

*Bulletin of The  
Heather Society*



*Vol. 6 No. 17*

*Spring 2006*

## DIARY OF EVENTS

### 2006

March 11th	South West	Sir Harold Hillier Gardens
March 18	Midlands	Garden Visit, Loughborough
April / May	Home Counties	To be arranged
May 7th	North East	Annual Outing
May 13th	South West	Exbury Gardens
<b>May 15th</b>	<b>Closing Date for Summer Bulletin</b>	
June 3rd	Yorkshire	Harlow Carr Meeting
July 5th	North East	Car Outing
<b>September 8-11</b>	<b>Annual Conference</b>	<b>Buxton</b>
September 9th	North East	Annual Show
September 16th	Yorkshire	Harlow Carr Meeting
September 30th	Home Counties	Visit to RHS Wisley
October 27th	North East	AGM



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Cover illustration *Erica Carnea* by Brita Johannson

*Every morning, while we are on our morning constitutional round the garden with the dogs, we stop to inspect the new bed of 'Recommended Heathers'. I am very pleased to see that (so far!) the Erica cinerea plants (my greatest worry) are all still looking perky and haven't died of either winter drought or drowning. As I write this in mid January, we have had one small taste of the promised 'real winter', with temperatures down to -6 ° centigrade. Nothing (as yet) like the 1981/82 winter when temperatures went down to -26 ° and many plants with their heads above the snow cover were killed - or the bad one some years later, when a strong easterly wind, combined with the temperature remaining below freezing for a couple of weeks and no snow cover, caused many heathers (and other evergreens) to die of winter drought.*

## **34th Annual Conference & Annual Gathering of The Heather Society 8<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> September 2006. Palace Hotel, Buxton**

Buxton is a spa town in the heart of the Peak District National Park in the county of Derbyshire. Buxton is less than an hour journey from the cities of Manchester, Sheffield and Derby and an hour and a half from Nottingham. Set 1000 feet above sea level amidst the dramatic Peak District landscape, Buxton has been a popular holiday resort for centuries. Blessed with stunning scenery, magnificent architecture, a wealth of shops, a thriving arts scene and its world famous spa water, Buxton has plenty to offer any visitor.

We hope you will think we have arranged an interesting programme for you. Part of our Society's remit is to inform and to educate, but we would also like you to come and be entertained. With this in mind, we want as many people as possible to attend and discover the pleasures in meeting others who are committed to matters ericaceous, be it in an amateur garden or on a professional horticultural scale. The Conference also includes the A.G.M., so come and play an active part in your Society's affairs.

### **Programme**

**Friday, 8<sup>th</sup> September:** The conference starts with delegate registration at about 4:00 p.m. and then after dinner will be formally opened by our Chairman, Arnold Stow, followed by two talks. One from Mr. Christopher

Dean who is working on the "Moors for the Future" project and one from Mr. Geoff Eyre on "Seed Preparation and Germination Techniques for Moorland Regeneration". These promise to be fascinating talks.

**Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> September:** A scenic coach drive through the Peak District with a visit to a site near Lady Bower Reservoir to view the results of Mr. Eyre's work with heather & grass seed. Hopefully we will include a visit to the new research centre for "The Moors for the Future Project" at Edale, which should have its visitor information facility open by September.

A picnic lunch en-route to Chatsworth House, near Bakewell. Chatsworth is one of Britain's best loved historic houses and estate, the home of the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire, Chatsworth 1000 acre park and gardens was the setting for the recently released film "Pride and Prejudice". Our visit will concentrate on the gardens. There will be a guided tour and electric scooters are available for the less mobile.

In the evening, after dinner, Derek Spicer, the Chairman of the British Conifer Society will talk on 'New Conifer Cultivars and Their Uses as Companion Planting for *Erica*'.

**Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> September**

We shall start the morning with the A.G.M.

After coffee, our President, David Small and Council Member, Barry Sellers will talk to us about their exciting work with "Cape Heaths" and the construction of David's tunnel for housing his collection.

On Sunday afternoon there will be a visit to the Plant and Gardening Fair, Pavilion Gardens Buxton.

Stuart Warner of Barncroft Nurseries will be selling plants there and will be willing to sell to members from his lorry outside. The nursery grows a wide range of plants including; Rhododendrons, Azaleas, Conifers, Heathers and much more. The full range can be browsed at: [www.barncroftnurseries.com](http://www.barncroftnurseries.com). Advance orders may be placed via the website or by post or fax.

After dinner there will be a light hearted chance for everybody to test their knowledge of ericaceous matters. A table quiz with a glittering array of prizes for the winners.

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

Accommodation has been reserved at the Palace Hotel, which is in the very heart of Buxton. This is a wonderfully appointed hotel complete with a spa and swimming pool. There are 5 acres of gardens to stroll through and admire the views over the town. At the moment we have reserved 5 twin, 10 double and 10 single rooms. If you are thinking of attending, please let Anne Small know as soon as possible, stating your room requirements. Last year we found that there was a big demand for single rooms. The hotel requires firm confirmation of our room requirements by 1<sup>st</sup> July 2006, after which there will be a 90% charge for late cancellations.

If all these rooms are taken, then there may be the possibility of booking more rooms, otherwise subsequent bookings will be accepted as day visitors and those persons will be asked to make their own bed & breakfast accommodation arrangements. In this case the telephone number of the area's

Tourist Information Office will be given to aid Bed & Breakfast enquiries.

### **Cost of the Conference**

Final costings are not yet available, but the figures given below are for your guidance and should not be too far from the right numbers

Resident, for the whole weekend.	£265 (per person sharing)
Resident, leaving Sunday afternoon	£200 (per person sharing)
Resident, leaving after Sunday dinner	£220 (per person sharing)
There is a single person supplement of	£10 per night
Non-Resident, Friday evening	£27
Saturday: all day	£35
excluding dinner	£15
Sunday: all day	£30
excluding dinner	£10

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

Cheques for the booking fee of £2, and for the Conference should be made payable to *The Heather Society*, the booking fee is non-returnable and is not a deposit on the cost of the Conference. Please note that the latest date for full payment is 7<sup>th</sup> July 2005. Members are reminded that payment by VISA or MASTERCARD credit cards is acceptable.

A cost per night for the use of the hotel around the conference week-end may be obtained from Susie Kay, who will be pleased to answer any queries relating to the 2006 Conference (Tel: 00353 95 43575, e-mail: [susiek@gofree.indigo.ie](mailto:susiek@gofree.indigo.ie))

*Susie Kay*

### **Proposed field trip to northern Spain.**

As many of you know we were hoping to have a field trip to the Picos and Galicia in northern Spain this year. Originally, this was being arranged through a tour operator who subsequently dropped out. Although the Society itself has the capability to organise such a trip we cannot insure such a visit as we are not ABTA rated.

It is with much regret we have had to abandon our plans for 2006 but will continue to seek a tour operator we can work with in future.

*David Small*

### **Profile of Council Member – David Edge**

David's interest in heathers started when he took employment at the age of nineteen at Stewarts Nurseries based at Wimborne in Dorset. This followed 3 years of employment on leaving school, with the Ministry of Defence, as a scientific assistant at Porton Down near Salisbury. Seeing that his future did not lie in this field, he decided that perhaps a career in horticulture held more interest, as he had developed an interest in this area at school.

A two-year apprenticeship was offered to David at Stewarts' Nurseries and in this *Bulletin*.

Secondly I need to remind members that Lin and I will be visiting two gardens during this Spring but I need to point out that the date for the first visit has been

on turning up for work on the first day he appeared dressed smartly with polished shoes tie and jacket. The assumption that the first day would be spent filling in forms and visiting other departments as per the Ministry of Defence was rudely shattered when he was directed immediately to the potting bench.

David's training at Stewarts was broadly based and included a horticultural course at Dorchester College. All aspects of production of trees and shrubs and at the garden centres were covered in the apprenticeship including the propagation of heathers!



David's interest in heathers developed with another apprentice, also at Stewarts, and weekends were spent in building a collection and visiting nearby nurseries such as specialist heather growers Maxwell and Beale. His parents in the meantime had moved to a property with a large garden and this provided an area to set up his collection and production with a small propagation area.

At the end of his apprenticeship in 1971, aged 21, David was offered a place at Hadlow College in Kent, on a three year OND sandwich course studying the production of trees and shrubs. The middle year was spent at Barter's Farm Nurseries near Warminster and he returned to college to lead a project in the final year producing a commercial heather crop.

Weekends and holidays in the meantime had allowed David to build up a unit at his parents producing 3000 heathers a year which local garden centres purchased. He returned from college having saved the sum of £400.00 and an acquaintance informed him of a 3-acre area of ground nearby that was available for rent. As his father wished to reclaim his own garden, he decided to take the plunge of self-employment and invest this sum in the formation of the nursery. Moving the heather production to the new site, additional work was taken on in the form of landscaping and garden maintenance to provide additional income. Deliveries were undertaken initially in a three wheel Reliant van, upgrading eventually to a Ford Anglia van.

The end of the five-year lease encouraged David and his wife to take the plunge and sell their house at Ringwood and purchase two acres of land at Woodlands where the relocation of the nursery took place and home was then a mobile home. Income was supplemented by his employment at nearby garden centres whilst he and his wife developed the nursery. Eventually the nursery was able to provide full time employment to David, additional land was purchased and a house constructed.

He has continued to specialise in heather production finding that straying into alpines, conifers and herbaceous plants were a distraction from the core subject of the business.

Now, aged 55, David continues to specialise in heather production and his business is major supplier to retail outlets throughout the south of the country.

David was a founder member of the British Heather Growers Association, which at its peak had 25 members. He is a Panel member of The Horticultural Development Council representing ericaceous growers where he combines his research and wide nursery experience to the benefit of potential industry research projects.

## Heathers in – *My garden: An intimate magazine for garden lovers (1934–1951).*

Charles Nelson

I recently acquired a partial set of this little magazine which was owned and edited by Theo A. Stephens (1888–1972). Stephens published his rather personal magazine every month for 18 years between 1934 and 1951; the volumes I have are nos. 1 to 24 inclusive (1934 to 1942). The writing in the magazine was of a very high standard it was intended to be *read* not merely looked at. As Stephens himself put it "It is not intended that *My Garden* will ever be an instructional book in any sense of the word. Its aim will be to interest real garden lovers by talking about gardens in all their respects." One of the most frequent contributors was Arthur Tysilio Johnson, whose name is familiar to heather enthusiasts; not only did he write one of the first

twentieth-century books about hardy heathers, *The hardy heaths and some of their nearer allies* (1928, and revised several times), but he also was responsible for introducing two cultivars that still have merit today *Erica darleyensis* 'Arthur Johnson' and *Calluna vulgaris* 'Johnson's Variety'. Johnson was a regular contributor about many other garden topics to such periodicals as *The gardener's chronicle* and *New flora and sylvia*, as well as *My garden*.

In going through *My garden*, volume by volume, I noted quite a few articles on heathers, and other titbits of information. One of considerable interest,

MY GARDEN

JANUARY 1934

### Bullfinches and Heather

WISE birds bullfinches, for instead of going to the bleak moors for heather seed they come to our garden. Here, oddly enough, they seem to prefer the Corsican heath (*Erica stricta*) to any other. This beautiful species wraps its seed vessels in faded flower calyces which are now a bright rusty-red and singularly attractive against the moss-green foliage. Add to this colouring the brilliant rosy-cerise of Mr. Bullfinch's best waistcoat, his steel-blue and chequer of white all set-off with a jet-black beret, and the garden at any season can show no prettier spectacle of the kind.

Not long ago it was reported in the garden Press how bullfinches had been the means of disseminating the seed of *E. lusitanica*. It seems that a colony of this Spanish heath sprang up in a field at some distance from a well-known Sussex garden in which the plant was growing. How the seedlings got there was for some time a mystery. But it eventually transpired that bullfinches, after visiting the garden, were in the habit of returning to the field. In doing so they carried some seed adhering to their bills, and this, wiped-off, as they did their toilet, fell to the ground and so germinated.

J.

since as far as I am aware the information doesn't appear elsewhere, is a note in the issue for June 1946 about the death of Mr. Syme, gardener to Mrs. Ralph W. T. Walker, who had been responsible for propagating *Erica carnea* 'Springwood White' (*My garden* 32 (150): 625, 627) after Mrs. Walker had collected it in on Monte Carregio, Italy. Syme had worked for Mrs. Walker for 26 years.

The articles are a little out-of-date as far as nomenclature is concerned, but they are not without value, so over the next few issues of the *Bulletin* we will reproduce a selection in facsimile, giving members a flavour of the magazine as well as the entertainment of reading what was being written about heathers in the 1930's and early 1940's

The first article, signed "J" – there is no clear indication who this was, but I suspect it was Johnson – is about bullfinches and heathers which refers incidentally to the spread of *Erica lusitanica* at Lytchett Matravers in Dorset (see Bulletin 6 no 14: 4 (Spring 2005)). I was sufficiently intrigued about this to check the information that bullfinches do eat heather seeds. A number of web-sites, including that of The John Muir Trust ([www.jmt.org](http://www.jmt.org)) provided the answer – "the Bullfinch is typically associated with gardens, parkland and woodland but it does successfully use young plantations and wet areas. One of their preferred foods in the uplands during the autumn and winter is heather seed." Another included the statement that in "the autumn, Bullfinches also feed in flocks on heather seeds at the edge of moorland" ([www.highlandbiodiversity.com](http://www.highlandbiodiversity.com)).

The second page reprinted here is W. E. Th. Ingerwersen's advertisement which includes *Calluna vulgaris* 'Elegantissima' (now known as 'Walter Ingerwersen') as well as *E. umbellata*. Lastly an article on 'My heath garden' by Norma Cousie. I have not traced any information about the lady nor where she lived, but her ideas are still worth airing more than 70 years after she wrote.

To quote Theo Stephens himself: "And now, like Oliver Twist, may I ask for more ..." – more in the next *Bulletin* ...

MY GARDEN		JANUARY 1934	
<i>Beautiful and Uncommon Plants</i>			
<i>Androsace cylindrica</i>		4 really high class plants	2/6
" <i>hirtella</i>		for the Alpine house	1/6
" <i>pyrenaica</i>			1/6
" <i>spinulifera</i>			5/-
<i>Calluna vulgaris elegantissima</i>	A.M., R.H.S., 1932		1/0
<i>Campanula alpina</i>			1/6
" <i>Aucherii</i>		Are four real treasures	1/6
" <i>Formaneckiana</i>		and not commonly	1/6
" <i>orphanidis</i>		obtainable	1/6
<i>Cyananthus</i> sp. K.W. 4549	One of the handsomest plants from China		2/6
<i>Cyclamen ibericum bulgaricum</i>	Brand New Discovery		2/6
<i>Edraianthus</i>			1/0
" <i>caudatus</i>		Everyone of the Edraianthus	1/0
" <i>dalmaticus</i>		is worth growing, here are five	1/0
" <i>graminifolius</i>		of the best. Full sun, dry	1/0
" <i>tenuifolius</i>		positions	1/0
<i>Erica umbellata</i>		A lovely introduction from Portugal	2/6
<i>Jasminum Parkeri</i>		A real treasure	3/6
<i>Oenothera eximia</i> (OE. caespitosa)		Huge scented white flowers	1/6
<i>Primula</i> ( <i>Omphalogramma</i> ) <i>vincaeflora</i>		A seldom offered	3/6
Rarity			2/6
<i>Primula</i> Winteri		Which may flower at Xmas	2/6
<i>Ranunculus calandrinoides</i>		An alpine house beauty from Mt. Atlas	3/6
<i>Silene</i> <i>Ingramii</i>	A.M., Chelsea, 1933		2/6
<i>Veronica borbycina</i>		A tiny silver and blue treasure from Ararat	1/6
<i>Wahlenbergia pumiliorum</i>			1/0
" <i>Matthewsii</i>		Lovely and of recent introduction	1/0
<b>W. E. TH. INGWERSEN Ltd.</b>			
BIRCH FARM, SHARPTHORNE, EAST GRINSTEAD			
Telephone & Telegrams: SHARPTHORNE 36			
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Any contributions submitted will be very carefully considered and those considered unsuitable will be returned provided the sender's name is clearly written on them and they are accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope. The Editor will not, however, accept any responsibility for manuscripts or photographs lost or mislaid in transmission and while in his office.			
All contributions accepted are paid for on publication.			
Including contributors are requested to study <i>MY GARDEN</i> carefully before submitting contributions.			
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1: 254 Feb 34	Erica lusitanica (photo)	
1: 408 Mar 34	Heaths and peat	J
1: 295-298 Feb 34	Winter-flowering shrubs	Cambrensis
1: 112 Jan 1934	Bullfinches and heather	J
1: 438-440 Mar 34	My heath garden	Norma Cousie
2: 117-120 May 34	The summer-flowering heaths	A. T. Johnson
3: 158 Oct 34	A heath hedge	
3: 361 Nov 34	Erica australia 'Mr. Robert' (photo)	
3: 472 Dec 34	Erica carnea [in Given a garden XII ...]	Beverley Nichols
3: 247-251 Oct 34	Some late-flowering shrubs	Paul Trevor
3: 76-80 Sep 34	On lime-loving plants	Paul Trevor
4: 237 Feb 35	Erica mediterranea superba (photo)	
4: 48-50, 55-56 Jan 35	Flora hyemalis	A. T. Johnson
	On winter-flowering shrubs	
4: 309-313 Mar 35	Making a heath garden	A. T. Johnson
4: 541 Apr 35	St Dabeoc's heath (photo)	
5: 14 May 35	Erica carnea Springwood	J
5: 540 Aug 35	The Connemara heath	J
6: 197-200 Oct 35	Heaths in Autumn	A. T. Johnson
9: 14-15 Sep 36	The Mediterranean heath	
9: 41-43 Sep 36	Summer-Autumn heaths	A. T. Johnson
	Some distinguishes novelties	
10: 16-17 Jan 37	Erica carnea (plus colour photo)	
10: 375-378 Mar 37	Heaths in the rock-garden	A. T. Johnson
13: 480 Apr 38	Heath hedges	A. T. J.
13: 531-532, 535, 537-540 Apr 38	Shrubs for Spring planting A selection, mainly evergreen [+ photo of E. arborea alpina p. 535]	A. T. Johnson
15: 69 Sep 38	Daboecia azorica	
15: 472, 473, 474, 477-480 Dec 38	The winter-flowering heaths Colour and fragrance in the Dark Days	A. T. Johnson
17: 446-447 Aug 39	Purple heather	
19: 42 Jan 40	A beautiful heath [umbellata]	
21: 268 Nov 40	A winter-flowering tree heath (E. lusitanica)	
23: 112 Aug 41	Double-flowered heaths	
23: 221-222 Sep 41	The heath of spring	
24: 24 Jan 42	The Cornish heath	

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## My Heath Garden

*By Norma Cousie*

THIS winter I have been making a heath garden, not, I'm afraid, the size of the huge one at Wisley, nor yet a whole hillside like a famous one in Gloucestershire: but a small semi-wild place devoted to heaths, their cousins the azaleas, and such things as I thought would look well with them. In fact it is only that the heaths are numerically in the majority that warrants my giving it that title at all!

Azaleas have always been my first love among plants, and having already a goodish mass of flame and orange ones elsewhere in the garden, I had long wanted some more of quieter colouring as a contrast. I also wanted to try what Miss Jekyll advocates in one of her marvellous books, that is, to plant them several yards apart from each other in order to show their beauty of growth.

The site was a narrow strip of land running uphill to a clump of birch trees on the skyline, with a small plantation of young Scots fir on one side and a rough hedge on the other. The ground was covered with rough grass, bracken, brambles and at the top solid gorse. As I am single handed I cannot work very rapidly but it makes the joy of achievement at the end all the greater!

I had to begin by cutting brambles etc. and marking out a rough path; that needed great consideration, as I have learnt by bitter experience it is far easier to remove turf than replace it! After that I had to cut down a few trees, a badly grown birch, and two larches and a pine to break the straight line of the wood.

## MY GARDEN

MARCH 1934

Then came stripping the turf in large irregular patches on each side of the path. The heaths, luckily, are happy in this soil with the minimum of digging, but for the other plants I excavated good-sized holes and added generous quantities of leaf soil and rotted turf.

With this planting in view I had gone a bust at the Chelsea Show last year (for me, that is, when all my plants have to come out of a limited dress allowance). I ordered sixteen cream and yellow azaleas, two deep purple rhododendrons, two ceanothus, three Japanese cherries, a *Solanum crispum*, a *Halesia carolina*, seventeen tall heaths and a great many dwarf ones. So when planting time came it was really rather exciting.

I put the Japanese cherry, Ukon (a pale yellow one that I personally like almost the best) half way up the slope on the right; rather behind it I planted the grey blue *Ceanothus dentatus floribundus*, and in front a big mass of the tall-growing white *Erica lusitanica*; then a widely scattered, irregular planting of azaleas, *pontica* and *viscosa*, yellow and white and very sweet smelling; and among and in front of them drifts of dwarf heaths, chiefly the white form of *Daboecia polifolia* and our wild *Calluna vulgaris*. Lower on the right come the mauve *solanum*, the white *halesia* and a group of baby *berberis* sent me from Wisley last year. In front of them come stretches of the early flowering *Erica carnea*, the type plant, *praecox rubra* and the dark *Vivelli*.

On the other side of the curving path I have two double white cherries against the dark firs, below them more yellow and white azaleas (*Byron* and *Narcissiflora*), the purple rhododendrons and a colony of the early blue comfrey and again more heaths with a drift of white daffodils planted among them to foam down the hill. A group of *Erica Veitchii*, another of *Erica arborea alpina* also come into the picture and

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MARCH 1934

merge at the bottom into an old planting of white broom.

So that the colouring is nearly all cream and white and pale yellow with touches of grey-blue, purple and mauve against a mass of dark green, grey-green and the white stems of the birches. An absolute contrast to my other flaming group of azaleas.

It has been the most tremendous fun, both planning it and carrying it out. Naturally it will not look its best for a year or two, by which time all the gaps between the heaths should have filled up; but even now, in mid-January, it is very pleasant to my mind with the early *Erica carneas* a mass of pink, *Erica lusitanica* coming out hard and the flower buds of the azaleas glistening in the sun, full of promise to come.



## **Heather Restoration at Kinver Edge, Worcestershire With acknowledgements to the National Trust**

An ongoing programme of restoration work on the lowland heath at Kinver Edge has started to yield significant results.

Lowland heath is one of the most endangered habitats in Europe and the warden and 'The Kinver Edge Volunteers' have been working to restore it by removing scrub. Cattle grazing has been reintroduced to the site to maintain the open heath after removal of the scrub. Bees, moths and other heathland insects are benefiting from the work but perhaps the best sign of success is the return of the rare Nightjar, a nocturnal bird of open heath, after an absence of 20 years.

"Kinver Edge is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and the work undertaken will encourage more heathland grasses and heather to grow, providing a more varied environment and habitats for the wildlife", commented Simon Cleaver, Property Manager. "Throughout the summer, our staff and volunteers have also been improving some of the footpaths, using the wood chippings from the trees that we've removed."

This work has been funded by a grant from DEFRA via a Countryside Stewardship Scheme. Kinver Edge, located just eight miles from Birmingham, has a network of footpaths, ideal for an autumn walk.

## Letters to the Editor

### Eileen Petterssen

'Natural' or 'Artificial' ? ' Mingling?' (*Bulletin* Autumn 2005) took up the very vital topic of any heather garden and David Plumridge ends with a question to other members. I would have liked to be able to answer, but only end up with more questions and it seems to me 'Open Forum' would be a good forum for a discussion.

My fascination in heathers comes from its habitat and in the garden this is represented with the natural, mingling look. If I had to choose, I would go for this approach. To have seen Don Richard's garden [in Cumbria] was perhaps the best experience.

Visiting many heather gardens at annual Conferences through the years, my taste has widened. A planting where each plant shows up can be a marvellous sight and in a limited space must be the only way to grow heathers. To my mind conifers are also incorporated better in that type of garden.

Of course all plantings start out as David's 'Artificial' look and end up as 'Natural' if left unattended. I do think you need a high degree of plant knowledge and an artist's eye to make the 'Artificial' garden look really good, plus having access to the chosen cultivars. My best experience of such a garden is Brita's and it certainly does not fit the labelling 'Artificial' or even 'Formal'. I like to think of it as 'cared for' – it has an atmosphere of caring that warms your soul. I'm lucky to have had the privilege.

As Rita Plumridge had to fight swamping in their lovely mingling garden, so I had to pull out *E. x krameri* this year; my climate had turned it into a wandering smotherer.

*Daboecia cantabrica* 'Waley's Red' freezes back most years, so it is safe and a great delight. I also find that mingling gives a protection from frost. My hope is that the mingling approach will sort out the plants that cope best with gradually being turned into the garden of a mini 'Old Peoples Home' with no gardener

*Eileen's letter reminded me of a most interesting article, that she wrote for Heather News in 2004, about her garden in Norway. It is reproduced below. Ed.*

### My Garden

**Eileen Petterssen, Otervei 16, 5236 Radal, Norway**  
**With acknowledgements to Heather News – the quarterly**  
**publication of the North American Heather Society –**  
**Spring 2004**

When Joyce asked me to write about my garden, I thought this an easy thing to do. I had the idea of starting at the beginning twenty-five years ago, but found this made it all seem so distant. Starting work the garden this past spring triggered my memory somewhat. Here are some of experiences - good and otherwise.

My fascination with heathers is more with them in the wild than as garden plants; I tell people I have plants, not a garden. Blake's words express this better than mine:

*To see a World in a Grain of Sand*

*And a Heaven in a Wild Flower.*

Two factors limit the possibility of having a varied heather garden here. First, our climate, influenced by the gulf stream, has cool summers and mild winters. This should be fine for the heathers - if we only had more sun during summer, a proper autumn to stop growth, and a snow cover during sudden or long spells of frost. Hardiness zones are difficult to translate as they do not take into account these factors. The local variation in temperature and rainfall is substantial. Most of the year we are 5c ° colder than Bergen city or the coastal islands. Sunshine hours are fewer too, but I haven't been able to get updated figures.

The second limiting factor is the lack of available plants. The number of species and cultivars to be found in nurseries or garden centres in Norway is very restricted, almost non-existent. Earlier, the plants would be named cultivars, but this has changed; they are now labelled as Spring Heather, Autumn Heather - if anything. In April, one white, perhaps two coloured, but no foliage *cameas* are available. In September/October two or three *Calluna* cultivars appear, but they are big plants and will not establish well enough to survive the winter. To plan a heather planting under these conditions is impossible. Therefore we use heathers mostly used as companion plants, in containers or, perhaps most widely, on graves.

My interest in heathers started in 1977. At that time, when we travelled to England we could bring plants to the value of £25 home to Norway, and it was Geoffrey Yates who suggested buying rooted cuttings so I would have good number of plants to start off with. It was also possible to import plants on a license, but the procedure of getting them through inspection took so long that plants were in a very poor condition when received. Soon, importation became so difficult that producing plants oneself was the only alternative. This has perhaps been perhaps the greatest joy and satisfaction of my work with heathers and I am very thankful for the help received from Geoffrey Yates, Anne and David at Denbeigh, John and Nancy Proudfoot, and Brita Johansson. Attending the annual conferences of *The Heather Society* was an opportunity to bring back cutting material, giving me a chance to try out new varieties. During the next spring the tiny plants went into the garden but needed careful attention through the first year. The variable winter climate meant adding protection during sudden spells of bare frost and taking it off again in wet and mild periods. This demanded an alertness that seems to have deserted me in more recent years. I have had to give up producing plants, and even if I miss it greatly, it is a challenge just to keep going what I do have.

The native vegetation of our site was dominated by *Salix*, juniper, *Calluna*, *Myrica gale*, *Vaccinium vitis-idea* and *Myrtus*. Now, having to reduce my gardening, I am very pleased that my heathers look so natural with the native vegetation. The house is placed on the flat area towards the 0.3-acre garden, with a steep slope leading down to a small lake on the west side. The front garden is a south facing slope, less steep, and this is where my heathers still dominate the picture, even if the lowest part now gradually is going back to nature. The situation of our house, unfortunately, means the heathers are not visible from indoors, which is rather sad, but the heathers give a warming welcome on arrival (and remind one of what needs to be done).

We had lived here for twenty years when my interest in heathers started.

The first planting, in 1978, was on the lowest half of the slope, with small plants of quite a number of species. The majority were *Calluna* cultivars, but also bell heathers (*Erica cinerea*), *E. carnea*, and more tender *Erica* species.

With no knowledge of hardiness, I had some hard lessons to learn, but also some nice surprises. Over the next fifteen years or so, the top half of the slope was included to make place for the many new plants I wanted to enjoy.

In Norway, three of the heather family grow naturally but, ironically, none of them is easy to grow in the climate of my garden. *Calluna* (*Røsslyng*) needs a sunny and dry position to perform well, and therefore really is best as a south-facing rock-garden plant. After about ten years, I gave up focusing on ling but still have a few for giving colour in the autumn.

Some of Brita's cultivars are very good, and Bob Brien's St. Kilda heathers seem to tolerate our dull summers. 'J. H. Hamilton', 'Alba Plena', and 'Cuprea' have been the best of the callunas. Many of the seedlings popping for a year or two to lighten up the slope. . White flowers in the wild were very few, but last year I saw so many close together, in two localities, that I wonder if this is the result of radiation.

*Erica tetralix* (*Klokkelyng/Poselyng*) is also a widespread plant in nature here, but not used as a garden plant at all. It gets straggly, still growing in dark autumn days. Pruning hard may result in late flowering - something you would like to avoid, as the early flowering is what you need in a heather planting here. Recently, I have been trying out more of the *E. tetralix* cultivars, as this species fits well with my 'back to nature' policy. Wild white *tetralix* plants are fairly easy to find, and I have several Norwegian ones. I also still have a lovely white *E. tetralix* cultivar from the Falmouth conference in 1983.

*Erica cinerea* (*Klokkelyng/Purpurlyng*) is our third wild-growing heather. It grows in a very narrow strip along our southwest coast, on the islands in a south-west facing position. Few Norwegians know it exists; and there is confusion, as 'Klokke-lyng' (Bell-heather) is used as the common name for both bell- and cross-leaved-heather. The alternative names are more local. A poem by our Olav H. Hauge, translated by Robin Fulton, shows this:

*Song, tread lightly on my heart,*

*Tread lightly as bell-heather on watery moor,*

*As bird on overnight ice.*

*Break the crust of pain,*

*Song, you'll drown.*

In the garden *E. cinerea* needs the most protected place in a rocky bed, with full sun and good drainage. (Full sun in west Norway = a dull sky most of the time.) Some good winters it does survive but is lost sooner, rather than later - except in the very favourable situation near its natural area. *Erica cinerea* does come again from the base but often will not produce strong plants before next winter. My only *cinerea* plant now is my own 'Ogmund' but over the years I've had such a lot of pleasure from the bell heathers.

Of the other European species, *E. carnea* (*Varlyng*) does extremely well, because it is very hardy and long-lived. It is a superior plant and available here in April - even if the limited selection is very unpredictable. There are attempts to improve the situation. Perhaps one day this wonderful plant will get the appreciation it deserves. My hope is that the best of the old cultivars will not

disappear completely from the trade, because the new cultivars have been selected in a climate different from ours.

*E. x darleyensis* is not hardy enough to take a hard winter, but again, in a good spot, in a reasonable winter, it does well. *Erica vagans* is not reliably hardy here, and it is too soon to know if *E. x griffithsii* does better. I have 'Mrs. D. F. Maxwell', 'Lyonesse' and 'Valerie Griffiths', but they suffer winter damage that reduces flowering. *Erica x kramerii* seems to be a little hardier, giving a better performance.

Experiences with the more tender *Erica* species and hybrids and also the *Daboecia* cultivars have given many surprises. For instance, *E. x watsonii* and *E. x stuartii* do much better than the *cinereas* which grow wild only a few miles to the west of us. As expected, the *E. tetralix* hybrids are hardier than their other parent, except for *E. x williamsii* (I was so sorry that my 'Ken Wilson' died this winter after a very long spell of bare frost - it was such a lovely plant). *Erica ciliaris*, *E. erigena* and *E. mackaiana* would need the most favourable spots, plus winter protection.

*Daboecia* is the other nice surprise I've had. With me, 'Waley's Red', 'Charles Nelson', 'Alba', 'Silverwells', 'Jack Drake', and 'William Buchanan' are old friends, and I hope some of my newer cultivars will last as long. *Daboecias* seem to like our climate and perform so well that they are very useful, giving a very long period of colour from early July onwards. The *Daboecia* seedlings are a bonus, often giving a good white at no expense. A few seedlings are more *azorica*-ish than any plant I saw on my first visit to the Azores in 2002. On the 2003 tour, Charles Nelson firmly stated that *D. azorica* is a valid species.

Of the tree heaths, only *E. arborea* var. *alpina* reaches a fair size in sheltered positions; but, in my garden it did not survive its second winter. Neither did *E. arborea* 'Estrella Gold'. These are the only tree heaths I had hoped to include. Its hybrid has not been tried out here yet, as far as I know.

I would like to end by taking you into my other heather garden - 100% labour free and in flower all the year round. I'm sure many of you would feel very much at home there, as it is a place of heather folk, the loveliest heathers of all - friends from many places, gathered for a garden party or a quiet talk, whenever I want. I cherish it greatly, especially as it has plenty of room for new friends. The Azores tour of 2003 brought several.

Eileen reports that her garden is located 13 km south of Bergen, midway to the airport, at an approximate elevation of 60 m. It is about 10 km inland but 1 km from an inlet. Referring to local weather statistics, Eileen informs us that Bergen's average annual temperature is 8°C; the average rainfall of 1,960 mm falls mostly between May and September although, Eileen says, "this seems to be under change". The sun shines on the average of 1,230 hours annually.

## Beryl Farrah 1903 - 2005

On Monday, November 7th, 2005 Beryl Farrah, a former Administrator of the Heather Society, passed away at the Avon Reach Residential and Nursing Home in Mundeford near Christchurch in Dorset.

Beryl, with her husband Ken, joined *The Heather Society* in 1975 and such was their interest in heathers and the well being of the Society Ken became the Administrator in 1980. Ken took over the administration from an



organisation specialising in society administration and immediately provided the Society with a friendly and personal face to the outside world. Beryl ably supported Ken in his work for the Society and when Ken entered hospital she continued with his good work. When Ken sadly passed away in May 1984 Beryl very bravely offered to officially carry on his good work and maintain that friendly and personal approach to the day to day running of the Society's affairs. However at the end of 1985 Beryl finally decided it was time to hand over to Anne Small, the Society's current Administrator, but continued to maintain her lively interest in the Society.

Ken and Beryl had created a wonderful heather garden at their home in Highcliffe in Dorset and over the years they, and eventually just Beryl, displayed generous hospitality, on many occasions, in opening their garden to the members of the South West Local Group. Not only was their garden of



interest to members it was also of interest to the local media and featured in the press. After Ken's death Beryl continued to tend her garden but now with the help of a kind neighbour who dealt with those maintenance tasks that were likely to quickly tire her. But when it came to the maintenance of the heathers, then Beryl enlisted the help of local group members, who were only too glad to assist, given that she and Ken had given so much to the Society. In 1991 Beryl decided that it was time to give up her home and the garden she loved so much and move to a local retirement flat and then in 1996 with her failing health beginning to trouble her she made a further decision to move a few yards

down the road to the Avon Reach Residential Home. In recent years Beryl suffered great pain from osteoporosis but stayed her cheerful and caring self. Even with her failing health Beryl always avidly read her Society literature and regularly corresponded with many of the members as well as with relatives and friends from a bulging address book.

Beryl was a stalwart member of the Society and the local group and, until failing health intervened, attended many local group meetings and Society Conferences making many friends within the Society. Beryl was such a warm and good person and the ease with which she made friends, the care shown to her by her family and their words at her funeral echoed those qualities. I was recently reminded by Beryl's niece, Jean, that Beryl was an inspiration to the younger members of her family persuading Jean's two daughters to each plant up a heather garden as she and Ken had all those years ago. Beryl always showed pleasure in being kept abreast of Society affairs and I know that Lin and I will miss our visits and the friendship she showed us over so many years. God bless you Beryl.

*Phil Joyner*

## Ray Warner 1931 – 2005

Ray Warner was a dental surgeon by profession and was also a very keen gardener. He found gardening a relief and a therapy after a day at the dentist's chair.

Back in the 1960's, while he and his wife Olwyn were living at 'Fairlands' in Stoke on Trent, Ray began designing and planting a heather garden. In 1968 they joined *The Heather Society* and, over the years, became more and more involved with the Society, making many like-minded friends. They joined the then thriving Midlands Group, which met regularly in Birmingham, and attended many meetings there. 'Those were very happy times for us', Olwyn told me.



In 1976, Ray and Olwyn bought a rundown farm near Leek in Staffordshire and decided to start a nursery. Developing Barncroft Nurseries was a big undertaking, as Ray was still working at his dentistry practice.

Ray decided to concentrate on heathers, both wholesale and retail and, over the years, Barncroft Nurseries, with its extensive range of heathers and its beautiful landscaped heather display at the front, became a Mecca for heather lovers.

Ray was ill for the last thirteen years of his life and much of the running of the nursery fell to their son, Stuart. Sadly, Ray died on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2005.

After thirty years, this may be the last one for Barncroft Nurseries, as Stuart would like to concentrate on a career in landscape gardening.

*Daphne Everett*

## Group News

### North East

Whilst it did not increase attendance numbers, the first ever afternoon AG., was a success and appreciated by those attending, who did not have to turn out on a dark night. It was good to welcome Dave and Beryl Mayne from Kirkbymoorside, who have supported our AGMs for many years and for which we extend our thanks.

The Committee was returned to office yet again and after tea and biscuits, I gave a slide show to round off the proceedings.

The 'Dates for your Diary' are, literally just that, and are provisional, as we have not had a meeting yet to discuss the programme, but our Group members will be informed with full information later.

Annual Outing	Sunday	7 May
Car Outing	Wednesday	5 July
Annual Show	Saturday	9 September
AGM	Friday	27 October

Wishing all our members and friends a good heather year from the North East Group.

*Dorothy M Warner*

## Midlands

Joan and I invite members to visit us at 10 Upper Green, Loughborough on Saturday 18th March 2006 to see the winter heathers in bloom. We propose a 2pm start, with tea at about 4 pm. If you wish to come, please let me know beforehand if possible. Details of how to communicate with us are given on the last page of the *Bulletin*. In your response, please provide a contact telephone number or e-mail address. I can supply a sketch of the route if asked.

## Home Counties

As mentioned in the last Bulletin, at our October 2005 meeting members were asked to list their five favourite heathers and Pamela Lee very kindly made a note of the cultivars chosen and the number of votes; these details are given below:-

The two most popular heather cultivars were:

Myretoun Ruby (5 votes) and Mrs. D F Maxwell (4 votes)

3 votes each were given to the following:

'Foxhollow'	'Jacqueline'
'Kramer's Rote'	'Peter Sparkes'

'Rosalie'

2 votes each were given to the following:

'Alexandra'	'Estrella Gold'
'Exeter'	'Furzey'
'Heaven Scent'	'Tib'

'Waley's Red'

The following 31 were given 1 vote each:

'Adrienne Duncan'	'Albert's Gold'
'Annemarie'	'Ann Sparkes'
'Anthony Davis'	'Arran Gold'
'Australis'	'Azorica'
'Champs Hill'	'Firefly'
'Ghost Hills'	'Golden Drop'
'Golden Starlet'	'Herman Blum'
'Ice Princess'	'Isabell'
'Jack H Brummage'	'Jan Dekker'
'Ken Wilson'	'Mr. Robert'
'Multicolor'	multiflora (not yet named)
'Nathalie'	'Olivia Hall'
'Silver Knight'	'Snowstorm' ('Schneesturm')
'Stephen Davis'	tetralix seedling
'Thing Nee'	'Valerie Griffiths'
'Valerie Proudley'	

Sincere thanks to Pamela Lee for providing this information.

Two meetings are planned for 2006, I intend to arrange a visit to a garden in April/May (details will be sent to members via a Newsletter as requested) and the Garden Meeting Room at RHS Wisley has been booked for Saturday 30 September 2006.

*Derek Millis*

## South West Area News

First of all I regret to report that Beryl Farrah, a much loved and stalwart member of the former South West group, has passed away since the publication of the last *Bulletin*. Beryl will be sadly missed. Please find an obituary elsewhere

put back a week from the previous announcement in the Autumn Bulletin. The first visit will be to the Sir Harold Hillier Gardens at Romsey on March 11th, not March 4th. At Hilliers the winter garden and the heather garden will have plenty to admire. The second visit will be to Exbury Gardens on May 13th when it should be the peak flowering time for the azaleas. Both dates are Saturdays and I suggest that Lin and I will be in the vicinity of the entrances at about 2.00pm. There will be no arrangements made with the gardens, no guides and no group entrance fees. There will be no reminders delivered to your door and there will be no need to let me know you are coming, just turn up and we will walk around together viewing and chatting as we go. It's an excuse to get out and about and meet old friends and perhaps make new ones so Lin and I hope to see you there. Both gardens are adequately signposted from major routes and are easily found on maps of the area. Please watch the Summer *Bulletin* for the announcement of any garden(s) that Lin and I will be visiting in the latter part of the year.

*Phil Joyner*

## Yorkshire

The meeting Room at Harlow Carr has been booked for **3 June**, and **30 September**. Full details will be announced later.

*Jean Julian*

## NEW MEMBERS IN 2005

### Zone 1

PARKER Mrs. C, 15 Windmill Court, Cellardyke, Anstruther, Fife, KY10 3BT.  
WOOD Mr B, Heatherknowe Old Nursery, Dunreggan-Moniaive, Thornhill, DG3 4HH.

### Zone 3

ARNOLD Mrs K, 35 Harlsey Crescent, Hartburn, Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland, TS18 5DE.  
HENDERSON Miss C R, 82 Burnham Avenue, West Denton Park Estate, Newcastle Upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear, NE15 8XQ.

### Zone 4

HOLT Mr S, 4 Pendleton Avenue, Rawtenstall, Rossendale, Lancashire, BB4 8UX.  
JONES Mr R, 7 Winmarleigh Road, Lancaster, LA1 4LG.

### Zone 5

CRAVEN Miss H R, 36 Whitehall Croft, Rothwell, Leeds, W. Yorkshire, LS26 0JD.  
DANIEL Mr S J, 39 Burrill Drive, Wigginton, York, YO32 2ST.

### Zone 7

BUXTON Mrs D, 7 Linbery Close, Iakerthorpe, Alfreton, Derbyshire DE55 7NF.

### Zone 8

HAWTON Mr A, Bryn Cerdin Fach, Bwlchygroes, Llandysul, Ceredigion, SA44 4TA.  
HOBBS Mrs A, 1 The Paddock, Llanyre, Llandrindod, Powys, LD1 6NG.

### Zone 9

HALL Mr B, 27 Marshall Close, Feering, Colchester, Essex, CO5 9LQ.  
WHITE Mr L, 30 Thurlstone Avenue, Seven Kings, Essex, IG3 9DU.

### Zone 11

ATTWOOD Mr P, Cottswood, Clandon Road, West Clandon, Surrey, GU4 7UW.  
DONALDSON Dr J A, Winchcombe, Elmstead Road, West Byfleet, Surrey, KT14 6JB.  
JAMES Dr P C, 15 Hobury Street, London, SW10 0JB.  
TURNER Mrs O, 73 Woodfield Gardens, New Malden, Surrey, KT3 6DY.

### Zone 12

HAWKER Mr L, Fiveways, Donne Lane Head, Odcombe, Yeovil, Somerset, BA22 8UE.

### Zone 14

CARLSSON Ms B, Liden 27, 439 36 Onsala, Sweden.

CLEMENTE Mr M Fuster, Avda. Constitucion 204, Casarrubios Del Monte 45950 (Toledo) Spain.

FAGÚNDEZ RMTE J, R. Pico Sacro 15, 15706 Santiago de Compostella, A Coruña, Spain.

MACDONALD Mr N B, 7839 Hihn Road, Ben Lomond, CA 95005, USA.

MORENA Mme E, 12 Rue des Templiers, 02600 Mortefontaine, France.

FERKINGSTAD Mr P M, Mjølhusv. 30, 4272 Sandve, Norway.

NEHLS Mr W, Institut Fuer Gemuese-und Zier-Pfignzenbau, Theodor-Echtermeyer-Weg 1, Grossbeeren G-14979, Germany.

SCHONFELD Ms J, 1810 Fairview Drive, Bayside, CA 95524, USA.

**CHANGE OF ADDRESS**

**Zone 1**

BELL, Mr G M, Hallyards Cottage, Banchory, Kincardineshire, AB31 6HX.

SMITH Mr & Mrs L F, 1 Holmhead Drive, Stewarton, Ayrshire, KA3 5QR.

**Zone 14**

KETELAAR Mr S, Tuimelaar 2, 3435 CD Nieuwegein, Nederland

**DECEASED**

**Zone 1**

DUFFNER Mr C R, Pheasant Walk, Shieldhill Road, Quothquan, Biggar, Lanarkshire, ML12 6NA.

**Zone 3**

COURTNEY Mr J S, 40 Western Way, Ponteland, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE20 9AS.

**Zone 5**

VICKERS Mr G P V, Flat 17, Brundish House, Braithwell Road, Maltby, S. Yorkshire, S66 8JT.

**Zone 7**

WARNER Mr R, Barncroft Nurseries, Dunwood Lane, Longsdon, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs,

ST9 9QW.

**Zone 12**

Farrah Mrs B, 15 Avon Reach Nursing & Residential Home, 1 Farm Lane, Christchurch, Dorset, BH23 4AH.

**Zone 14**

WESTERMANN Mr H, Baumschulenweg 2, 29646 Bispingen, Germany.

**RESIGNATIONS**

**Zone 5**

McIVOR Dr I D, 41 Shoreham Drive, Moorgate, Rotherham, Yorkshire, S60 3DT.

**Zone 11**

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

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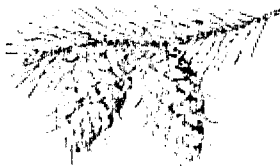
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