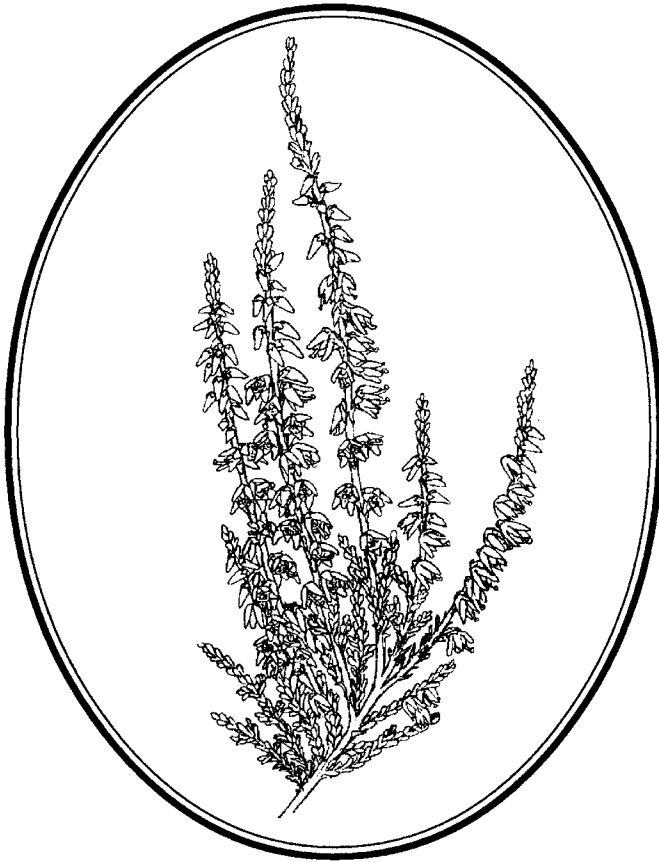


*Bulletin of The
Heather Society*



Vol. 6 No. 19

Autumn 2006

DIARY OF EVENTS

2006

27 October North East AGM

2007

15 January **CLOSING DATE FOR SPRING BULLETIN**

17th March, Yorkshire To be decided

24 March South West Visit to Furzey Gardens

2nd June Yorkshire To be decided

18th August East Midlands Visit to *The Bannut*

7-10 September **CONFERENCE** South Wales

22nd September Yorkshire To be decided

22 September Home Counties Wisley Meeting



A Registered Charity No. 261407

Editor: Daphne Everett, The Bannut, Bringsty, Herefordshire, WR6 5TA.
Telephone/Fax: 01885 482206 e-mail: everettbannut@zetnet.co.uk

Cover illustration *Calluna vulgaris* by Brita Johannson



It isn't often that a guest at the Palace Hotel at Buxton sits under an umbrella during dinner. But when someone in a room above the dining room leaves a tap running and water comes through the ceiling, drastic measures must be taken to save Andy's permanent wave. Andy Collins (who looks after the National Heather Collection at Wisley) was provided with the perfect solution. Dee Daneri, all the way from California, looks quite bemused about the whole thing (or is it the wine?).

Conferences 2006 & 2007

Susie Kay

This is a **BIG THANK YOU** to all who came to Buxton. Without you there would be no Conference and your attendance is what makes it such an enjoyable occasion and gives a real cohesion to *The Heather Society*. All matter of things were discussed apart from ericaceous problems.

Of course a huge thank you goes to our speakers, Chris Dean from "Moors for the Future" project and Geoff Eyre (who decided to become a member on the spot), Derek Spicer from the Conifer Society, almost a companion society, and our very own David Small and Barry Sellers. And how will we ever forget the machinations of our Registrar, Charles Nelson, with his quirky quiz, which produced so much head scratching and laughter. But I must not forget Council who gave me so much support in organising your conference. So if you missed this year look below for what is going to happen in 2007.

Conference 2007

Our venue is Haverfordwest in Pembrokeshire. The hotel will be the "Hotel Mariners", located in the centre of the town. This is a small family run

establishment where we will receive a very warm welcome. The dates are **7th, 8th & 9th September 2007**. The cost will be approximately £220 per person.

After dinner on Friday there will be a talk by Mat Sutton on the "Marloes Coast Project". It appears that all over the British Isles there are people who are so concerned about heath restoration with its associated grasslands and habitats, that they will find time to come and talk to *The Heather Society*.

On Saturday we shall visit Marloes to view this restoration, which will also give us a chance to see some of the stunning coastline of Pembrokeshire.

In the afternoon we will travel by coach to Picton Castle, which is still habitable and has a history of 750 years. Our visit will give you a unique insight into the lives of the Philips family whose home has been here since the 15th Century. There will be time to explore the Woodland Gardens, plus a chance to purchase plants, as Picton Castle will be holding their Rare Plant Fair. Dinner on Saturday night will be followed by an exciting speaker, at the moment a big secret.

Sunday will start with the A.G.M. This is an opportunity for members to voice any queries they have regarding the organisation of *The Heather Society* and is the one time in the year when members can have their say on any point of interest in the running of the Society

After the welcome cup of coffee we shall be off to the National Botanic Garden of Wales. This is a fairly new Garden with a mass of interesting features. In fact there is so much to see and we do hope there will be enough time for everybody to enjoy the diverse nature of these gardens.

Sunday evening will see the return of "Open Forum" but with a slight twist. Members who wish to show 10 slides of their own garden will have the opportunity to give a short presentation.

Through the weekend, as all this is happening, we shall be having a plant sale again, which is a great opportunity to acquire rare cultivars and species to enhance your garden (and boast about), So if you are coming, please start potting up that very special ericaceous plant so that others can grow it in their garden and enjoy it and make us a caring sharing Society.

As you will have seen from the CD which was enclosed in your Summer 2006 Bulletin we do have fun and are a normal set of people who have one interest in common. HEATHER. If you have never attended, I hope I might have whetted your appetite to join the "Faithfuls" and share our fun on these annual occasions. Mark it in your diary now!!

Report on the AGM held on 10 September 2006 at the Palace Hotel, Buxton

The Chairman, Arnold Stow, opened the AGM with a review of the year. He commented on what a difficult growing year it had been with high temperatures, little rain and, for many, hosepipe bans. Many heathlands had suffered devastation by fire.

Although member numbers have stabilized in recent years, Council decided earlier in the year to advertise in a couple of BBC publications, but the results were very disappointing. Other avenues will be explored.

The CD based on the Society's activities during the year was distributed free of charge to all members. This involved a lot of work by Anne and David Small, and Arnold was rather disappointed at the lack of feedback from members.

Thanks were given to Roy Nichols, who was retiring from Council. To attend Council meetings he had travelled from Newcastle to London, 3 times a year, for the last 13 years.

Arnold reminded the audience of the sad deaths during the year of some long-time members of the Society: Beryl Farrah, Ray Warner and John Tucker (there is an appreciation of John Tucker later in this *Bulletin*).

Last year, Daphne Everett resigned from Council, but agreed to continue as *Bulletin* Editor. In recognition of her service, Council had unanimously decided that she should be made a Vice President of the Society.

Finally, Arnold thanked the Secretary, the Treasurer and the two Editors, not forgetting the Conference Organiser, Susie Kay for all their work.

The Secretary, Jean Julian, reported on the work of Council during the year. She said that Julian Fitz-Earle had been newly welcomed to Council and Charles Nelson had made a welcome return. Charles had arranged for the Royal Chairman, Major General Pat Turpin's papers to be archived at the Royal Cornwall Museum, Truro. David Small had decided not to publish a 4th edition of the *Handyguide* but to put it on the Society's website and also on a CD ROM to be issued with the booklet, *Recommended Heathers*. Ella May Wulff and David Small are currently working on a coffee table book on heathers. Council is recommending a new 'President's Award' to be awarded to the producer of a worthy new cultivar. Of the National collections – Cherrybank is having some problems, Harlow Carr remains on hold, but Wisley is making steady progress. Some of the local groups were having problems with numbers – only the Home Counties and the North East Groups have meetings which are well attended.

The Treasurer, Phil Joyner presented the accounts. He reported an excess of expenditure over income of about £500. Interest on investments stood at almost £2,550. A refund of Gift Aid for the last three years totalled £1366.49. The accounts were approved.

Harry Reilly, who had audited the books for several years had decided that he must retire. A new Auditor would be sought. Phil thanked the Administrator, Anne Small, for the phenomenal amount of work she did for the Society.

The 2008 International Conference will be held in Victoria, Vancouver Island. The AGM will be held at Harrogate on Saturday, 27th September

The Chairman thanked his wife, Josey, for the beautiful flower arrangements she had prepared for the weekend. (*Greatly deserved! Ed*)

Appeal from the Hon Treasurer

The Society is currently without an Auditor to audit the 2006 accounts and the accounts in future years. The Hon Treasurer would be pleased to hear from any member who feels that they could volunteer for this position and would like more details. Failing this then the Hon Treasurer would be pleased

to hear from any member who is aware of anyone, outside of the Society, who would be willing to volunteer for this role and would like more details. Contact details can be found at the back of this Bulletin.

Phil Joyner - Hon Treasurer

In Appreciation

John Tucker - 26.9.21 - 9.7.06

John Tucker, who died in a nursing home 2 1/2 months before his 85th birthday, was a faithful member of the Home Counties Group. He first opened his garden, 'Floraldene', to members of the earlier Mid-Southern Group in April 1986 and competed successfully in the Heather Competitions held at RHS Shows in London. He enjoyed arranging flowers and more recently won the Turpin Trophy three times in the Group's annual competition at Wisley. When he returned the trophy in 2003, he said he would retire from the competition, as he no longer wanted to drive so far in his tiny car with the increasing traffic.

John knew his heathers well and gave talks to local groups to encourage further interest. His was a chalk garden, so he had had to work hard to develop a deep, productive topsoil. The garden was opened regularly under the National Gardens Scheme and he welcomed visitors with a variety of his home-baked cakes. He made sure that there were groups of seats in every attractive corner of the garden so that people could relax and enjoy it. John was good at DIY and built furniture for house and garden, constructing a conservatory and greenhouses close to the house so that he could continue his skilful propagating when the days drew in, succeeding with the most difficult of plants.

John Tucker was born, an only child, at Findon near Worthing in West Sussex, where his parents owned a mixed plant nursery. On the outbreak of the Second World War, at the age of 18, he joined the RAF as a medical orderly and was sent to the Far East zone. Captured by the Japanese, he endured many years of hardship and deprivation, moving from one prison camp to another. It was during this time that John realised he had gift for languages, developing this talent in later life and adding to his fluent Dutch a knowledge of German, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Czech and Norwegian.

By the early fifties, after a period of rehabilitation in London, John was put in charge of his parents' nursery (which had been turned over to food production during the war). He brought it up to a high standard, gaining it a reputation for being the best small nursery in the Southeast.

Around 1970 he felt the urge to travel, which he did, annually and widely. He sold part of the nursery, under pressure, to developers. He retained the house and enough land to lay out a garden, which he gradually planted, with specimen trees, shrubs and heathers. His hardy physique, he always maintained, was due to a daily dip in the sea from May to October: in winter he would go skating on frozen ponds. He loved classical music, canoeing, camping and treating his friends to sumptuous picnics.

John never married but kept in regular contact with several cousins and many devoted friends. He had requested a cheerful funeral service and accordingly it opened and closed with the playing of "An English Country Garden". A card sent by *The Heather Society* was much appreciated and a wreath of conifers and heathers from John's garden was placed on the coffin: sprays of flowers were distributed and we were each invited to place one beside it as a farewell gesture.

Pamela Lee

Jean Merrin

"Members will be saddened to hear of the recent death of Jean Merrin who with her husband, Roy, had been a member of the Home Counties Group and previously the Southern Group for many years. Jean was an active member, having won the Turpin Trophy in 2001. She always enjoyed the company of members at Heather Society outings and meetings. We send our sincere condolences to Roy and family."

Derek Millis

Ken Wilson

Ken passed away Oct. 4th. after a short illness. He was active in his 70th year in horticulture growing tomatoes and colourful annuals in his small garden. Born in Yorkshire, Ken began a nursery career at Baker's Nursery near Wolverhampton, home of the famous Russell lupins and before emigrating to Canada in 1954 operated his own nursery near Pateley Bridge in Nidderdale.

Ken's plant growing skills, and leadership values, led him to the University of British Columbia in Vancouver in 1969. It was here as Operations Supervisor for the Botanical Gardens that Ken contacted other members of THS living on the west coast of North America who together formed The Pacific North West Heather Society, later to become NAHS.

Ken loved sharing his knowledge with garden clubs, students and nursery growers. He hosted radio and television garden programs and will be remembered by the heather *Erica x williamsii* 'Ken Wilson'.

David Wilson

Yachats Heather: A Legacy Ramona Bloomingdale, Oregon, USA

I asked Ramona to write this article, not only because I found the two original articles in Heather News very interesting, but particularly because I wanted to know more about the pioneering Scottish lady, Ada Violet Turner, who was mentioned and I thought her story would be of interest to other Heather Society members too. Ed.

It's a small world I thought, as I responded to an article in the *North American Heather Society* newsletter about the naturalized heather [*Calluna*] growing along the 804 Trail north of Yachats, Oregon.

That particular location along the Oregon coast has long been a part of A

family holiday times and even a retirement home for some members. The trail along the top of the cliff, with ever present views of the Pacific, and paths leading down to rocky tide pools and sandy beaches, has been an important component of trips to the beach for five generations of my family. A memorial bench for my mother provides a resting spot near the north end of the trail. I knew I needed to respond to the *NAHS* article, and so I started with an e-mail to the author, Ella May Wulff.

An Oregon State Park, Smelt Sands Wayside, is a good place to start a walk north along the top of the cliff. The 804 Trail, a part of the state park system, takes a walker through an often windblown area, of coast pine (*Pinus contorta*) and salal (*Gaultheria shallon*) mixed with a variety of wild flowers, that include many of European origin. Oxeye daisies, hawkweed, foxglove and grasses vie for space. The central Oregon coast enjoys a mild marine climate, with fog coming in off the Pacific, the usual winter temperatures are above freezing, and there is abundant rain from fall through spring. The Yachats heather have found this ideal.

As you hike the trail you will find the heather growing along the east side in sheltered places, not directly along the edge of the cliff. It is much the easiest to spot during bloom times in August and September. The west side of the trail seems to provide a buffer from winds and salt spray.

The heather along the trail shows considerable variation in size and colour, varying from white through mauve to ruby. None of them is double. One dark form has an unusual flowering habit. The flowering stem has a short section of flowers, then a section with leaves, then finishes with another short section of flowers. (Fig. 1)

Joyce Prothero, current editor of the *North American Heather Society* newsletter, made the presence of the naturalized heather known to heather enthusiasts. Following a visit to the site Ella May Wulff speculated that a Johnny Heatherseed, lonely for the auld sod, had left a legacy. With roots in the area, and a curiosity that needed satisfying, I set out in search of something to back up local lore about the history of those who had lived adjacent to the trail.

I well remember the widespread clumps of heather in unsettled areas north of Yachats from the mid 1960's. I'd understood that the plants not native to the area were to be found around where a fox farm once stood. A trip to the Oregon Coast History Center in Newport netted maps of the area with the names of property owners and newspapers with the obituaries of Timothy and Grace Welp. From 1926 to 1939 they had operated *Welp's Silver Fox Farm*. Four offspring, two daughters and two sons, were listed.

A website devoted to searching for people found three of the four, complete with addresses. Correspondence with one gave me the address and phone number of the fourth. Since then I've had responses from each. Those old enough to remember those years recalled a woman with a nursery across Highway 101 during the 1930's and 40's. One daughter, Albertina Welp Myers remembers the heather with lavender blossoms outside their dining room window. Ada Turner, who operated the neighbouring nursery north of the farm, had given them the heather. A return to the Lincoln County Historical Society found Turner's obituary and a number of articles written by area newspaper reporters who had interviewed Turner.

Ada Violet Turner

Turner is described as a lively character with a pair of sparkling eyes. She was born in 1879 in Bridge of Allen, Scotland. During her childhood, her father, a doctor and horticulturist, took a position with the East India Company and was head of the Calcutta Botanical Gardens. She was educated by tutors and sent to school in Switzerland. She describes her Victorian education as “a wonderful education, only it didn’t lead anywhere”. Following the Victorian education, she attended Swanley Horticultural College, located in Kent, England.

With her father’s intervention, she found a place at Edinburgh Botanical Gardens with a class of fifty boys and two instructors. “There was me, sitting alone as if I had leprosy. They wouldn’t allow the boys to talk with me on campus.” At Edinburgh, she had a year of taking notes and making cuttings. In 1905 Ada moved to Canada, and by 1921 she had moved to Yachats, Oregon. During the early 1930’s she started her first licensed nursery along Highway 101 north of Yachats, where she raised rare plants and forty-one varieties of heather. During the second world war, and far from market, she found work with a florist in Portland, Oregon. By 1957, having loved the coast, she moved back - this time to Gleneden Beach, where the sign outside her nursery read : Turner Nursery, Rare Plants.

During her 100th year, in 1979, with the help of her daughter, Polly, she was still watering and weeding at the nursery. She was elected a Fellow of the *Royal Horticultural Society* of England and was the oldest member of that society in the world. Ada Violet Turner died at the age of 107. Ella May had it right. Almost. It was a Janie Heatherseed named Ada Turner, not a Johnny Heatherseed, who brought heather to Yachats.

Recent visits to the heather sites

In August and September of 2005 I visited the 804 Trail and the heather sites. On an overcast mid-August day, I photographed heather with lavender and rosy-coloured blossoms. The white budded plants had yet to open their flowers. On another visit, on a decidedly damp September morning, the white buds had opened, and the plant with rosy-coloured blossoms was still full of vibrant flowers.

About five years ago, a family with property close to a patch of the heather burned the area, much to the dismay of their neighbours. It is here, close to the trail and open to the sky, that the heather is the most vigorous and bushy. A visit in September with Donald Niskanen of The Bramble and the Rose, took me to an extensive patch of heather at some distance east of the trail. His nursery stands where Turner started her first nursery, and he provided a guided tour of his property between Highway 101 and the 804 Trail. The callunas are thick. He has regularly mowed some of the plants, and these hug the ground. Others are intertwined with salal, bracken and grasses, often reaching waist high.

A number of years ago, before the land was occupied, I walked the area between the 804 Trail and Highway 101. Lanky ericas existed there in heavy shade alongside the callunas. Recently, more and more dwellings have For

sprung up east of the trail, so some of the existing heather may be lost on private lands. As the trail is now a part of the Oregon State Park system, the plant life along the historic 804 Trail should remain a gift to be enjoyed by all.

Closing comments

Turner remembered as a child being taken high in the hills of Scotland by her father, who gave her some stones to throw into the water. He told her that the ripples from those stones will never be gone. In a million years they will still be moving. Everything you do goes on and on, and you can't say nothing matters, because everything always does.

Information in Paragraphs 2 through 3 is from *Heathers along the Old 804* by Ella May Wulff, published in #97 of the *North American Heather Society* newsletter, p. 10, Winter 2002

Photographs

1. Mid-August, 2005 A vigorous *Calluna* 5 years after the Muirburn.
2. *Calluna* nestled among the bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) close to the east side of the trail.
3. September, 2005, white *Calluna* mingled with grass and growing beside a native salal (*Gaultheria shallon*) a heather relative.

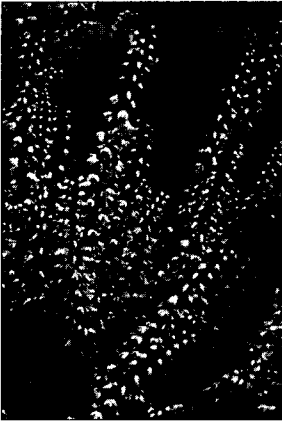


Fig. 1

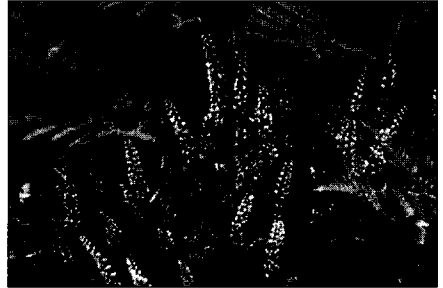


Fig. 2



Fig. 3

An Episcopal Hymn to Heathers (whilst fly-fishing)

E. Charles Nelson

For many years a poem about the heathers of Connemara has puzzled me, because its author was extremely elusive – indeed “anonymous”. This piece of literature was known to me, only until this very day (see below), from an address to the Belfast Naturalists’ Field Club, delivered on 19 March 1901, by the Club’s Vice-president William Henry Phillips (1830–1923) who was a fern (not heather!) enthusiast. Phillips’ talk was entitled “My hobby about ferns and its results: personal reminiscences”, and towards the end of the published version we read this:

One of our poet bishops, since gone to his rest, wrote as follows to a clergyman of his diocese who had promised to go with him to Connemara, but was prevented by engagements. The description [Phillips continued] is very humorous, and would almost describe some of our Ulster scenes, say, Newcastle:—

DERADDA LODGE, CONNEMARA, August 1895.

Dear Fowler, I think, on the whole, you’ll agree with me,
 This place is delicious (I wish you could be with me!);
 But especially charming to one who has got any
 Fancy for fishing, conjointly with botany.
 Just think, when on land from your boat you get out,
 Having captured a salmon, or ten or twelve trout,
 As you lounge on the margin, enjoying your lunch,
 You suddenly find that your cushion’s a bunch
 Of what we consider our fairest of spolia,
 Menziesia to wit, species polifolia.
 Then to stretch your cramped legs, you stroll off a short way,
 And lo! there’s the heath that is nam’d from Mackay;
 Or perchance you may find (you know it most rare is)
 Another heath bearing the name ciliaris;
 Or even by luck one outrivalling any – a
 Bush of the Erica Mediterranea.
 Then look in that ditch—there’s a prize for herbaria!
 The true Intermediate Utricularia.
 You will know it, without any flower or fruit,
 By the groups of small bladders apart from the root.
 Then in casting your fly you hook into a weed—
 Draw it in—why, what is it? a rush or a reed?
 No, the treasure you’ve hook’d in that cast so unwary
 Is the Eriocaulon septangulare!
 When the salmon have baffled your patience and skill,
 Take half a day off, and walk over that hill,
 And there, on the rocks (it’s no fiction or phantom),
 Grows the real unmistakeable true Adiantum:

While in that little lake which the seabreezes fall on,
 All full of Lobelia and Eriocaulon
 (In vain the green depths of its waters defy us),
 With a gaff we secure the much-coveted Naias.
 Now I think, my dear Fowler, I've well proved my case,
 That this is a most undeniable place;
 And once more I wish you were with me to fish up
 Big trout and rare plants!—
 Your affectionate Bishop.

Nothing in that botanical hymn could be said to describe Newcastle in the County Down, a place as devoid of interesting heathers as most other parts of Ireland (except some naturalized Cornish heath at Murlough Nature Reserve, but I doubt even Phillips knew about it!). No matter, Phillips' plant geography was a trifle askew. The verse is entirely correct for Connemara – the bishop knew more than Phillips, even though his tortured rhymes may appal.

Let's investigate the evidence and unmask the poet.

Deradda lodge

Deradda Lodge was the name of a house, probably best described as a sporting lodge, situated in the townland of Derryadd West (Doire Fhada Thiar) at Toombeola, a short distance north of Roundstone in Connemara. According to the gazetteer that accompanies Tim Robinson's superbly detailed *Connemara* (1990) map, in 1839 a Scot, John Robertson, leased the fishery on the Ballynahinch River, which forms part of the townland's western boundary, and started a cannery using the local salmon. Robertson was not the only Scottish Presbyterian in the area. The McCalla family lived in Roundstone, and a Presbyterian chapel was built in the village in 1840. Robertson surely knew William McCalla, botanist and one-time schoolmaster, who discovered *Erica mackaiana*, and whose melancholy tomb marks the site of the vanished chapel.

About 1840 Robertson built a fishery cottage which by 1850 had been converted into a hotel. In April 1865 Robertson was among the signatories of an "Address by the Magistrates, Clergy, Gentry, and Inhabitants of Connemara, to Thomas Dillon Fitzgerald, Esq., R. M., Late of Clifden" (*The Cork examiner* 25 April 1865). Subsequently, Walter Blackadder, the manager of the fishery for the Ballynahinch estate, rebuilt the hotel and in 1872, named The Angler's Return, it was advertised (Robinson 1990) as "beautifully situated for Salmon and Sea Trout Fishing, Sea Bathing and Seal Shooting." The website for The Angler's Return presently proclaims: "nestled at the foot of Derradda [sic] Hill, is an eighteenth [sic] century sporting lodge, now a small family run guest-house...".

The poetical bishop evidently stayed in Deradda Lodge in the late 1800's for the fishing, and he certainly knew his Connemara botany well. Of the plants he wove into his verse *Adiantum capillus-veneris* (maidenhair fern) is perhaps the most indicative because it is known only to occur on one solitary boulder: "... And there, on the rocks (it's no fiction or phantom) / Grows the real unmistakable [sic] true *Adiantum*." The fern was first found in the vicinity of Roundstone before June 1836 by William McCalla. According to D. A. Webb and M. J. P. Scannell (1983 *Flora of Connemara and The Burren*,

p. 266) its “occurrence on an isolated boulder by L. Bollard is unusual...”.

Tracing the affectionate bishop

I have tried for many years to identify the episcopal author of this hymn to heathers (see for example *The Church of Ireland gazette* 16 June 2006). He was clearly addicted to fly-fishing – more than botanizing, indeed.

The break-through came a few weeks ago (mid-August) when I chanced to read J. Harris Stone's 1906 book *Connemara and the neighbouring spots of beauty and interest*. Therein I happened on a reference to the death on 10 August 1897 at Dhulough House, near Leenane in the northwestern reaches of Connemara, of the (Anglican) Bishop of Wakefield, the Most Revd Dr. William Walsham How. Stone commented that the bishop “had only arrived about a fortnight before in search of rest and health.” According to his entry in the *Oxford dictionary of national biography* (<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13882>), How was “a keen fisherman, an accomplished botanist, and a most popular writer, both in prose and verse.” His dates fitted too – Phillips had stated that the poet had “since gone to his rest”. In a database I maintain about botanists and horticulturists with explicit Irish connections, I had noted Bishop How – but I had queried his entry: “why did he die in Leenane?” Now I know why!

How's botanical writings include an account of the plants of Great Orme Head in north Wales and he also contributed a list of plants found in the neighbourhood of Barmouth to Roberts' *Gossiping guide to Wales*. Moreover, How wrote various verses about plants: London Pride, Thrift, Mountain pansies, Golden saxifrage.

Finally, today (the feast of St. Bees, Virgin of Ireland – according to my trusty *Pocket encyclopaedia of natural phenomena* – who fed the wild birds), I obtained a copy of Frederick Douglas How's biography of his episcopal father: *Bishop Walsham How: a memoir* (1899) contains a chapter on “The bishop as a fisherman” (pp 432–447), and another on “The bishop as a botanist” (pp 449–459). At last, the mystery is solved. The poet is no longer anonymous.

William Walsham How (born in Shrewsbury on 13 December 1832) was Rector of Whittingdon, Shropshire, for 28 years. He was consecrated suffragan to the Bishop of London (with the title Bishop of Bedford) in 1879, and was translated in 1888 to Wakefield. How visited Connemara “several times” on fishing expeditions. On his first trip in 1867, with his cousin Mr. G. F. King, he stayed at Deradda Lodge but the “sport was not good”; “He chronicled the visit in rhyme, which he illustrated with spirited pen-and-ink sketches.” The whole poem is reprinted in his son's *Memoir* (pp 436–438).

DAY 1.

Calmly bright

Is the morning light;

Lovely blue are the mountain ridges:

Gently ripple the waters

Like the prattle of Erin's daughters;

But oh! Confound these venomous midges!

And, there were five more days/stanzas.

How visited Deradda again in 1869 with a friend, Colonel Lloyd. In 1895, by which time he had been the Bishop of Wakefield for seven years, How “took several members of his family for a short tour in Ireland, spending ten days at Deradda Lodge.” He wrote on 14 August 1895: “I have managed to get in a bit of botanising, and have found two or three rare plants, but I am going to cut the fishing one day, and have a botanical ramble on Roundstone Hill [sic, Errisbeg], three or four miles from here, where there are two or three very rare heathers, as well as some other rarities.”

The hapless Fowler to whom the poem was addressed, was the Rector of Liversedge in Wakefield diocese, the Reverend William Fowler (1835–1912), a Lincolnshire man who is known for his contributions to the botanical recording of that county. Fowler was described as one of How’s “chief botanical friends” in the *Memoir* (p. 456). So the poem’s addressee is also identified.

Prior to this trip, the bishop had written to Frederick Janson Hanbury (1851–1938), a former neighbour, a well-known plantsman and an expert on hawkweeds (*Hieracium* species):

I am going on this day week to Connemara for some salmon-fishing, and shall be at Ballinahinch, not far from Roundstone and Clifden. Can you tell me what plants I should look for if the weather does not do for fishing and I can get a little botanising? It is the heaths that are said to be specialities here. *E. Mackaiana* is said to be findable, but *E. ciliaris* very doubtful. I was there long ago but did not get to the heath habitats. The bogs at Ballinahinch were full of *Menziesia polifolia* [= *Daboecia cantabrica*] and *Drosera anglica*, but little else interesting.



So the Bishop of Wakefield wrote the poem about Deradda Lodge, perhaps the only one in any language to contain the names of no fewer than *four* heathers and certainly the only one ever to include the binomial *Erica mediterranea*! The bishop is undoubtedly better known for his other hymns, especially “For all the saints who from their labours rest...”, which I sang countless times when I was a chorister.

William Walsham How may not have caught many salmon or sea-trout yet he must rank as an incomparable rhymist. Consider his couplets:

... more rare is /... Ciliaris;
 ... Or even by luck one outrivalling any – a / Bush of the Erica Mediterranea.
 ... cast so unwary /... Septangulare;
 ... seabreezes fall on /... Eriocaulon.

I wonder idly what he would have done with the famously rhymeless plant name – orange?

Buxton 2006 Pub Quiz



DAVID McCLINTOCK

For those that missed the Buxton Pub Quiz at the Conference, compiled by our Registrar & Yearbook editor, Charles Nelson, most of it is reproduced below. It is a shame I can't reproduce Charles having hysterics as he read out the questions!

Charles has generously offered to donate a 1971 edition of Terry Underhill's book 'Heaths & Heather's', to the person who gets the most points. **This is no ordinary copy, it is from David McClintock's library, complete with his bookplate!**

If there is a draw it will be the first one out of the hat. Sorry – 2006 Conference attendees are strictly prohibited. (Answers will be given in the Spring Bulletin). Ed.

Round 1

- Question 1 Heathers only grow wild in Europe – true or false?
- Question 2 You are a comely maiden living in the seventeenth century in Ireland – would you wear a sprig of St. Dabeoc's heath to prevent ...
A: scurvy, **B:** incontinence, **C:** chilblains, or **D:** acne?
- Question 3 How many heathers are recommended in *The Heather Society's guide to recommended heathers*?
99, 100 or 101
- Question 4 When is the best time to prune heathers that bloom in the late summer?
A: after they have flowered, **B:** when there is a new moon, **C:** never, **D:** before the flowers open
- Question 5 To which genus of heathers do the "bud-bloomers" belong?
- Question 6 Two of these cultivars are Cornish heath (*Erica vagans*); which two are hybrids of that species?
A: 'Tracy Wilson', **B:** 'Mrs. D. F. Maxwell', **C:** 'Lyonesse',
D: 'P. D. Williams'
- Question 7 Mrs. Dorothy Metheny came from the western USA, but *Erica watsonii* 'Dorothy Metheny' came from Hartland Moor, Dorset. During which Annual Conference was it collected by Major-General Pat Turpin?
- Question 8 Adding flowers-of-sulphur to the soil in your garden may be beneficial to the heathers because
A: it kills moss, **B:** moles don't like it, **C:** it helps neutralize alkaline soil, **D:** it makes the place look prettier?
- Question 9 *Erica darleyensis* was first raised in Derbyshire: true or false?
- Question 10 You are going to plant a brand new heather bed; is it better to plant the cultivars in groups of five or groups of six?

Round 2

- Question 1 Supply the missing word in this verse from the American poet Emily Dickinson.
*I never saw a moor, I never saw the sea;
 Yet know I how the looks, And what a wave must be.
 I never spoke with God, Nor visited in Heaven;
 Yet certain am I of the spot, As if a chart were given.*
- Question 2 How many stamens are there in each flower of bell heather?
10, 13, 4, or 8
- Question 3 A robust, mature plant of ling can produce about 7,900 flowers a year, and yield 158,000 seeds: true or false?
- Question 4 On a windy day, how far can a seed of *Calluna* travel from the mother-plant?
A: 100 metres, B: 1 metre, C: 250 metres, D: 10 kilometres, E: *Calluna* seeds can't fly!
- Question 5 Which of these heathers is the all-time winner of most RHS show prizes?
A: *Erica umbellata* 'David Small', B: *Erica ciliaris* 'Stoborough', C: *Calluna vulgaris* 'Tib', D: *Daboecia cantabrica* 'Praegerae'
- Question 6 When was The Heather Society founded?
- Question 7 Who designed The Heather Society's badge?
A: David McClintock, B: Major-General Pat Turpin, C: J. Bridgland, D: Geoffrey Smith, E: No-one, it just happened!
- Question 8 This is a quotation from Sir Walter Scott: "What saw she in the bog, then... forby moor-cocks and heather-blutters?" What are heather-blutters?
A: Goats, B: Snipe, C: Grouse, D: Men cutting turves.
- Question 9 Which heather has a cultivar, with beautiful white flowers, named 'April Fool'?
- Question 10 The name Ling is shared by several plants and animals. Which of these is *not* called ling?
A: Scotch heather, B: a species of cat found only on remote islands in the Pacific Ocean, C: a sacred fungus believed to confer longevity, D: a North Atlantic fish, E: the water-chestnut from China.

Round 4

- Question 1 What do honey-bees collect when they visit heather flowers?
A: nectar, B: pollen, C: wax, D: honey
- Question 2 Name a heather cultivar that was collected during the finders' honeymoon.
- Question 3 Birds of many kinds are associated with heather; which one feasts on heather seed (in season!)?
A: black grouse, B: woodlark, C: bullfinch, D: nightjar
- Question 4 In the early 1800's young men would often transmit messages to their girlfriends by giving them flowers. Under the "language of

flowers”, what did a gift of heather mean?

A: I'm impatient! **B:** I want solitude! **C:** I'm fond of modern architecture! **D:** You will be the death of me!

Question 5 If ...Little Anne from Killybegs was his granddaughter, and Jenny and Margaret were his sisters, which *Erica darleyensis* did John Letts and Brian Proudly name after him?

Question 6 In *The low road* (1927), F. Dyfe Maxwell wrote: "It is suggested that a statement be received from the nurseryman, to the effect that the Heathers he is prepared to supply are all grown from, before the order is actually placed." What revolutionary method of propagation did he recommend?

A. seed, **B.** tiny cuttings, **C.** large clumps split up and replanted.

Question 7 What wild heather grows the closest to the North Pole?

Question 8 The Balkan heath used to be given the Latin name *Bruckenthalia* – its current scientific name is: **A:** *Erica spiculifolia*, **B:** *Erica spiculiflora*, **C:** *Erica sicula*, **D:** *Erica bruckenthalia*

Question 9 When is the ideal season to cut ling required for making besoms?

Question 10 Heather ignites faery passions, it is said, and opens portals between their world and ours. Is it wise, for the sake of your heather garden, to make an offering of heather on the eve of Bealtaine? (Clue: Bealtaine is an ancient Celtic festival celebrated around 1st May.)

Round 5

Question 1 How many heather species are native in Wales?

0 None; heather does not grow wild in Wales, **1**, **2**, **3** or **4**

Question 2 Which of these *Erica* hybrids arose by accident (or chance) in a garden or nursery?

A: *E. griffithsii* 'Heaven Scent', **B:** *E. veitchii* 'Exeter' **C:** *E. darleyensis* 'Darley Dale', **D:** *E. williamsii* 'Ken Wilson'

Question 3 Who is the "odd one out" and why?

A: Arnold Stow, **B:** Barry Sellers, **C:** Charles Nelson, **D:** Jean Julian

Question 4 If one bee needs to visit 2,000,000 heather flowers to make 1lb of honey, how many handfuls of heather flowers are required to make 30 pints of heather ale?

Question 5 What is brown, $\frac{1}{4}$ in long, has 3 pairs of legs, lives in wet moorland and enjoys nothing better than *Calluna vulgaris* for breakfast, lunch and tea?

Question 6 When taking cuttings of hardy heathers, select plants that are more than 3 years old: true or false?

Question 7 Name any heather named after a saint.

Question 8 Where is *The Heather Society's* Uniform Resource Locator kept?

Question 9 How much Danes' drink, made from heather honey, will bring a giant back to life again?

Question 10 Wild yeti hate the chores! So they would not be any good in a heather garden, or would they when properly organized?

The Winter-Flowering Heaths. Colour and Fragrance in the Dark Days

By A. T. Johnson

There are many winter-blooming shrubs, but none of them is so valuable to the average gardener as *Erica carnea*. Yet, highly esteemed as it is for its hardiness and ease of culture, for the abounding wealth of blossom with which it cheers us through the winter, this wonderful heath is not, for some wholly unaccountable reason, planted nearly as widely as it deserves to be. That it has been steadily winning its way during the last decade [1930's] or so is admitted, but there is still lots of room for it in most gardens, and anyone who is on the look-out for a plant that is not only supremely showy – especially when grouped – throughout the winter, but essentially a labour-saver, will find his desires amply fulfilled by *E. carnea*.

So generally adaptable and willing is this heath that it will even thrive on lime or chalk – a rare concession for an erica. It is almost the only winter-spring blooming shrub in which the flowers are frost-proof. Indifference to wind – even a sea-wind – is another of its virtues, and it is as immune to drought as any shrub can be.

The first of the winter heaths to colour is usually *E. [darleyensis]*, a hybrid from *carnea*, and a taller (18 in.) more loosely built shrub with shell-pink flowers often in early November, and before going on to the *carnea* varieties the late-flowering form of the Scottish heather (*Calluna*) deserves a passing notice. Making a bush some 20 in. high, this Mediterranean diversion known as *C. vulgaris* 'Hiemalis', is very attractive from the later weeks of the year to January, when its erect spikes of lavender-purple blossoms come in as a useful link between the autumnal and main winter bloomers.

There are about two dozen varieties of *E. carnea*, which is a dozen too many, since half of them are too much alike in colour and period ever to have earned varietal names. Here I have no hesitation in cutting down my selection to nine, knowing that with that number anyone can rely on an unbroken succession of colour from the earliest days of winter to May. Thus, for a start, we have *E. carnea* 'Praecox' in a full-toned rosy-carmine, this being followed about Christmastime by 'King George', which is overtaken by the slightly paler 'Queen Mary', both of them making fine bushy plants which will be smothered in bloom for many weeks. Then, about February, comes the dark-leaved 'Vivellii' with spikes of a rich carmine-crimson, a dwarf grower and one of the best, and hard on 'Vivellii's' heels is its nearest rival, 'Ruby Glow'. This, a 9-in. plant with the orderly compactness of the rest, is particularly brilliant with its ruby-tinted crimson flowers which, exceeding those of 'Vivellii' in brightness, have won for this comparatively new variety a foremost place in the group.

Still newer – indeed the latest addition to the *carneas* – is the pink form of ['Springwood Pink'], a variety that possesses all the vigour and size of flower so characteristic of the famous white of its name. This glorious heath is a most prolific bloomer, its large flowers are an exceedingly bright pink touched with carmine, and it will remain in colour from the early days of the year until

primrose-time. Covering the same period is the superb ['Springwood White'] itself, easily the most beautiful and distinctive of the *carnea* set and an indispensable adjunct to the most exclusive selection. Seen in the mass there is a decided hint of yellow in the opening flowers of ['Springwood White'], but this serves only to impart a solidarity to the perfect whiteness of the developing blossoms. But permanent as ['Springwood White'] is among white *carneas*, we still grow the older variety, 'Cecilia M. Beale', for it has its uses as a smaller, less robust white, while it does flower three weeks earlier than 'Springwood [White]'.

The last variety of *carnea* to be named in this selection is 'Atrorubra', the last to bloom. With its dark foliage, and deep carmine-red blossoms, this is often not in flower until spring is well on the way, and it makes a fitting conclusion to a flowering performance which, presented by forms of a single species, must be unique in the records of plant life.

Although *E. carnea* is at its best in extensive drifts, it lends itself to groups large and small, and even a single plant is not to be despised. Given an average loam, preferably rather gritty and stony, this should need no more than deep digging in the way of preparation, but it is always desirable to work-in a layer of decayed garden refuse and it is our practice to give each plant some granulated moss-peat as it is being put out. In planting drifts, we find it a good plan to space rather closely, say, 12–15 in. apart, then when the clumps begin to touch one another every alternate one is lifted with a ball of soil and used for extension. This method gives one a better show of colour in a shorter time and it greatly reduces the business of keeping the ground between the plants clean during the earlier years. Eventually, the clumps, standing at 2–3 ft. apart, may be allowed to run into one another and so form a dense carpet of growth through which no weed is likely to penetrate.

If not as hardy generally as *carnea*, *E. lusitanica* is robust enough to face the winter in most places. Indeed, it takes so kindly to our climate that, spreading by seed, it has become naturalized over extensive tracts in various parts of the country. In many respects the Lusitanian heath is the most attractive of the taller species and one that would be well worth a place in any garden for the beauty of its foliage alone. An erect grower with plumose branches densely clothed with needle-like leaves of a vivid, yet gentle, moss-green, *E. lusitanica* (syn. *codonodes*) breaks out in pink buds about Christmastime and these, developing into pure white bells with pink anthers and calyces, envelop the bush with a snowy whiteness delicately flushed with rose. And from mid-winter to May this fine shrub will maintain an unbroken yield of these lovely flowers, which, if relatively small, are produced in such prodigal luxuriance that they convert each foxtail branch into a copious raceme of blossom.

E. lusitanica, which I should give a light, rather dry soil, with that full exposure in which all heaths delight, makes a first-rate centre-piece for a bed of the more dwarf kinds. But it can also be used either as a background to an extensive grouping or as a means of relieving any planting of the lesser heaths that may seem too uniformly level. It is always desirable to grow it in groups of anything from three plants upwards according to the size of the area, these being spaced about 4 ft. apart.

following on into spring *E. arborea* 'Alpina' can be strongly recommended for the same uses and treatment. This dwarf form of the greatest of the tree heaths is quite hardy, and its more compact growth and handsome dark-green foliage make it a better plant for the average garden than the type. But where there is only room for one successor to *E. lusitanica* I would give the preference to *E. [] veitchii*.

A hybrid between the last-mentioned and *E. arborea*, this fine heath, which does not often get above 5–6 ft., produces from late February onwards its white flowers in abounding luxuriance, and these are even more richly vanilla-scented than those of *arborea* from which it inherits that quality. *E. [] veitchii* is quite reasonably hardy, as good a doer as any of these tree heaths in a lime-free soil and, like the rest of its kind, it is an admirable plant for meagre soils subject to summer drought.

E. mediterranea [= *E. erigena*] is really a spring bloomer, but its cheerful dwarf variety called 'Brightness', with rosy-carmine flowers, is earlier than the type and the white is earlier still, often showing blossoms before the later snowdrops have departed. This albino is a most useful heath, for since it seldom exceeds 2 ft. it is the only white heath of its size and season. But good as *E. [erigena f.] alba* is, it has a serious rival in the new 'W. T. Rackliff' which has larger flowers of a purer whiteness and these often begin to appear at the end of January. This notable addition to a worthy group should have a successful future, especially as a companion for the pretty little 'Brightness'.

(Originally published in *My garden* 15 (no. 60), December 1938.)

Letters

Butterflies and heathers

At the RHS Garden, Wisley, last Saturday, during sunny spells, there were several Red Admiral butterflies on the patch of *Erica x griffithsii* 'Heaven Scent' (see picture on p. 000). The insects were probably attracted by the perfume, and were evidently feeding on the nectar. Clearly too these butterflies could be cross-pollinating the heathers on which they were feeding. Butterflies, including the Red Admiral, are recorded as feeding on ling (*Calluna*), while the Silver-studded Blue and the Grayling are reported to feed on *Erica tetralix* and *E. cinerea* respectively. Heathers (*Calluna*) and *Erica* spp) are the food plants for the Silver-studded Blue's caterpillars.

Have members any observations on butterflies on other heathers in their gardens?

E. C Nelson

Some Observations on a Difficult Year

One of the beauties of growing heathers is that there is always a surprise. The last twelve months have seen considerable variations in the weather, with this autumn starting off like last year, with abnormal warmth and abundant moisture. But, as Allen Hall reported in the Summer Bulletin, a harsh winter was to follow. Unlike Allen's area of the Midlands, Swindon did get some snow

and abnormally early. The change from warmth to cold just before the middle of November was dramatic. What was odd about the frosty period was the occurrence of thin fog that did not fully clear in the day. Daytime temperatures were 3 to 7 degrees C but with the clear skies above and very little insulation, the ground continued to cool and frost frequently remained on the grass and in the soil. This may explain why after a milder day on the 25th with some rain, I arrived in Swindon to find snow had settled.

At 10pm snow fell heavily and next morning there was a 4cm cover with a freezing wind. Looking at my more tender plants revealed that *Erica maderensis* 'Madeira Gold' had its top 7cm of growth killed and buds on *Erica x darleyensis* 'George Rendell' were damaged just above the ground. Another snowfall on the 29th was wet but had not all melted by the end of the month. Some *Erica manipuliflora* buds did not open but were undamaged, rather the plants 'damped off'. But the odd feature of the winter was the lack of really mild days rather than any severity. Although dry, conditions were damp, dull and cold. The only truly hard weather was at the start of February. But on several occasions when conditions seemed to favour a little work on the garden I found ice in the soil about 10 cm down. *Erica umbellata* did not like the conditions and suddenly defoliated in February to be followed by the 'David Small' cultivar in March. Neither recovered! The bitter drying winds and frost of March may not have helped the latter.

In the last week of March, warmth and rain arrived with a vengeance, but there were no really warm days until early May's brief heatwave. May was exceptionally wet and it was difficult to get on to the garden for mud and water. That all changed in June, to hot dry weather with serious drought stresses, until heavy rain in the last week. July was exceptionally hot and, despite the drought, extremely wet (those who do not believe this can check the rainfall for nearby Brize Norton and RAF Lyneham which had 215 and 170% of normal rainfall, respectively).

Twice, on the 5/6th and the 22nd, parched conditions with 12cm cracks (which I filled with grit sand and compost) were changed to mud and water after thunderstorms, with prolonged, torrential rain. August was humid but less wet than July. What did well through all this? The

Erica x griffithsii did quite well and the *Erica vagans* were only slightly less floriferous than usual. But the stars must be the *Erica erigena* and *Erica manipuliflora* cultivars which seemed to thrive. The Dalmatian pair of the latter were prolific bloomers. But 'Don Richards' was so smothered that it was almost impossible to see foliage, being packed with long racemes, solid with bloom. It is not surprising perhaps that the *E. manipuliflora* did so well. The year did, after all, have weather not unlike its home, the Balkans, with a fairly cold dry winter, much rain in the spring and scorching summer heat, punctuated by some heavy thunderstorms. But the *Erica erigena* cultivars are rarely unhappy these days, able to survive drought provided there are real soakings now and again. As autumn arrives, the *Erica carnea* that survived have, like *E. erigena*, plenty of buds and there is a good show of bloom from the *E. manipuliflora*, with 'Ian Cooper' now taking centre stage.

Richard Canovan

Celestial Interrogation

Below is another little item you might find amusing. I have had it put by for so long, I can't remember where it came from. Ed

Imagine the conversation The Creator might have had with St. Francis on the subject of lawns:

GOD: Frank, you know all about gardens and nature. What in the world is going on down there in the land they call England? What happened to the dandelions, violets, thistles and stuff I started eons ago? I had a perfect, no-maintenance garden plan. Those plants grow in any type of soil, withstand drought and multiply with abandon. The nectar from the long lasting blossoms attracts butterflies, honey bees and flocks of songbirds. I expected to see a vast garden of colours by now. But all I see are these green rectangles.

ST. FRANCIS: It's the tribes that settled there, Lord. The Suburbanites. They started calling your flowers "weeds" and went to great lengths to kill them and replace them with grass.

GOD: Grass? But it's so boring. It's not colourful. It doesn't attract butterflies, birds and bees, only grubs and worms. It's temperamental with temperatures. Do these Suburbanites really want all that grass growing there?

ST. FRANCIS: Apparently so, Lord. They go to great pains to grow it and keep it green. They begin each spring by fertilising grass and poisoning any other plant that crops up in the lawn.

GOD: The spring rains and warm weather probably make grass grow really fast. That must make the Suburbanites happy.

ST. FRANCIS: Apparently not, Lord. As soon as it grows a little, they cut it, sometimes twice a week.

GOD: They cut it? Do they then bail it like hay?

ST. FRANCIS: Not exactly, Lord. Most of them rake it up and put it in bags.

GOD: They bag it? Why? Is it a cash crop? Do they sell it?

ST. FRANCIS: No Sir. Just the opposite. They pay to throw it away.

GOD: Now let me get this straight. They fertilise grass so it will grow. And when it does grow, they cut it off and pay to throw it away?

ST. FRANCIS: Yes, Sir.

GOD: These Suburbanites must be relieved in the summer when we cut back on the rain and turn up the heat. That surely slows the growth and saves them a lot of work.

ST. FRANCIS: You aren't going to believe this Lord. When the grass stops growing so fast, they drag out hoses and pay more money to water it so they can continue to mow it and pay to get rid of it.

GOD: What nonsense. At least they kept some of the trees. That was a sheer stroke of genius, if I do say so myself. The trees grow leaves in the spring to provide beauty and shade in the summer. In the autumn they fall to the ground and form a natural blanket to keep moisture in the soil and protect the trees and bushes. Plus, as they rot, the leaves form compost to enhance the soil. It's a natural circle of life.

ST. FRANCIS: You better sit down, Lord. The Suburbanites have drawn a new circle. As soon as the leaves fall, they rake them into great piles and pay to have them hauled away.

GOD: No. What do they do to protect the shrub and tree roots in the winter

and to keep the soil moist and loose?

ST. FRANCIS: After throwing away the leaves, they go out and buy something which they call mulch. Then haul it home and spread it around in place of the leaves.

GOD: And where do they get this mulch?

ST. FRANCIS: They cut down trees and grind them up to make the mulch.

GOD: Enough. I don't want to think about this any more. St. Catherine, you're in charge of the arts. What movie have you scheduled for us tonight?

ST. CATHERINE: 'Dumb and Dumber', Lord. It's a real stupid movie about...

GOD: Never mind, I think I just heard the whole story from St. Francis.

Group News

Yorkshire

On Saturday, 16th September 2006 twelve members of the Yorkshire Heather Group attended an illustrated talk at Harlow Carr on 'Traditional Heather Gardens' when Geoff Yates led a discussion on our appreciation of these gardens. This was followed by an expression of concern on their demise and a discussion of how the public plant heathers now.

No programme of talks has been arranged as yet for 2007 but a room has been booked for the following dates: 17th March, 2nd June and 22nd September 2007. Ideas for talks or visits will be most welcome.

Jean Julian

North East

Because we had to cancel our mid-summer Car Outing to Bide-a-Wee Garden Last year, due to exceptional rain, we planned another visit to the same garden for this year. This we did in July and nine members met for lunch before going on to spend the afternoon at Bide-a-Wee. This proved to be a very interesting garden made in several tiers on what was once a small quarry. It contained some unusual shrubs and much herbaceous material but no heathers! This time the weather was at its hottest and it was all we could do to keep going.

Saturday, September 9th was a beautiful, warm sunny day for the Ponteland Flower Show. Our Judge said that, considering it had been a difficult growing year for the heathers we had put on a reasonable show, even though we had fewer exhibits. Our next meeting will be the A.G.M. to be held in St. Matthew's Church Hall, Ponteland, on 27 October at 2pm. Please note the new time. Reminders of this will be sent out nearer the time.

Dorothy M Warner.

East Midlands

Preliminary notice - Summer Visit 2007 to *The Bannut*

Maurice and Daphne Everett have kindly invited us to visit their 2.5 acre garden at the Bannut, Bringsty, near Bromyard, Saturday 18th August 2007. We last visited this lovely garden on 14th August 1999.

The garden contains heather beds covering an area of almost half an acre, a

unique Heather Knot Garden and, since October 2005, a Demonstration Bed of *The Heather Society's* 100 Recommended Heathers.

Daphne and Maurice suggest that since members may have a long way to travel they might like to arrive at around 1.00 pm when a light lunch will be provided. They also generously say that there will be no entrance charge to members of our party. The garden visit will begin at 2pm.

Please note in your diaries!

More details and a route map will be available before the event. On this occasion it will be essential to let me know by July 14th 2007 if you intend to come.

Members from other groups will be welcome.

Allen Hall

Home Counties

On Saturday 30th September Home Counties Group members and their guests met for their annual end of season meeting at the RHS Gardens, Wisley. The weather was sunny and warm for the morning walk around the Heather Gardens National Collection accompanied by member Andy Collins who is responsible for conifers and heathers in this beautiful part of Wisley. Unfortunately several beds have become infested with bindweed and have had to be cleared completely and will be replanted next autumn, so we shall have to wait until another year to see the heathers in their glory.

A talk was given during the afternoon session in the Garden Meeting Room by Matt Jackson, Head of Policy, Planning and Wider Countryside at BBOWT (Berkshire, Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust), on Thames Basin Heaths and their survival. Matt's beautifully illustrated talk was most interesting, it gave members much food for thought and promoted some lively discussion. With the proposed increase in house building in the South East, from East Anglia down to Dorset, it is essential that these areas are protected for the future.

BBOWT's expert management of their Wildmoor Heath Nature Reserve, Crowthorne, Berkshire, is ensuring that this beautiful spot is surviving in the busy South East region. Matt Jackson, writing in September's Wildlife News, says 'Open heath land is rarer than rain forest and about one fifth of the world's total heath land is found in the UK'. If you wish to find out more about this subject and Wildmoor Heath (their 'precious jewel') etc. visit www.bbowl.org.uk.

Pamela Lee read to the meeting her obituary to the late John Tucker who had been a member of *The Heather Society* for many years and who died in July this year. John was a most remarkable man - the gentle, quiet man most of us knew had many hidden talents.

Pamela Lee also showed some photographs of the recovery of heathland which had been severely damaged by fire. The heathers had made a wonderful come back and the heath is well on its way to its former glory.

David Small gave a short talk on the latest developments in the heather world, handing round photographs of some new varieties. Members had many questions for David and I am sure we all learned a lot from his contribution. Thanks to Matt, Pamela and David for providing entertaining and stimulating talks.

Prior to an excellent tea with cakes kindly provided by Audrey Sprague, Josey Stow and Pam Millis (thank you ladies), Josey judged the Class 1 of the table show and David Small judged Classes 1 and 2 - the winners were as follows:

- 1) Best flower arrangement in which heathers predominate - Derek Millis

(Turpin Trophy)

2) Best vase of hardy heather in flower, single variety - Derek Millis (*Calluna vulgaris* 'Dark Beauty')

3) Best vase of heather chosen for foliage - Derek Millis (*Erica x darleyensis* 'Mary Helen')

It has to be said there was a very disappointing number of entries for the table show, it would be nice to have more entries next year so we could make the judge's job more difficult!

The Garden Meeting Room has been booked for next year's meeting which will take place on Saturday 22 September 2007. Details of activities for season 2007 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

In the continued absence of a volunteer to run the former South-West Group the unofficial arrangements for getting together during 2006 will continue into 2007. I will remind you that the dates will only be announced via the *Bulletins* and visits to gardens will not be pre-arranged and therefore any advertised group rates for entry will not apply. No guided tours will be arranged.

At the time of writing the meeting at Knoll Gardens is still three weeks away and will be reported on in the Spring Bulletin.

For the spring of 2007 Lin and I will be visiting Furzey Gardens, in the New Forest, on Saturday, March 24th and Society members and their friends are invited to meet us in the car park at 2.00pm and to take a stroll with us. This is a garden that has been visited by the SW Group of the Society in the past and has plenty to interest members. The garden has a collection of spring bulbs, trees and shrubs together with a heather garden and a lake with a waterfall. For the plant buyers amongst you there is a small nursery stocked by the students of the Minstead Training Project. For 2006 entry was advertised as £4.50 with concessions. The garden has refreshment facilities and an art gallery. Furzey Gardens is at Minstead which is best approached by turning right off of the A337 Cadnam - Lyndhurst road when travelling from the Cadnam direction. The garden is adequately signposted.

The current intention is to announce a further garden visit for 2007 in the Spring Bulletin, meanwhile Lin and I look forward to meeting you at Furzey Gardens.

Phil Joyner



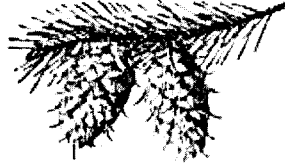
Watching butterflies on 'Heaven Scent'; Heather Society members at the Homer Counties meeting, RHS Gardens, Wisley, 30 September 2006: from the left, Andy Collins, Phil Joyner (Hon. Treasurer), Arnold Stow (Chairman) and David Sprague. Photograph by Charles Nelson.

The British Conifer Society

Why not join **The British Conifer Society** – a newly formed group bringing together people with an interest in conifers.

Contact:

BCS Secretary
Bedgebury National Pinetum
Goudhurst
Kent
TN17 15L



Tel: 01580211044 ext 231
E-mail: daniel.luscombe@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

Or download a membership application from our web site:
www.britishconifersociety.org.uk

Membership rates:

£20 – covers 2 members per household (UK)
£25 – international

Conifers – the perfect companion plants for heathers



SPRING PARK NURSERY

The Specialist Mail Order Nursery for Heathers and Conifers

Over 100 varieties of Heathers currently available
Plants available all year round - no order too small - fast delivery

Now with "Online, secure purchasing"

Bulk order prices and discounts on selected varieties - see Website for details

Heather collections still at 2004 prices.
£9.99 plus P & P for 10 plants

Visitors welcome by prior appointment

www.springparknursery.co.uk

T: 020 8777 5161 for free catalogue

or email **sales@springparknursery.co.uk**

78, Woodland Way, West Wickham, Kent BR4 9LR

USEFUL ADDRESSES

Society's Website: www.heathersociety.org.uk

- Chairman & Steering Committee** *Policy matters, major events etc.*
Mr. A. J. Stow, Widmour, Limmer Lane, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, HP12 4QR. *e-mail:* ajs@widmour.freeserve.co.uk *Tel:* (01494) 449397
- Treasurer** Mr. P.L. Joyner, 84 Kinross Road, Rushington, Totton, Southampton, Hampshire, SO40 4BN. *e-mail:* pjoyner@supanet.com *Tel:* (02380) 864336
- Secretary & Slide Librarian** *Council Matters/Hire of slides*
Mrs. J. Julian, "Matchams", Main Street, Askham Richard, York, YO23 3PT. *e-mail:* jeanjulian@zetnet.co.uk *Tel:* (01904) 707316
- Yearbook Editor & Registrar** *Articles for the Yearbook / Naming of Heathers*
Dr. E.C. Nelson, Tippitwitchet Cottage, Hall Road, Outwell, Wisbech PE14 8PE. *e-mail:* registrar@zetnet.co.uk
Tel: [int +44] 0 845 3240 580 *FAX:* (01945) 774077
- Bulletin Editor** *Notes, articles for the Bulletin and Technical Matters*
Mrs. D. Everett, The Bannut, Bringsty, Herefordshire, WR6 5TA. *e-mail:* everettbannut@zetnet.co.uk
Tel: (01885) 482206 *FAX:* (01885) 482206
- Advertising** *Adverts, advertising rates etc. for the Bulletin*
Mr. D. Small - details as Plant Sales & Website
- Administrator** *Membership, Subscriptions, Orders for publications etc.*
Mrs. A. Small, Denbeigh, All Saints Road, Creeting St. Mary, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP6 8PJ. *e-mail:* heathers@zetnet.co.uk
Tel: (01449) 711220 *FAX:* (01449) 711220
- Conference Manager** Mrs. S. Kay, Lettergesh East, Renvyle, Co. Galway, Republic of Ireland
e-mail: susiek@gofree.indigo.ie *Tel:* 00353 95 43575
- Plant Sales & Website** Mr. D. Small, Denbeigh, All Saints Road, Creeting St. Mary, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP6 8PJ.
e-mail: heathers@zetnet.co.uk
Tel: (01449) 711220 *FAX:* (01449) 711220
- Group Organisers** *(Remember, you will be very welcome at any local meeting or visit!)*
- East Midlands** Mr. A. Hall, 10, Upper Green, Nanpantan, Loughborough, Leics. LE11 3SG.
e-mail: halla@care4free.net *Tel:* 01509 238923
- North East** Mrs. D. M. Warner, Littlecroft, Click-em-in, Ponteland, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE20 9BQ.
Tel: (01661) 823299
- Home Counties** Mr. D. Millis, 18, The Horseshoe, Leverstock Green, Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP3 8QW
e-mail: Derek.Millis@care4free.net *Tel:* (01442) 254880
- South West** Mr. P.L. Joyner, 84 Kinross Road, Rushington, Totton, Southampton, Hampshire, SO40 4BN. *e-mail:* pjoyner@supanet.com *Tel:* (02380) 864336
- Yorkshire** Dr. J. Griffiths, 9, Ashlea Close, Leeds, West Yorkshire. LS25 1JX.
Tel: (01132) 863349