts by means of which the walls are formed, and carefully pressed down so as to incorporate with each other or with the twigs that are sometimes plaited from one post to another.

Could the epithet "cat" have to do with cat-and-clay walls?

Madeira Gold On Lime

Richard Canovan

One of the problems of growing trial plants is that one has little scope for design not knowing the ultimate dimensions or how each plant will perform. Therefore, as a gesture, I bought two plants of *Erica carnea* 'Nathalie' to go with a survivor from a previous failed attempt. I chose a different garden centre.

This should have contrasted well with *Erica xoldenburgensis* 'Ammerland' and a golden foliated *Erica manipuliflora*. Unfortunately one plant died in the spring and the other has struggled. So another plant obtained from a cutting session was put on trial. *Erica scoparia* subsp. *madericola* 'Madeira Gold' was planted in the gap and has already put on much new growth. Despite the alkaline soil it shows no sign of chlorosis and every sign of outgrowing its space. But it remains to be seen whether it is fully hardy.

This does however suggest that 'Madeira Gold' may be lime tolerant like the *E. bergiana* x *spiculifolia* hybrid that has done so well nearby and shows very little sign of chlorosis after more than five years. This contrasts with *Erica xwilliamsii* 'Ken Wilson' which has not given of its best, 'Cow-y-Jack' having done better.

***Erica manipuliflora* 'Toothill Mustard'**

The description of the foliage of *Erica manipuliflora* 'Toothill Mustard', in the 2003 *Yearbook* (Registration no. 172, page 74) contained an error. It should read: "Foliage mustard-yellow becoming brighter by June fading to golden green by early winter; stems red".

***Erica scoparia*: help!**

During our recent visit to The Azores where countless bushes of *Erica scoparia* subsp. *azorica* (syn. *Erica azorica*) were seen, we became intrigued by the variation shown in the wild, especially in the shape of the stigma. Moreover the flowers are described sometimes as "chestnut" coloured (e.g. *Handy guide*), yet those we saw were mainly whitish with a variable reddish tinge. In a few cases the flowers were distinctly plum-coloured.

We would like to compile an inventory of *Erica scoparia* in cultivation, to aid future work, and would be most grateful to any (all) members who grow *Erica scoparia* for information about their plants, especially their (wild) sources. Even if source information is not available, it would still be most useful to know about any plants in cultivation.

We would also welcome help from any members who live in areas where *Erica scoparia* is native or naturalized, or members who may be travelling in the near future to places where the subspecies occur – Madeira (subsp. *madericola*), Canary Islands (subsp. *platycodon*), and south-western Europe (subsp. *scoparia*).

Please contact us by email or (snail-)mail, and let us know if you grow this heather, whether your plants have bloomed and if fresh flowers are still apparent. Thank you.

Allen Hall (10 Upper Green, Loughborough LE11 3SG

Charles Nelson (or Tippitiwitchet Cottage, Hall Road, Outwell, Wisbech, PE13 8PE, Cambridgeshire

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

Q I wonder if you may be able to offer some advice to me. I cut back the heather in my garden with an electric saw and there are now brown twiggy areas on the heather bush. Have I completely destroyed the heather or will it grow back or is there anything I can do to rescue the situation?

A It does depend on which species of heather you have cut back. Most species will not accept any cut-back past the previous year's growth and it does sound as though you have been rather drastic. If there is still some greenery, then a heavy mulch with peat mixed into the plant (so you are half burying it) might revive the plant. Alternately, if the plant is no more than 2 years old you could dig it up, make the hole deeper and re-plant the heather so it is half buried. This is best done in autumn.

Q Can you please advise me? In your website you give some very useful advice re. the above [sequestered lime] but would I would be obliged if you would clarify a point or two for me. Is sulphate of iron, which I have purchased from my garden centre, the same as sequestered iron? The advice on the sulphate is to sprinkle on the soil and hoe in, but when the heathers spread, this will be difficult and I wonder if it will then be OK to mix with water and apply this to the foliage? Alternatively is the advice you give, re digging in flowers of sulphur, a permanent solution that does not require a repeat? Many thanks for the website which has been a great help.

Q Can you help? I am looking for a list of heathers which Roe deer and Hares will not eat. We live in an exposed site, in the Scottish Highlands, with shallow, poor soil. Whilst the deer and hares do not eat the indigenous heather which surrounds us, they do seem to enjoy all the ones we plant. Ideally I would like to plant a variety of colours and flowering times to give year round interest. I would be grateful for any suggestions you may have.

A Deer and hares will tend to eat any heather which may have been artificially fed and will actively seek them out as they are more nutritious. Deer will kill heathers which are on their routine tracks by

trampling them to death and they will idly graze heathers either side of their tracks so it is worth placing heather beds away from such tracks. They will also actively seek out *Erica vagans* particularly when it is in flower, *Erica arborea*, and to a slightly lesser extent *Erica carnea* when it is in flower. Hares on the other hand, unlike rabbits, tend to only eat erect growing stems and I would expect them to be of a lesser problem on the more prostrate species or cultivars. Most of my comments are based on experiences in the USA where deer are a much bigger problem.

Group News

North East

Our Annual Outing to Holker Hall in Cumbria on May 4th was thoroughly enjoyed by our 10 *Heather Society* members and their 44 friends.

Holker Hall is the home of Lord and Lady Cavendish, and their extensive garden is planted for year-round interest, so that there is always something of interest to captivate. We saw the rhododendrons and azaleas at their best and they were magnificent - some reaching to a height of 70 feet. The large motor museum was appreciated by the men, as the replicas of Donald Campbell's Bluebird Car and the jet hydroplane Bluebird K7 are housed here. Coniston Water is just a short distance from Holker.

Thursday, June 12th is our Car Outing to Kane's Nursery at Wooler and we are meeting at 12 noon for lunch at the Roseden Tea Rooms (approximately 1 mile south of the nursery) prior to the nursery visit.

Saturday, September 13th will be our Annual show, held in the Memorial Hall, Ponteland. Yet again we are having to make changes in order to keep the members' interest in showing heathers. Last year we made a change by devoting half the show-bench to competitive exhibits and the other half to a display of heathers in bowls, which had been grown by members. This was successful - with more members exhibiting - but we know that this year some members will not be available, which means that we are again faced with a 'thin' show. A proposal was made, and agreed at our meeting (and was subsequently agreed by the Ponteland Flower show Committee) that we merge the *Heather Society* Classes with the PFS heather classes, making this an Open Competition, and that we sponsor these classes in their entirety. We will also give a Trophy in memory of Bobby Thompson, for 'The Best Exhibit in the Show'. Group members will be notified nearer the time with the new schedule.

Our AGM this year will be on **Friday, November 7th** at 7.30 pm, in St. Matthew's Church Hall, Ponteland, when we look forward to seeing you all.

Here's hoping for a good gardening summer!

Dorothy M Warner

Yorkshire

At our opening meeting of the year on Saturday, 8th March 2003 we had 23 members present. Following a short Annual General Meeting the secretary outlined the programme for the year. The speaker for the afternoon was Brian Hutchinson, former head gardener at Castle Howard and Sledmere House. He spoke about "My Favourite Plants" and took us for over an hour on an alphabetical journey of the various trees and plants that he appreciates, including a lot of heathers.

He challenged members to recognise and guess the name of a few twigs of *Erica oldenburgensis* 'Ammerland' before starting a lively question and answer session over tea and biscuits. (This particular plant can be seen in the bed at the entrance, at the bottom of the ramp)

The 2003 programme continues as follows:

Starting, in the Study Centre, Harlow Carr before moving out into the garden (weather permitting) the talk on **Saturday, 7th June** will be given by the Curator, Andrew Hart on "The Future of R.H.S. Harlow Carr"

Then on **Saturday, 19th July** we shall have a talk by Dr. Peter Newton on "Heathers and their Soil Requirements" to include all types of heathers but particularly the temperamental ones like *Erica cinerea*. This talk will take place in the Field Classroom by the Harrogate Arms pub as the Study Centre is occupied by an exhibition.

Our autumn meeting on **Saturday, 13th September** will be a visit to our Treasurer, Kathleen Dyson's garden in Fixby, Huddersfield to see it at its best with the *Calluna* in flower.

We look forward to seeing members old and new on these Saturdays. Subscriptions for the Yorkshire Heather Group remain the same, £1 per visit, £3 per year or £4.50 for a couple.

Jean Julian

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. Tea will be served afterwards

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, Nanpantan, Loughborough, proved very acceptable for our meeting in 2002 and I have booked it again for this event. St Mary's Church was once the estate church of Nanpantan Hall and is set in woodland. It is about 150 yards west of the Priory Inn, which is a local landmark.

To get to St Mary's from the M1 motorway, leave at junction 23 and take the A512 towards Loughborough. Turn right at the first traffic lights into Snell's Nook Lane. Go to the crossroad (The Priory Inn is on the corner). Turn right into Nanpantan Road. St Mary's is 150 yards on the left. There is adequate parking.

From Loughborough town, take the Loughborough ring road, Epinal Way, and turn from it into Forest Road. The signs point to Nanpantan. After a mile, Forest Road becomes Nanpantan Road and a further mile leads to the traffic

lights at the Snell's Nook Lane cross roads with the Priory Inn on the right. Go straight over the cross roads and St Mary's is 150 yards farther along on the left.

Loughborough Main Line rail station has good connections with London (St Pancras), Leicester, Derby, Nottingham and Birmingham and is about three miles distance from St Mary's.

Please ask if you would like a copy of a sketch of the route – I shall be sending one anyway to members of the East Midlands Group.

Allen Hall

Home Counties

The Group met on 16 March at The Running Horses, Mickleham, where we had an excellent lunch before travelling to Dorking where David and Audrey Sprague welcomed us to their delightful garden. We were blessed with a warm, sunny day and the heathers were looking at their best - a tribute to David's hard work.

The garden is situated on quite a steep slope and is on a series of terraces, this makes it most interesting as the views are different on every level. David has installed a most ingenious watering system and this was of interest to many of the Group, especially the control of the flow of water by ballcocks in the water butts.

David and Audrey kindly provided us with a splendid tea, which was the perfect end to a very pleasant day.

Owing to unforeseen circumstances the meeting planned for May/June will not now take place. The Group's next meeting will be our annual get-together at **RHS Wisley on Saturday 18 October**. We shall meet outside the shop at 11.00 for a walk round the heather gardens and the afternoon meeting will commence at 14.00 in the Hillside Events Centre. There will be the usual heather competition and further details of the afternoon will be announced in a newsletter.

Have a good summer and I hope to see as many of you as possible at Wisley on 18 October.

Derek Millis

South West

I open this report with the sad news of the deaths of two South West Group members. The first was John Deakin who died during the first half of May. John was a great friend to *The Heather Society* for as long as I can remember and attended many of the group meetings imparting his great knowledge on heathers to the members. John gained his knowledge on heathers when working at the Maxwell and Beale Nurseries alongside the late Joyce Burfitt and he personally knew many of those people after whom many cultivars have been named. John had been confined to an electric wheelchair for several years but he didn't let that stop him trying to live life to the full. John leaves two daughters and their families, his wife Brenda having died some three years ago. We all pass on our condolences to John's family. The second death was that of Joyce Pittman who passed away during April. Over many years Joyce and her husband Stan were regular supporters of both the former Southern Group and this group attending many of the meetings. They also supported the Society by attending some of the past Conferences. We all pass on our condolences to Stan and the rest of the family.

After the sad start to this SW news I now move on to the report of the first two meetings of the year and a description of the third and last meeting of the year.

On Saturday 22nd March, South West Group members met at the Lytchett Matravers Village Hall in Dorset for a talk with slides and the annual Table Show. The weather was cool but dry and sunny providing good travelling conditions for those attending the meeting. I was pleased to have many of our regular members present giving a total of 24 persons including myself. I was the speaker for the afternoon and gave the talk that I give to local horticultural societies which covers most aspects of heather growing. After the talk the members enjoyed the social part of the afternoon taking refreshment and chatting on our favourite topic. The Table Show was then judged and the results were as follows:

Class 1 A vase or bowl of Heathers in bloom

1st Anne Pringle 2nd Jennifer Turrell 3rd Maureen Clark

Class 2 A vase or bowl of Heathers shown for foliage effect

1st Anne Pringle 2nd Phil Joyner 3rd Jennifer Turrell

Anne Pringle was the winner of the Burfitt Bowl for the most points overall but prizes were presented to the members placed in the competition. My thanks goes to my wife Lin and the several of the members for their work in the kitchen. Thanks are also due to the other members who took part in the Table Show and to Lorna Farrow for judging the Table Show.

The second meeting of the year was held on Saturday, 10th May and was a visit to Exbury Gardens on the south-eastern edge of the New Forest. The group's only previous visit to these gardens was many years ago when the group was so ably organised by Bert and Diane Jones. This is the garden created by the late Lionel de Rothschild and now owned by Edmund de Rothschild and is famous for its fine collection of Rhododendrons and Azaleas. At this time of year the gardens are at their best and we weren't disappointed. On a damp cool afternoon a party (19) of members gathered for a 2.00pm start and were shown around part of the extensive gardens by Stuart Grainger, one of the tour guides. Stuart talked about the history of the gardens and pointed out those plants, shrubs and trees which were of particular interest on the day and at this time of year there was no shortage of interest with the Rhododendrons and Azaleas in their full glory. We ended the afternoon with a welcome cup of tea in the restaurant adjacent to the well stocked plant sales area. My thanks goes to the Exbury Gardens for arranging the guided tour and to Stuart for his helpful and courteous manner.

The Remainder of the Year

Saturday 20th September - A visit has been arranged to Heale Gardens, Middle Woodford, north of Salisbury in Wiltshire. Regretfully I am unable to arrange a guided tour so we will wander at leisure, chatting as we go. We will meet at about 1.45pm outside the entrance for entry into the garden at 2.00pm. The gardens are situated on the river Avon and cover 8 acres. The gardens are of all year interest. Amongst the many items of interest is a Japanese Garden with a fine collection of Acers and at the time we are visiting the gardens boast displays of Cyclamen, Nerines and Viburnums. The gardens have a plant sales area, a shop and refreshment facilities. The gardens are situated on the Woodford Valley road and are signposted from both the A360 Salisbury to Devizes road and the A345 Salisbury to Amesbury road and are about midway between those two roads and approximately 4 miles north of Salisbury.

Saturday 27th March 2004 - Annual indoor meeting at 2.00 p.m. at the Lytchett Matravers Village Hall. A talk will be arranged, more details in the *Autumn Bulletin*.

If you intend to come to a meeting then I would be grateful if you could let me know about 10 days beforehand (Tel: 023 80864336 or E-mail: pjoyner@supanet.com). If you require further information then either send me a SAE or contact me as described above. I would like to emphasise that the

meetings are open not only to local group members but to all *Heather Society* members and their friends. Once again I am grateful to those people who make the visits possible and I look forward to seeing you at the next meeting.

Phil Joyner

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Zone 1 - Scotland

W R MO

Yes YesNo Mr. D. Sturrock, Angus Plants & Crafts, Crosston Farm, by Letham, FORFAR, ANGUS, DD8 2NZ.

Yes YesYes Mr. & Mrs. J Davidson, Highland Heathers, Muirend, COMRIE, PERTSHIRE, PH6 2JA.

Yes YesYes Mr. D.A. Lambie, Speyside Heather Centre, West End, Skye of Curr, DULNAIN

BRIDGE, INVERNESS-SHIRE, PH26 3PA.

Yes No No Mr. & Mrs. G Gow, Perthshire Heathers, The Farl, Forgandenny, PERTH, PH2 9DB.

Zone 2 - Ireland

Yes No No Mr. W. Crawford, Brownlow Heathers, 148 Avenue Road, Lurgan, CRAIGAVON, CO. ARMAGH, NORTHERN IRELAND, BT66 7BJ.

No YesNo Mr. G. Willis, Kilternan Nurseries, Old Post Office, KILTERNAN, CO. DUBLIN, REPUBLIC OF IRELAND.

Yes YesNo Mr. & Mrs. D. Kerins, Fernhurst Garden Nurseries, Killowen, KENMARE, CO. KERRY, REPUBLIC OF IRELAND.

Zone 4 - England: Northwest

Yes YesNo The Nurseries Holmes of Natland, Natland, KENDAL, CUMBRIA, LA9 7QC.

Yes No No Mr. T. Foden, Foden Nurseries, Rowley House, Kermincham, HOLMES CHAPEL, CHESHIRE, CW4 8DX.

Yes YesYes Mr. S. Crabtree, Eversley Nursery, 10 Granville Avenue, Hesketh Bank, PRESTON, LANCASHIRE, PR4 6AH.

Yes YesYes Mr. T.J. Okell, Okell's Nurseries, Duddon Heath, Nr. TARPORLEY, CHESHIRE, CW6 0EP.

Zone 7 - England: West Midlands

Yes YesNo Mr. & Mrs. R. Warner, Barncroft Nurseries, Dunwood Lane, Longsdon, STOKE-ON-TRENT, STAFFORDSHIRE, ST9 9QW.

Zone 8 - Cymru (Wales)

W R MO

Yes No No Mr. & Mrs. N. Croft, Glynwern Heather Nurseries, Cilcennin, LAMPETER, DYFED SA48 8RJ.

Zone 11 - England: Southern

No YesNo Mr. S. Moody, 2 Chiltern Cottages, Vicarage Lane, Burwash Common, ETCHINGHAM, E. SUSSEX, TN19 7LN.

Yes YesYes Mr. J. Martin, Hillway Nursery, Felbridge, EAST GRINSTEAD, E. SUSSEX, RH19 2PS.

Zone 12 - England: Southwest

Yes No No Mr. D. M. Edge, Forest Edge Nursery, Verwood Road, Woodlands, WIMBORNE, DORSET, BH21 6LJ.

Yes No No Mr. M.C.C. Skinner, Combe Florey Nursery, Combe Florey, TAUNTON, SOMERSET, TA4 3JE.

Zone 13 - England: Far West

Yes No Yes Mr. A. Powell, Talaton Plants, 1 Ivy Cottages, Talaton, EXETER, DEVON, EX5 2SD.

Zone 14.1 - Australasia

No YesYes Mrs. C. Coe, Coehaven Nursery, 150 Rangioru Road, OTAKI, NEW ZEALAND.

- Yes YesNo Mrs. M.L. Hughes, Blue Mountain Nurseries, 99 Bushy Hill Street,
Tapanui, WEST OTAGO, NEW ZEALAND.
Yes No No Mr. & Mrs. D.A. Phillips, Ericaflora, P.O. Box 206, MONBULK,
VICTORIA 3793, AUSTRALIA.

Zone 14.2 - Canada

- No YesYes Mr. D. Wilson, 6605 Hopedale Road, CHILLIWACK, BRITISH
COLUMBIA V2R 4L4, CANADA.

Zone 14.3 - Europe

- Yes No No Mr. H.W. de Bruijn, Insteek 46, 2771 AB BOSKOOP, NEDERLAND.
No YesNo Karmøy Lyngsenter Vigsnes A/S, Vigsnes, N-4262 AVALDSNES,
NORWAY.
Yes No No Mr. K. Kramer, Edammer Straße 26, 26188 EDEWECHT, GERMANY.
Yes No No Hr. O. Søndergaard, Gl. Sundsvej 15, DK-7451 SUNDS, DENMARK.
Yes YesNo Mr. G. Van Hoef, Esweg 15, 3771 BARNEVELD, NEDERLAND.
No YesNo Mr. H. Westermann, Baumschulenweg 2, 29646 BISPINGEN,
GERMANY.
Yes No No Mr. J. van Leuven, Ilmenweg 39, 47608 Geldern, GERMANY.
Yes No No Mr. Rafał Wolski, Kwalifikowane Szkółki Owocowe i Róż, ul. Srebrna
Dąbrowa 18, 95 050 KONSTANTYNÓW ŁÓDZKI, POLAND.

Zone 14.6 - U.S.A.

- Yes YesYes Miss K. Herrick, Rock Spray Nursery inc., Box 693, TRURO, MA 02666,
U.S.A.
Yes YesNo Mr. A.H. Pilch, Log House Herbs, 70 Ajuga Drive, SYLVA, NORTH
CAROLINA 28779, U.S.A.
No YesNo Mrs. G. Couch-Carlberg, Glenmar Heather Nursery Inc., P.O. Box 479,
BAYSIDE, CA 95524-0479, U.S.A.
No No Yes Mrs. K.L. Lortz, Heaths & Heathers, E. 502 Haskell Hill Road,
SHELTON, WA 98584, U.S.A.

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