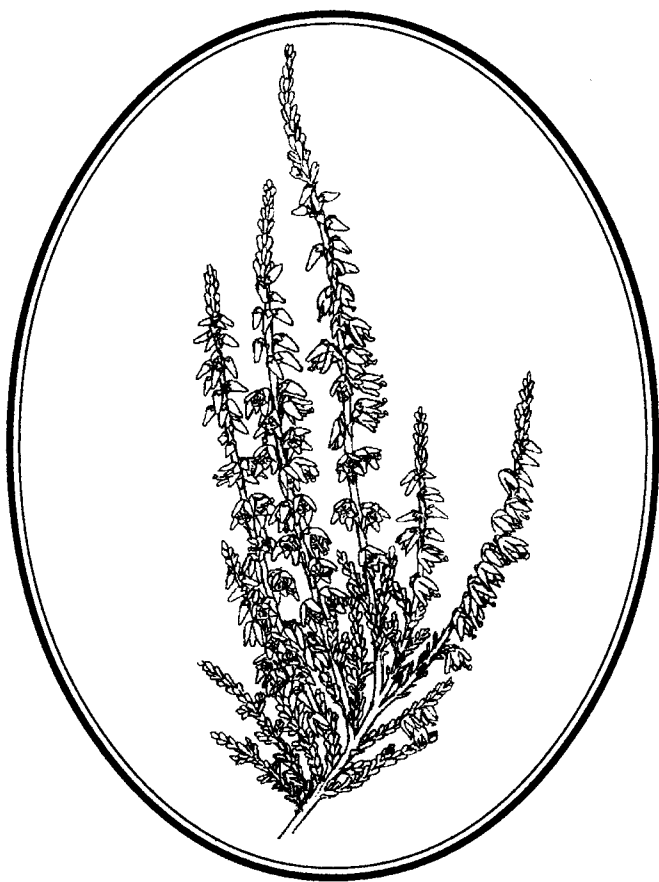


*Bulletin of The
Heather Society*



Vol. 6 No. 13

Autumn 2004

DIARY OF EVENTS

2004

October 29 North East Group Annual General Meeting

2005

January 15 CLOSING DATE FOR SPRING BULLETIN

March 12 East Midlands Visit to Kingfisher Nursery

March 12 South West Annual Indoor meeting

September 9 - 12

HEATHER SOCIETY GATHERING & CONFERENCE, DORSET

October 1 Home Counties Annual Meeting



A Registered Charity No. 261407

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Cover illustration *Calluna vulgaris* by Brita Johannson

Congratulations are due to all those who worked so hard to make the recent International Conference such a success, with the hospitality of the Lambies at the Speyside Heather Centre and the traditional Scottish entertainment at the hotel adding greatly to the enjoyment. It made me wonder - where are our English traditions? Do we have any?

The 2005 Annual Gathering of The Heather Society

34th Annual Conference, September 9th - 12th 2005

The 2005 Annual Gathering of the Heather Society will be held in Dorset. Accommodation, dining and lecture facilities have been arranged in the Russell Court Hotel in Bournemouth. Single, twin or double rooms are available and the hotel has ample car parking. The hotel is situated in the centre of town overlooking the bay, within a leisurely walking distance of the major shops and beaches. Bournemouth coach and railway stations are about ten minutes walk (or a short taxi drive). Dorset has the New Forest, attractive beaches and museums, so why not plan a holiday in the area around the Conference weekend.

The weekend includes a visit to the Arne Peninsula to see *Erica ciliaris* in the wild; this will be combined with a talk by Professor Nigel Webb, who is an expert on the flora and fauna of the area. The second visit of the weekend will be to Compton Acres Gardens, a ten acre garden looking out over Poole Harbour, reputed to be one of the finest gardens in Europe and includes a "Scottish Heather Glen". This visit will be guided by the garden's Curator.

We shall also be going to Forest Edge Nurseries to see commercial trends and the opportunity to propagate some favourite heathers, together with the chance to see David Edge's personal collection of Cape Heaths.

Exbury Gardens is the last main visit of the weekend. At this 200 acre estate with narrow gauge steam railway and heather garden, we will be given an introductory talk by the Head Gardener, followed by a guided tour.

A draft programme comprising these visits, talks, AGM, and discussion sessions is being prepared and will be announced in the Spring Bulletin.

There will be plenty of time over the weekend to meet old friends or to make new ones, with time to relax and talk about your favourite subjects. The inclusive cost for the whole weekend will be about £225, with a single person supplement of £7.50 per night. Arrangements can be made if you want to attend on a "day visitor" basis. Bookings may now be made by sending £2 to Anne Small, Denbeigh, All Saints Road, Creeting St Mary, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP6 8PJ. The booking fee is non-returnable and is not a deposit on the cost of the conference.

I will be pleased to answer any queries relating to this 2005 Gathering by telephone (00353 95 43575) or E-mail: susiek@gofree.indigo.ie

Susie Kay

Report on the 2004 Annual General meeting

Daphne Everett

Through the kind hospitality of Betty & David Lambie, the 2004 AGM was held in the unusual surroundings of the Speyside Heather Centre – thereby saving the Society the £300 that the Hotel would have charged to hold it there. The meeting, was held in an Exhibition Room and was much enlivened by an electricity-saving sensor which, at regular intervals throughout the meeting, switched all the lights off and plunged the meeting into darkness. Still – it stopped anyone from falling asleep!

The Chairman, Arnold Stow welcomed everyone to the 33rd Annual Conference and, in particular, the many members from abroad who were attending. He made particular mention of Dee Daneri and one of the Society's Vice Presidents, Alice Knight, both from the USA, who had sadly lost their husbands within the last 12 months. Arnold also thanked the various members of Council for their contributions to the running of the Society and also the Editor of the *Yearbook* (now called *Heathers*).

The Secretary, Jean Julian reported that: Council meetings will no longer be held at Vincent Square as the rooms have become too expensive. The Society remains stable at around 550 members. Volume II of the International Register – Cape Heaths is progressing well. Local Groups are continuing strongly. The Wisley Heather Collection continues to thrive and, now that the RHS has taken over Harlow Carr, there are plans for a new Collection there sometime in the future.

It was proposed by the Yearbook Editor that the President/Chairman of the Dutch, German & North American Heather Societies should be made Vice-Presidents of *The Heather Society* for the duration of their year in Office. This was accepted.

Congratulations were also expressed for member John Bridgland, who has recently reached the grand age of 97. John had decided that it was time to retire from the Society, but, instead, the Society felt that he deserved Life Membership.

The Treasurer, Phil Joyner, (in his first year in office) presented the accounts, which remain in a healthy state. This is partly due to the sound investment knowledge of Council Members, Richard Canovan and Roy Nichols.

He also had on show the audited copies of the 2002 accounts, as these had had to be presented unaudited at the last Conference. There were questions from the floor regarding the high cost to a small Society of producing the International Register. It was explained that producing a Register is a requirement of being the International Cultivar Registration Authority.

Conference Organiser, Susie Kay, reported on the preliminary arrangements for the 2005 Conference - to be held in Bournemouth, from 9 - 12th September.

The Meeting came to an end with the presentation by Ella May Wulff, President of the *North American Heather Society*, to our own President, David Small, of a certificate for Life Membership of that Society.

A Small Taste of the 2004 Conference

Daphne Everett

Although I mustn't steal the thunder of Council Member, Barry Sellers, who will be writing up an account of the Conference for the 2005 edition of *Heathers*, I couldn't resist showing you the Society's Chairman, Arnold Stow and the Home Counties organiser, Derek Millis, as you have never seen them before.

The pictures were taken during lunch at the Speyside Heather Centre, when a 'strong' man from each table was dragged off to - he knew not where - only to reappear dressed as you see, in order to serve the rest of us with the Heather Centre's famous Granny Clottie's Dumplings.



Granny Clottie - Arnold Stow
Photograph - Valerie Griffiths



Granny Clottie - Derek Millis
Photograph - Valerie Griffiths



Group on heather Moor, David Lambie with Phil Joyner looking at a white Calluna.

Photographs Daphne Everett

With an International Flavour

Jean Julian

The 2004 Conference at Coylumbridge was very different from our usual event, mainly due to its international flavour, with 74 delegates attending from six countries. Then on Tuesday 24th August at the completion of Conference, seventeen delegates were up for an early breakfast, as we were leaving on a post-conference tour of Western Scotland. We retained the same coach and driver (Colin) so we knew we were in for a steady ride.

We left the hotel to visit Colin's home village of Newtonmore, having come through the rival village of Kingussie, where he went to school. Then on through *Monarch of the Glen* country to Spean Bridge for coffee. Many parts of Speyside are used in the television series and we were fortunately able to view 'Ardluie House' across Loch Laggan but not able to view the impressive Commando Memorial just outside Spean Bridge village. So off now down the Great Glen to Fort William for lunch where eleven of us frequented the same baker's shop.

We had set off under grey skies but the weather improved and the sun came out as we arrived at Glenfinnan and the memorial to Bonnie Prince Charlie. We had a choice, a video explaining Prince Charles Stuart's travels, the opportunity to climb the monument, taking note that it says here that the white heather is the emblem of the McDonnell's and the purple has been adopted by Clan Donal but most chose to inspect the railway viaduct which Hogwart's Express crossed in the Harry Potter film. We reached Mallaig in plenty of time to catch the ferry Coir'duis to Armadale on Skye. Thank goodness Armadale Gardens were still open so we could view the ruined castle, garden and exhibition explaining the history of the islands and the Scottish kings. We stayed the night at the Sligachan Inn, a little larger now than the original of Dr. Johnson's time. Seventeen was a good number to fit round a table but this gastronomic delight managed it even though the Brits and Americans stuck to opposite ends.

Wednesday morning saw us driving up the west side of the island for a tour round Dunvegan Castle garden with the gardens adviser, David Maclean: a

a walled garden and a fern house. We gave him plenty of advice where to plant heathers! After a look round the castle we had planned to visit the Talisker distillery but the time was not convenient so we moved on to Portree for a lazy afternoon in the sunshine. Here we met members of the German group who were traversing Scotland in the opposite direction to us. We had an early return home before beginning an enjoyable evening; the Brits taking one side of the table this time and the Americans the other. Wine must have flowed to encourage our Chairman and his party to tell tall stories.

We returned to the mainland on Thursday via the new bridge from Kyleakin to Kyle of Lochalsh. The weather was not quite so good that day so having had a good walk around Plockton we relaxed in the local hotel over coffee. Plockton is a beautiful corner of Scotland with palm trees on the foreshore, made famous in the TV series *Hamish MacBeath*. We then followed a spectacular but narrow road alongside the loch, just right for a daredevil coach driver, to arrive at Attadale Garden. This place had a design of its own; a perfectly kept garden with several styles, rhododendron walk, Japanese Garden, kitchen garden, fern house and everything looked after by honesty boxes; not only the entrance fee but even the superb plants for sale. The rain came down as we left and we could just see the water as we arrived at Loch Carron village. It was a quick dash across the road to the Inn where they quickly rallied round to provide us with a meal even though it had only five minutes to last orders.

I felt for the visitors that afternoon having to traverse the pass to Sheildaig and Loch Torridon in such awful Scottish weather, when it has such spectacular views. We were glad to arrive at Gairloch and the Craig Mhor Hotel.

Friday continued to be a poor day but we were lucky enough to visit the Scottish National Trust Garden at Inverewe in cool dry weather. A quiz was held to find the most heather species in the garden and with a little trading, 10 species were named, plus *Andromeda* and *Phyllodoce*. We continued up the coast road in torrential rain so we were not able to view the Western Isles but we did walk through Corrieshalloch Gorge in a dry half hour. Here the Falls of Measach fall 200ft down a mile long gorge. It is believed to be the narrowest gorge in Europe and is crossed by a suspension bridge built in 1867. We continued up Loch Broom to Ullapool before returning to Gairloch via the better road. This proved quite challenging though due to road works. Only in Scotland can a major "A" road be single track with passing places; great fun in a coach if you have a good stomach.

We had a good choice of hotel, both provided traditional Scottish dishes and though porridge had to be requested there was Atholl Brose, Cranachan, Cullen Skink, smoked venison and lots of fresh fish and meat.

Saturday morning soon came and it was time to return to Inverness via yet another woollen mill. All offer a demonstration of weaving and a variety of goods for sale. Our indefatigable coach driver then dropped members of the team at various hotels before returning to Coylumbridge with the officers of the Society.

A wonderful time had been had by all. The friendship of our Society was impressive and the poor weather soon forgotten as we said our goodbyes.

North American Heather Society Conference August 2004 Allen Hall

The North American Heather Society (NAHS) Conference of 2004 was organised by *The Heather Enthusiasts of the Redwood Empire (HERE)* led by its inspirational president, Dee Daneri. It consisted of three events – a pre Conference tour of North California, the Conference itself and a post tour on Mounts Shasta and Lassen in search of the mountain heath, *Phyllodoce*. My wife Joan and I are members of NAHS and attended the Conference and tours. Dr. E Charles Nelson, also of the UK and Dr. E G H (Ted) Oliver of South Africa were the keynote speakers at the Conference and took part in both tours.

We met in San Francisco on 8th August for the pre tour and our first day took us to the University of California Santa Cruz arboretum for a visit to the Arruda, cape heaths and proteas of the South African section. Our visit was guided by Mr. Ron curator of the erica collection..

The South African section containing the erica collection had been covered in canvas with an overlay of fine gravel, the heathers being planted through into the ground below. However some plants had seeded into the gravel. There is no rainfall in the coastal area of California for six months over the summer and so irrigation is essential. The hot summer sun is mitigated on many days by a sea mist. In winter the rainfall is 60 inches, but in some exceptional years can be as much as 120 inches when flood conditions obtain. In January, the temperature drops to 29°F on 8 or 9 days. Ron Arruda said that around once in 10 years temperatures drop to 16° to 18°F. when the ground freezes and plants die, particularly the erica seedlings. Ted Oliver, the acknowledged expert on Cape heaths, was able to advise Ron Arruda on aspects of naming and labelling.

The day was gloriously hot and sunny and humming birds darted among the stunning flowers of the cape heaths. Among the species there we saw the dusky red flowers of *Erica cerinthoides*, the bright pink *baueri*, red *mammosa*, orange *grandiflora*, yellow *brachialis*, and *pinea* with bright yellow foliage as well as yellow flowers. Some, but not all, bushes of *canaliculata* were already coming into flower. All this, a blue sky and good company – a taste of heaven.

Ron Arruda guided us to his favourite fish restaurant perched on a pier jutting into the Pacific Ocean, and there we had lunch enjoying sea views and amiable conversation. Later, he led us on a visit to the Big Basin redwoods – *Sequoia sempervirens* – and we admired once more those noble trees.

On day two we visited University of California Berkeley botanical garden where we met the Director Molly Forbes and were guided by Bob Barany, curator of the South African section. Dr. Nelson had previously visited the arboretum and presented a lecture there so some of the staff were known to him. We saw more cape heaths here including *Erica longifolia* and *versicolor*. We learned that climatic conditions were little different from those at Santa Cruz. However, the South African and European sections are situated on a steep hill such that cold air in winter is likely to roll away from the tender

plants. The ground was mulched with compost rather than gravel which might also help preserve them during the short frosty period of the year. At any rate the cape heaths looked healthy.

In the European section we saw some *E. scoparia subsp scoparia*, *E. multiflora* and *E. manipuliflora*. The *multiflora* looked a little like *vagans* but Charles considered it was correctly labelled.

After lunch we visited the Golden Gate Park and Strybing Arboretum to see a wealth of plants and some cape heaths. On our way north we stopped to take photographs of the Golden Gate bridge and later had dinner al fresco in a town near our lodgings.

On the third day of our tour we did some wine tasting at the vineyards of California – an instructive experience. We made our way across country until in the late afternoon we came to the fabulous heather garden of Jim and Beverley Thompson at Manchester. Jim created this wonderful 2.5-acre garden about 20 years ago but has been ailing lately so that Beverley has taken responsibility for its maintenance. The garden is a fine – perhaps the finest – example of a traditional heather and dwarf conifer garden. Jim has landscaped an otherwise level plot to give variations in height to which the conifers also contribute. There are some 300 different heather cultivars planted to give drifts of colour and foliage winter and summer. Among them were some fine plantings of Jim's own introduction, *Calluna vulgaris* 'Fortyniner Gold'. For me this was the highlight of the tour though there were some exceptional gardens to come.

We stayed at Fort Bragg overnight and on the following day visited three private heather gardens and the Medicino Coast Botanical Garden and arboretum. Our first visit was to the garden of Natalie and Dick Somer.



Natalie & Jim Somer's garden –
photograph Allen Hall.

Dick is currently President of the California North Coast chapter and President elect of NAHS. We were treated to breakfast at their lovely home deep in the pinewoods. Their garden is exceptional in that the heathers are planted in shaped beds edged with segments of logs arranged vertically. The paths are covered with gravel. (In fact rarely did we see grassy paths in heather gardens.) Next we visited the garden of Joan Murphy. This garden is nearer the coast with

no tree cover. Heather is planted on the four sides of the house in lovely, well chosen drifts. There was here the best planting of *E. cinerea* 'Golden Drop' I have ever seen. A number of members of the local chapter had also gathered and it was good to meet among them Homer Ferguson who was President at the time of the 1996 tour. Only 5 minutes away was the home and garden of Edith Davis. This was a garden we saw during the 1996 NAHS tour and it retains its unusual

charm. Rather than beds with drifts of heather, the garden design is based on individual plantings of taller heathers and small clusters of (identical) cultivars of smaller growing varieties. Edith and her friends had provided their own tasty version of "brunch".

Then came Medicino Coast Botanical Garden and arboretum where we met Cathy Love and were accompanied by the curator Mario Abreu. We visited various parts of the gardens including a splendid garden of dahlias, a domestic type vegetable garden and a covered display of begonias. Of course, the most important garden for us was the heather garden. In it we found a good collection of European cultivars and a few South African species. The plants were well cultivated, labelled and presented. Charles and Ted were able to give some advice on naming.

On our long drive north to Fortuna we stopped to visit a redwood grove and to drive through the drive-through tree – a close fit as it turned out. Our day did not end when we arrived at our hotel because Dee with incredible hospitality invited Ted, Charles, Joan and me to a barbecue at her home nearby. So in the warm dusk we sipped our red wine surrounded by the flowers of her lovely garden and later ate our juicy steaks as the conversations flowed on.

Thursday was a free day and we explored the local area. We saw the remains of coastal defences erected during World War II and this reminded the foreign visitors among us that the USA had faced a real threat of invasion. In Eureka we saw the fabulous Carson Mansion and across the road from it the "Pink Lady" – a wooden house also built by the Carson's. In nearby Ferndale we saw another Victorian house of distinction, usually called the "Gingerbread House". Along the roadsides we frequently saw *Erica lusitanica* growing wild. This beautiful heather has become a real nuisance in California where the climate suits it well.

The Conference began with registration in the afternoon at River Lodge, Fortuna. River Lodge is a new Community Centre built on the Eel River. H.E.R.E. co-operated with the City Council from the outset to provide a heather garden around the Lodge and today the lovely garden has more than 600 heather cultivars. H.E.R.E. members designed the garden, provided the heathers and planted them. The Community is responsible for the upkeep of the garden. Both parties to this arrangement have done their jobs well. It was a real pleasure to view the garden. I saw no weeds, the plants looked healthy and the design was fine. It is evident that in California, heathers are pruned or rather clipped more thoroughly and carefully than is common in Britain. This gives a more sophisticated look to the heather gardens than I am used to.

The Conference Organisers had worked hard to prepare the Lodge. There were 2,000 heathers for sale, and on certain days, the public were invited in to make their purchases. There were many other items for sale. These included a Royal Doulton tea service, decorated with heathers and a Spode bone china cake dish. Some of Charles Nelson's books were offered for sale. Copies of Terry Underhill's first book, still in their publishers' wrappers were there as well as some of his later book. There were several copies of Dolf Schumann's *Ericas of South Africa* and a pristine copy of Baker and Oliver's *Erica in Southern Africa*, signed by Ted Oliver himself. Members had been busy

making serviette rings, greetings cards, handkerchiefs and other craft objects and there were a number of framed pictures of South African heathers – all for sale. There was a flower competition and prizes for winning entries were distributed on Saturday evening.

The keynote speakers made their presentations after dinner on the Friday and Saturday evenings. Dr. Oliver on Friday dealt with South African Heathers and Dr. Nelson on Saturday with the heathers of Europe. Both speakers made further presentations on Sunday morning when they explained facets of the naming of South African and European heathers respectively. Moreover Ted and Charles walked around the River Lodge garden on Sunday morning discussing the plants with Conference members and answering their questions.

Saturday was taken with visits to six members gardens including the garden of Glenmar Heather Nursery. These gardens ranged from small to medium size and each had distinctive features. Like the gardens we saw at Fort Bragg, it was interesting that they were within relatively easy reach of each other. This speaks of the enthusiasm of members of local chapters and should make it easier to arrange corporate events. At the risk of being invidious, I would mention in particular one of these lovely gardens – that of Katie Griffiths - because we saw her garden during the 1996 tour. Since 1996, Katie has moved to a somewhat larger house and garden though the garden is still not a big one. Her garden is packed with heathers and some other plants, making a glad display. Sinuous brick or grassy paths divide the beds to form attractive shapes.

The Glenmar nursery, where we had a delicious picnic lunch, is owned and operated by two H.E.R.E. members – Glenda Couch-Carlberg and Maria Krenek. Maria and her husband Tom live on the site. Glenmar is a specialist heather nursery of the old fashioned kind. The heathers are propagated and grown on site in conditions that ensure strong, healthy, disease resistant plants. And there is a good range of plants for sale as well. The garden is excellent and shows off the heathers to good effect – no doubt a good selling feature.

On Sunday, after lunch provided by the Wiyot Tribe, we visited the garden of Dian and Mike Keesee. Those who attended the 1996 Conference will well remember this beautiful, mature garden that Dian has since maintained and improved. It was a lovely day and humming birds were enjoying the flowers along with us – though not of course for the same reason.

The Conference concluded with a barbecue at the home of Dee Daneri. It was good to wander along the shady paths and converse with new friends. Discussions were going on about next year's conference in New Hampshire and indeed of the conference after that in British Columbia. The Stars and Stripes flew proudly above, and a duet provided some background music. But at last the shadows lengthened, the party was over and it was time to depart for another year.

There was another departure for those going on the post-conference tour – at 6 am on Monday, the following morning. We had a long journey ahead to get to Mount Shasta and a detour was necessary because of forest fires. The

small party consisted of Dee Daneri, Charles Nelson, Ted Oliver, Joan and me in one car and Donald Mackay and Elaine Miller in another. Donald knew the Mt. Shasta area and was to lead the party. Rhoda Posey, Chief Botanist for the US Forest Service, joined us at Mt. Shasta.



*Mount Shasta with a
phyllodoce meadow
in the foreground*

*Photograph,
Allen Hall*

Mt. Shasta is 14,168 ft. / 4,317m above sea level and still had snow fields near its peak in mid – August. We drove up to about 6,500 ft. on a hot, sunny day. The mountain rose above us, with pine woods up to the tree line. We walked by easy paths first over broken ground and then in a mountain meadow watered by streams fed by melting snow high above. The soil between the rocks was volcanic, sandy and well drained. There was plenty of *Phyllodoce empetrifomis* growing along the streams, or not far from them. The flowers were over and the plants bristled with ripening seed heads. *Phyllodoce* sheds its dried bells when the seeds set so we did not see many of the purple, urn-like bells that are characteristic of this species. Then we climbed a steep, rock strewn path to a higher meadow, passing *Phyllodoce* growing in cracks in the rocks. No doubt the roots of these plants remained cool and would find plenty of moisture. Later some of our party went up to about 7,500 ft. and proceeded to some meadows a little higher up.

On the next day, Douglas and Elaine left the party but the rest of us went to Mt. Lassen National Park, around 50 miles South East of Shasta, hoping (vainly as it turned out) to see *Cassiope*. On the way we stopped to see and photograph the spectacular Burney falls. Mt. Lassen is a semi-dormant volcano rising to 10,500 ft. / 3,187m and had snow fields on its upper slopes. Its last major eruption was in 1915 followed by sporadic activity until 1921. The national park is closed, except for winter sports, from November until June. We stopped in the Park at a meadow for a picnic lunch and to walk in the meadow. *Phyllodoce breweri* was growing all around us. After lunch we drove up to around 7,800 ft. and parked. From there we walked on a mountain path, passing drifts of snow, though the day was hot. *Phyllodoce* was much in evidence, sometimes appearing from small slits in rocks and sometimes emerging from below boulders. These plants would be deep under snow for

much of the year. Seed heads were ripening on most of them but a few still had flowers. The scenery was magnificent on this lovely day.

In the mid afternoon, we set out on the long drive to San Francisco since all of us had flights to catch in the course of the next two days. So ended a wonderful tour and NAHS Conference. However, three of us were on our way to Scotland for the Heather Society conference at Aviemore.

***Erica ciliaris* 'Mawiana'**

I am anxious to trace plants of this cultivar (usually incorrectly labelled 'Maweana': (see article in *Bulletin* Vol. 6, Autumn 2003). If any member grows this, please could they press and dry a specimen – a single shoot preferably with some fresh flowers still on it – and when dry send it to me at my address which is in the inside back cover. Thank you.

Dr. Charles Nelson

International Register David Small

The first part (A-C) of Volume 2 of The International Register of Heather Names was published on 20 August 2004 at the Second International Heather Conference at Coylumbridge. This volume, to be published in four parts during 2004, contains the names employed for *Erica* species and subspecific taxa that are indigenous in Africa (south of the Tropic of Cancer) and adjacent islands of the southern Atlantic and Indian Oceans. The majority of species occur in the Western Cape Province, South Africa, and these have long been referred to as the "Cape heaths", or "Cape Ericas". This volume also includes the names of natural and artificial hybrids, "varieties" and cultivars of the Cape heaths.

Copies can be obtained using the Order Form enclosed with this Bulletin.

Once the fourth part has been published, a CD-ROM will be made available for users of Microsoft Access.

In search of the Balkan heath, 2005 Charles Nelson

The Balkan heath, *Erica spiculifolia*, formerly *Bruckenthalia spiculifolia*, is one of the least well-known of the hardy European heathers. It is represented in our gardens by only a few clones, none of which is of documented wild origin. The colour range of wild plants is only vaguely recorded, although the existence of white-flowered *Bruckenthalia* has long been reported.

Next year, I have been offered an opportunity to bring a group to visit Romania in search of the Balkan heath. The tour will be organized by David Sayers Travel, who arranged our very enjoyable visit to The Azores in 2003. The trip would last one week between 21 July and 28 July (Thursday to Thursday) departing London Heathrow at 12.30pm, returning 11.30am), and

a programme has been worked out which includes Cluj-Napoca, a picturesque university city where the Romanian national botanical garden is located. Ling (*Calluna vulgaris*) grows in the vicinity of Cluj, almost at the southeastern extremity of its range. Various other places in northern Romania, one of the least spoiled parts of Eastern Europe, are on the itinerary, which will combine sightseeing with botanical rambles. In this region, more than anywhere else in Europe, traditional dress is still worn and wood-carving is a living craft. It will be a fascinating holiday with scope for lots of fun. One highlight will be a trip on the picturesque forestry train in the wild Vaser Valley; this train will bring us straight into the heart of the Carpathian Mountains, where the Balkan heath occurs.

Accommodation will be in 3-star hotels and rural guesthouses, with all meals (and wine with dinner) included. Local travel will be by coach, with travel Bucharest-Cluj by plane. The cost will be £1,394 (including flights), per person sharing. Full details are available on request to Romania (Balkan Heath), c/o Andrew Brock Travel, 29A Main Street, Lyddington, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 9LR. Tel: 01572 821330; Fax: 01572 821072; email: wsc@walkeurope.com

Heather Literature for members

Arnold Stow - Chairman

The Library of books owned by former President Major General Pat Turpin has been offered to the Society and accepted. It has been decided that they should be offered to members at a nominal cost of £3.00 for UK members to cover post and packing. Overseas postage costs on application. As a guide the USA cost would be £8.00

The books available are listed below.

<i>The Low Road</i>	1927	D F Maxwell
<i>Hardy Heaths</i>	1956	A T Johnson
<i>The Heather Garden</i>	1964	Fred Chapple
<i>The English Heather Garden</i> (2 copies)	1966	D F Max & P S Patrick
Lett's Catalogue	1966	J.F. Letts
<i>Heaths and Heathers</i> (2 editions)	1972 and 1990	Terry Underhill
<i>Heathers in Colour</i>	1974	Brian & Valerie Proudley
<i>Heathers in Colour</i> (in German)	1974	
<i>La bruyere</i> (in French)	1979	La Rochefoucauld
<i>In search of Heathland</i>	1982	Lee Chadwick
<i>Conifers and Heathers</i>	1986	Adrian Bloom
<i>Gardening with Conifers and Heathers</i>	1986	Alan Toogood
<i>Heathlands</i>	1986	Nigel Webb
<i>Heidegarten</i> (in German)	1987	Lothar Denkewitz

These books are available on a first come, first served basis from me (Address details inside back cover)

What is Irish heath?

Or, the baffling matter of common/colloquial/vernacular names for heathers

(with apologies to the editors of Heather notes)!

E. Charles Nelson, International Cultivar Registrar

If you live in Ireland or Britain, the plant called Irish heath bears the scientific (Latin) name *Erica erigena*. If you venture west to the USA (and Canada?), the plant that most commonly bears this English moniker has the Latin name *Daboecia cantabrica*. Back across the ocean, that species is called St Dabeoc's heath – pronounced da-vock. Ask for "Saint Da-vock's heath" in Vermont or Vancouver, and I fear the nurseryman will look at you quizzically and, in the end, offer you nothing. I won't ask why this contrary situation has arisen, because I suspect no-one knows.

English names – better to call them vernacular names – are not regulated by internationally agreed codes of nomenclature which, by the way, are not legally enforced anyway but gain their authority merely by the mutual consent of the whole community of botanists and horticulturists, both professional and amateur. Vernacular names, because they are names in the native language used by the people of particular districts, are not and never can be uniform, simply because every language differs. Even speakers of the same language – English for example! – will use different names for the same plant. Take *Calluna vulgaris*: in different parts of Great Britain this is (or was) called variously heather, hadder, hedder, ling, bazzom, bissom, black ling, broom, dog heather, grig, griglans, griglum, he-heather, mountain mist and red ling, and those are only the names recorded in that inestimable work by Geoffrey Grigson, *The Englishman's flora*. Note, by the way, he did not include Scotch heather as a name, and if you consult certain other dictionaries that particular abomination is applied to *Erica cinerea*. Given that *Calluna* ranges between Skipsfjorden in northern Norway to northern Morocco and from the Azores to central Siberia, this one heather alone must have hundreds, if not thousands, of truly vernacular names in European, Asian and African languages, both dead and alive. That's one reason why the Latin name is always to be preferred.

The late David McClintock asked the following question: "What regulates English names of plants?" His answer was: "In effect usage only". Several decades ago, the need for stability and uniformity in English names prompted the Botanical Society of the British Isles to set up a working party to recommend a set of English names for the plants that grow wild in the region. The BSBI published its first recommendations in 1974, and those recommended names are now widely used in English-language publications produced in Great Britain and Ireland. The Society set out some principles, the first being that "One English name only for a species [was to be] adopted." Interestingly this example was given:

We considered carefully a number of instances in which two English names were used widely, e.g. ling and heather for *Calluna vulgaris*. Such

apparently good cases were numerous. We decided finally that the alternative names would cause confusion and contradict the requirement that the Working Party recommend a separate name for each wild plant.

Subsequently, by the way, lists of recommended vernacular names have been published in the other languages, Irish, Welsh and (Scots) Gaelic. New English vernacular names are also occasionally coined when a plant found growing in the wild apparently has none; these are usually translations of the applicable Latin name. An example is Darley Dale heath for *Erica x darleyensis*. That name was most probably taken from David McClintock's excellent booklet *A guide to the naming of plants* (second edition, 1980), in which he listed all the hardy heather species, and the then-known hybrids, under, first, their recommended English name. Without exception, I think, the names David employed are now adopted in such standard works as Clive Stace's *New flora of the British Isles*. Thus *Calluna vulgaris* is called heather, and Irish heath is *Erica erigena*!

In an ideal (botanical) world we would all use only Latin names, so we could be unambiguously understood anywhere from Aberdeen (Scotland) or Aberdeen (South Africa) to Aberdeen (USA – take your pick, MI, NC SD, WA!). But, the world about us is not ideal and there is a further complication, well-illustrated by another of David McClintock's pertinent questions: "Can a cultivar name be used with an English name?" The answer was, and remains: "Yes". The *International code of nomenclature for cultivated plants (ICNCP)* permits the use of "common, colloquial, or vernacular names" – but "the formation and use" of such names is not regulated by the *ICNCP*. Formation and usage are still matters of preference and geography. The *ICNCP* Article 7 states that cultivar names can be written in "a variety of equivalent ways", and proceeds with the example of *Fragaria* 'Cambridge Favourite': it can also be strawberry 'Cambridge Favourite', 'Cambridge Favourite' strawberry, etcetera. Which brings me back to English names for heathers, and the question I posed in the title of this discourse.

What is Irish heath? *Erica erigena* (Old World) or *Daboecia cantabrica* (New World)? Irish heath 'Charles Nelson' is not a member of the same species, or even genus, as Irish heath 'Brian Proudley'. Or, what is bell heather? *Erica cinerea* (Old World) or *Erica x darleyensis* (at least one New World nursery)? Which one of these will flourish in lime-rich soil: bell heather 'Colligan Bridge' or bell heather 'Jenny Porter'?

Can we do anything about this confusion which surely can only cause deep incomprehension? Not a lot, I suggest ruefully, because old habits die hard, especially when reinforced by what was once called the "information super-highway", the world-wide web (aka the biggest waste of time on the planet). It would need an extremely ingenious hacker to invent a virus that would obliterate all websites containing unacceptable usages of vernacular names for heathers to bring about an earthly paradise where every heather had just one name in Latin and one in English. Until that day, all we can do is try to be uniform within our own community of heather enthusiasts. Mind you, even that might prove an impossible goal. But, nothing ventured, nothing gained.

So, I propose to attempt the impossible: by consulting the separate societies and by roping in the editors of our various English-language

newsletters, bulletins and quarterlies, to draw up a recommended list of common English names for the hardy heathers and their hybrids. It won't have the force of law, but if each of the societies within the heather community adopted it – or, at least, lent its support to such a list – we might more nearly achieve a heathery, nomenclatural Elysium rather than remain in what Dorothy Metheny aptly called the “Purgatory of changing names”.

Heathers with Pop Group/Pop Star Connections

Remember Lizzie Judson's article: 'Heathers can be Trendy' in the Summer Bulletin?

(Although Richard Canovan was the only one to respond to her challenge - Lizzie and I agree that he is a worthy winner).

What a novel idea in the *Summer Bulletin*. As you want entries for a competition, here is my entry: *KC and the Sunshine Band* - *Daboecia cantabrica* 'Katherine's Choice' and *Erica carnea* 'Sunshine Rambler'.

The same idea could be tried for songs, hits, jazz, arias and all sorts of pieces. *The Emotions*: 'Best of My Love' now evokes visions of *Erica cinerea* 'My Love' in July. 'Moonlight Sonata' or 'Dancing in the Moonlight' (Sherman Kelly) obviously evoke *Erica carnea* 'Moonlight'.

The Harmonising Four could be an open choice - which four heathers do people think best for harmonising either with each other or with others?

Will we now see new heathers being named after music or the group or composer?

Well done Lizzie.

Richard Canovan

Of course there is also 'Carmen', called after an opera, and I recently came across a singer (or it might have been a group) called 'Domino', obviously named in after the Erica cinerea of that name! Ed.

Building a Heather Roof

Heather Fitzgerald, Tremeirchion, St. Asaph

We live 750 feet above sea level, on an east-facing hillside in North Wales, with our house and calibration laboratories on the same site.

About 5 years ago, we wanted to extend the labs, and since they needed to remain in a rural area totally free from traffic vibration, decided to burrow them into the hill behind the house. We dug out about 5,000 tons of hard shale, built the laboratories in the hole, and then roofed them over with giant concrete beams.

Some years prior to this, I had planted a small raised heather bed in front of the house, to make a tidy and attractive entrance to the commercial area, and also to minimise the maintenance.

The soil is shallow, only two to three inches deep above broken shale, and

I found that the best approach was to use a mattock to dig individual holes for each heather, and plant them in two handfuls of peat. The plants really took off, filling the bed within 3 years. It seemed natural to follow the same technique for the lab roofs.

We started by installing a waterproof layer on top of the concrete beams, and then added 150mm of porous drainage board to carry the rain water away. This gave us a rather flat and boring expanse of roof, and we decided that building it up into raised beds would add interest. Unfortunately, the roof beams, even though they looked to be immense, would not have been able to support such a weight of soil. We then realised that the huge insulation blocks, 2 x 1 x 0.6 m (6' x 3' x 2'), which we had inserted between the walls of the building and the cut rock face would be ideal for building the mound. They have a density about one fiftieth that of water saturated soil, and so place very little additional load on the roof. These blocks are made



*Heather roof
1999 & 2003*



from recycled polystyrene which would otherwise go to landfill, and are used by civil engineers when they need exceptionally lightweight fill.

The landscaping was formed by stacking the blocks, then shaping them into a mound using a chain saw. This meant working in a dense blizzard of white polystyrene granules, but only took several hours to do. The result was a mound of flowing curves – nature rarely goes for straight lines – and an area which would blend in with the rest of the garden. It had the further advantage of giving us an exceptionally well insulated working space below the roof that only requires additional heating in the depths of winter – for the rest of the time, the heat from instruments, computers and people is enough to keep the labs and offices at a comfortable temperature.

A sheet of Terram, a geotextile material, was laid over the polystyrene to protect it, and stop roots from penetrating into it, and then a thin skin, typically 100 mm thick, of rocky soil, spread to form the surface. As before, small five inch diameter holes were hacked out for each heather, and each hole filled with two handfuls of peat.

Most of the heathers were bought in as plugs, costing 10p each, from Talaton Plants, together with a few larger ones, bought from nurseries and odd collections as I came across them. The plugs were potted on into peat in 1.5 inch diameter pots for a year, which required regular watering, especially during long dry spells, and then planted out.

I have tried to mix the foliage, the flower colour and the plant form to give variation during the year. I planted most varieties in threes, which in retrospect was a mistake, since the smaller ones should have been planted in greater numbers, and the larger ones such as many of the *Callunas* should probably have been planted just in ones and twos. I should also have done more checking on the likely final sizes, since some of the smaller species are now being swamped beneath the more vigorous ones.

The loading constraints on the roof gave a soil layer which wasn't as thick as I would have liked, and the construction of the mound meant that it was exceptionally free draining. The small plants had problems in the first year due to the very low water holding capacity of the mound, and the hose was out several times a week. I must confess that after the first summer, the plants were then ignored, on a 'survive or not' philosophy. And they have.

One of the remaining problems now is weeds with deep roots such as buttercups, docks and dandelions, some of which seem to have penetrated the geotextile layer. About once a year we have a major blitz to dig them out, but I'm hoping that within the next year or two, the heather cover will be complete, and these weeds will be swamped.

I made the mistake of labelling the plants with write-on plastic labels – most of these have now faded due to the sun and the rain. I now use engraved metal strips, with a piece of wire wrapped round one of the stems of each heather that I plant.

A couple of days ago, I tested the acidity (pH) of our local soil, and found that it is just under 6 – perhaps this is why heather plants do so well, and maybe it might imply that I don't need to plant in peat at all.

What to Plant with heathers

Some answers to Lizzie Judson's question in *Bulletin 12*

For many years the heather bank round our lawn has had evergreen azaleas mixed in with the ericas, giving height and colour between winter and summer. It works well. (See Maxwell & Beale catalogue cover 1963-64 (not very good))

For the past few years I have planted a variety of fuchsias, which blend in with everything. I refused to use conifers for years, then, with ones that are slow growing, I was tempted. The variety of needle colour is rather nice and has been admired!

Everything has grown apace. The fox cubs enjoy chasing one another and hiding in the bushes, even climbing through them.

Daphne Maginess.

When our new heather garden was planned about 6 years ago, I looked for some alternatives to conifers, which would also complement and enhance the heather plantings. Dwarf hebes were a fairly obvious choice – they look good both in flower and foliage all through the year. Looking for something taller, hardy hibiscus came to mind. These lovely shrubs with their pink, white or lilac flowers in late summer grow quite tall if left unpruned, but, as the growth is fairly upright, it doesn't shade the heather plants too much. The flower colours of both the hebes and the hibiscus associate beautifully with heathers and we have been very pleased with the overall effect.

Green and gold foliaged tree heaths were an indispensable part of the plan of course and, finally, I must confess to just a few dwarf pines. However, as the pines were planted in the interest of peace and marital harmony, I feel they must be excused.

Daphne Everett

Two interesting articles by Lizzie Judson in the Summer Bulletin have shamed me into putting pen to paper. Whilst I am unable to come up with any trendy names, I can offer some advice on Heather Companions, as I prefer to call them. Having gardened on alkaline soil for many years I quickly realised that to have a garden with colour during the summer, apart from foliage, other plants had to be included.

I have tried many, some were too vigorous, some disappeared amongst the heather never to be seen again and some have proved ideal. I will not mention the various grasses as these are well documented these days, or bulbs even the dwarf species, as they do not die gracefully.

No, the plant family I have in mind are the Hardy Geraniums (Cranesbills). Be careful and choose the alpine species and you will be well rewarded.

Proven favourites of mine are as follows:

Geranium cinereum 'Ballerina', *G.* 'Lawrence Flatman' Both have ash grey foliage with purplish pink flowers.

G. dalmaticum the type plant has shell pink flowers whilst there is a white version 'Alba'. Both have brilliant Autumn tints.

G. renardii is unusual as it flowers better on poor soil, surely ideal in the Heather garden. Highly valued as a foliage plant the flowers are opal white with pronounced purple veins with soft sage green wrinkled leaves

The variety *G.r.* 'Whiteknights' is a lilac flowered form

The species *G. sanguineum* offers many cultivars. I grow C.s. 'Shepherds Warning' which has bright magenta pink flowers and *G.s. striatum* with pale pink flowers.

One of the most interesting for late Summer colour is *G. wallichianum* 'Buxton's Variety'. Like the others mentioned above it disappears completely during the winter, but come summer it threads its way through the heather to display sky blue flowers with a large white centrepiece enhanced by black stamens.

All the plants mentioned are non invasive and grow between 4" and 12" tall (10cms - 30cms) and have never interfered with the flowering of the heathers.

Arnold Stow.

(The last time the Bulletin had such a good response to a question was many years ago, when someone wrote in asking for suggestions for keeping cats off heathers. The solutions were many and various I seem to remember. Ed.)

A Query through our website – www.heathersociety.org Answered by David Small

Q I am getting married in early September and like the idea of having a live plant display on each of the reception tables instead of the normal flower arrangement. As it is a Scottish wedding, I particularly like the idea of having pots of white heather. I am unsure as to which heather would be guaranteed to be in flower at this time, whether to raise them indoors, etc. and how exactly to look after them. I have only ever grown them as garden plants. The idea is that someone from each table would take the plant away as a reminder of the day and grow it themself.

A Congratulations! You should have no problems at all in supplying white heather for your guests for a early September wedding. Your best bet would be to order a so-called bud-bloomer of *Calluna vulgaris* (Ling), the most common species found in Scotland.

I suggest one of this group because they flower for a long time August to November, whereas other white flowering varieties either have early or shortened flowering times. There is another group you could consider which are double-flowering varieties. These tend to flower later and although I would expect them to be in full flower in early September, there is always that risk.

As you will require quite a number, I suggest approaching a wholesaler rather than attempt trying to grow them yourselves.

Group News

Yorkshire

On Saturday, 22nd May 2004, 22 members gathered at Wentworth Castle Gardens on a beautiful afternoon for a long guided walk round this hillside garden with one of the local volunteers. The rhododendrons and azaleas were at their best and it was a wonderful spectacle. She explained how the lottery funding they have received would be spent although they are still looking for further funding to restore the Victorian conservatory. This was featured on television in the programme "Restoration". It will be interesting to revisit this garden following completion of the restoration project.

On Saturday, 5th June 2004, 18 members were entertained at Harlow Carr by Michael Pearson who spoke of his several trips to Nepal. He visits this country each year to help with building schools following his efforts during the year to provide funding for the "Nepal Schools Project" an independent charity organised by Michael Rojik of Canada. The Canadian International Development Agency match fund by an equal amount his revenue for this volunteer organisation. He is also a keen collector of alpine plants collected in Nepal and had slides to demonstrate this. All had an interesting afternoon and a collection during tea raised £79 for the project.

Finally on Saturday, 11th September 2004, 15 members listened to a detailed, illustrated discussion on "Dwarf Rhododendrons" by Peter Bland, former Chairman of the Rhododendron Group at Harlow Carr. Peter compared various plants of the Ericaceae before going into detail about rhododendrons. Members were interested in the cultivation, propagation and disease problems of these plants.

Jean Julian

North East

Ten members met for lunch at 'The Stables' near Bolam Lake, on a bright, sunny day in July. Afterwards, we drove a very short distance to Bolam Hall cottage where we were entertained by the owner, Mrs. Heather Russell, to a delightful afternoon taking us round her garden and explaining how she and her husband had taken over a near wilderness and tamed it into a fascinating garden full of unexpected surprises. It was mainly herbaceous, with lawns and sunken paved areas for sitting, and behind the house was a small field full of wild flowers and shrubs, with wonderful views over to the Simonside hills and the Cheviots.

Our next event was the Ponteland Flower Show, which was held on Saturday, September 11th. We were fortunate to have a fine day, and to those who took part, our sincere thanks.

The Judge was quick to point out and to praise the high standard of the exhibits and David and Rita Plumridge won the trophy for 'The Best Exhibit in Show'. Well done to you both!

Our final meeting for the year will be our Annual General Meeting on **Friday, October 29th, 2004**, in St. Matthew's Church Hall, Ponteland, at 7.30 p.m. It will be the usual format of business, Faith Supper and members' slides. Contributions for the supper will be gratefully received on the night.

We do hope to see as many of you there as possible.

Dorothy Warner

East Midlands

By kind invitation of Mr. Peter Bingham, a visit is planned to the Kingfisher

most unusual garden made on a steep hillside, with banks, a formal garden, Nursery, Gedney Hill, Spalding on **Saturday, March 12th 2005**. We plan to assemble at the Nursery at around 1.45pm for a 2 pm start. The winter heathers should be in bloom at the time of the visit and there is much of interest to see at this large, modern heather nursery. The nursery is situated at Gedney Hill, near Spalding, Lincolnshire on the B1166 road between Holbeach Drove and Gedney Hill.

Members of other Groups are welcome, and in particular those of the Home Counties Group. It would help if you would let me know by February 26th if you intend to participate.

I propose to circulate route maps to East Midlands Group Members as usual. I will provide copies to members of other groups if asked but would appreciate SAE's with such requests.

Allen Hall

Home Counties

On Saturday 25th September, Heather Society members and their guests met on a dull but warm day at the RHS Gardens, Wisley, for the annual Home Counties Group end of season meeting. The morning walk around the Heather Gardens took place without member Andy Collins, who is responsible for the maintenance of the Heather Gardens, as unfortunately he was unwell and unable to accompany us and provide information re the present plantings and future plans.

The gardens were still very colourful and the new plantings were filling the beds nicely, however it was noticed that there were many plants looking in poor shape after the trials and tribulations of the weather during the past two years, and several would need to be replaced as the overall effect was somewhat spoilt by gaps and dead plants. The general consensus from members was that the beds would require a considerable amount of attention to bring them up to the standard required for a National Collection.

The afternoon session in the Garden Meeting Room was most enjoyable with guest speaker Walter Wornick, from New Hampshire, USA, providing an excellent talk entitled "Reflections on Heather at Home and Abroad". Walter's compilation of slides which accompanied his talk plus his wry humour ensured that we had a very interesting and entertaining time; his UK pictures were nicely interspersed with pictures taken in the USA and Bulgaria and, in addition to heather pictures, there were many of scenic value plus those of Society members that Walter had met during his many visits to these shores.

Prior to an excellent tea, with cakes kindly provided by Pamela Lee, Audrey Sprague and Josey Stow. Josey judged the table show and the winners were as follows:-

- 1) Best flower arrangement in which heathers predominate - Derek Millis (who retained the Turpin Trophy)
- 2) Best vase of hardy heather in flower, single variety - Eric Davis (*Calluna vulgaris* 'Annemarie' - double rose pink flowers)
- 3) Best vase of heather chosen for foliage - Julian Fitz-Earle (*Erica arborea* 'Albert's Gold' - yellow foliage)

Following tea a short illustrated talk was given by Home Counties member Pamela Lee on the visit she made to South Africa last year with several of the Society's members. This gave us a flavour of the heath and heather varieties to be found and the wonderful scenery to be enjoyed.

This concluded a most enjoyable meeting. Members may be interested to know that the Garden Hall has been booked for our annual meeting for the next two years i.e. **Saturday 1st October 2005** and **Saturday 30th September 2006** - don't forget!

Details of activities for season 2005 will be sent early next year to those members who are on my circulation list and to those who request inclusion on the list.

Derek Millis

South West

The SW group has held three meetings this year, one has already been reported on and the other two are described below.

On the afternoon of Saturday, 19th June, eleven members met in the garden of 'Chiffchaffs' in Dorset. The afternoon was sunny but not too hot as a cool breeze was blowing. Showers had been threatened but didn't materialise and so we all enjoyed a very pleasant afternoon in beautiful surroundings. The garden has views across the Blackmoor Vale and on that afternoon those views were spectacular. 'Chiffchaffs' has two gardens, one which surrounds the house and another which takes the form of a woodland walk along the lower slope of a hill. Kenneth Potts, who with his wife owns the house and garden, showed us around the garden surrounding the house. This garden was well stocked with a variety of interesting plants and at that time many were in full flower and I was particularly impressed with a large collection of hardy geraniums which obviously enjoyed the conditions provided. We were a little too late for the flowering display of rhododendrons and azaleas along the woodland walk but there was plenty of other interest in the moisture loving plants, such as primulas growing in the damper areas along a spring line at the base of the hill. The woodland walk lead back to the house through a small nursery area which was well stocked and was a great attraction to the members. The afternoon was rounded off with a welcome cup of tea and a piece of cake and I thank Kenneth Potts and his wife for hosting an enjoyable afternoon.

The weather on the afternoon of Saturday, 18th September was a complete contrast to the meeting in June because we were treated to dark clouds and drizzle interspersed with showers some of which were heavy. Regretfully the attendance at this meeting was the lowest I can remember and with several apologies having been received beforehand from stalwart members and perhaps the weather playing it's part in keeping other members away we were very thin on the ground. However not to be put off by the drizzle 4 members were escorted around the winding paths of Aurelia Gardens by Robert and Magdalene Knight who have hosted several of our meetings over a period of 12 years, having been members of the Society during the early 1990's. The garden was, as usual, magnificent with the gold foliage heathers, conifers, shrubs and grasses brightening up the dull afternoon. Although a lot of flowers were over there were still plenty of flowers to be seen and shades of red and purple predominated. In particular *Daboecia cantabrica* Rainbow and *Daboecia x scotica* William Buchanan put on a wonderful show. The garden can be no more than described as breathtaking. Robert is an experienced landscape gardener but now "retired" but is also a plantsman and was more than ready to chat, sometimes amusingly, about the garden, it's history and it's contents. Another of Robert and Magdalene's loves is rare breed fowl and there were several areas where these were "on display". Robert and Magdalene are in the process of handing the garden over to a local trust but will continue to live on the site and tend the garden. At the end of the tour we were treated to refreshment in the Summer House alongside the wildlife pond and despite the rain on the day the pond was at a low level emphasising that overall rainfall had been below average in that area over the last 18 months. I thank Robert and Magdalene for their hospitality and in particular to be so willing to enthusiastically show such a small party of members around.

Dates for your Diary: Saturday 12th March 2005 - 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 we will have an illustrated talk on a heather related topic. The

speaker and the subject will be announced in the circular issued in February and also in the Spring Bulletin. At this meeting there will be a 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 Anne Pringle) 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 close to the hall and a charge will be made to cover expenses. There will be refreshment supplied after the talk. Further information on this meeting can be obtained by sending me a SAE by the end of January 2005.

Friday 9th - Monday 12th September 2005 - The 2005 Heather Society gathering incorporating the Conference and the AGM will be held on SW Group territory. I hope that SW Group members will take the opportunity to get involved either as residential or day visitors. Please see details elsewhere in this *Bulletin*

An appeal: The position of Heather Society Treasurer, which you all know I inherited in September 2003, is taking up many hours of my "spare time". I therefore regret that after at least 25 years as the Organiser for this group the meeting next March will be the last meeting that I shall organise and it will be time to hand over the reins. I am therefore looking for a successor, someone who feels that he or she can organise 2 or 3 meetings a year, can produce 1 or 2 circulars a year and can write a short report for each of the 3 Bulletins. Please contact me if you feel you can take up this position.

And finally: I finish this report by thanking all of you who have attended the meetings this year for your support and I look forward to seeing you next March.

Phil Joyner

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