

# Bulletin of The Heather Society



NB  
Advertisement pages at end  
of this part have not been scanned

Vol. 5 No. 7

Spring 1996

## DIARY OF EVENTS 1995

30 March	Southern Group	Garden visit, Bracken Hill, Platt
30 March	South West Group	Heather Competitions and Talk
4 May	North East Group	Visit to Edinburgh Botanical Gardens
11 May	South West Group	Garden Visit, Waterdale House, Wilts.
18/19 May	North East Group	Houghall Open weekend
19 May	Southern Group	Garden visit, Great Comp
15 May	Closing Date for Summer Bulletin	
8 June	North East Group	Visit to Belsay Gardens
17 July	North East Group	Visit to Bill Crow's Nursery, Scot's Gap
27 July	Southern Group	Visit to Denbeigh Heathers
10 August	Southern Group South West Group	Joint Meeting - Visit to Iping and Stedham Common and Zeneca Gardens
20/21 August	RHS Show & Heather Comp. Vincent Square	
? September	North East Group	Annual Show
15 September	Closing Date Autumn Bulletin	
21 September	South West Group	Visit to Hartland Moor
28 September	Southern Group	Visit to Wisley & Heather Competition



A Registered Charity No. 261407

Editor: Daphne Everett, Greenacres Nursery, Bringsly, Worcester, WR6 5TA.  
Telephone/Fax: 01885 482206

Cover illustration *Erica Carnea* by Brita Johannson

*What with colour pictures in the Yearbook, a coloured cover on the Bulletin and coloured 'flyers' (publicity leaflets to those of us over sixty) to publicise the Society, with payment of Subscriptions now possible by Visa and Mastercard, and Heather Courses being run to encourage new members, the Heather Society is now a well and truly modern Society and is doing its best to ensure that it will still be thriving well into the 21st Century. Much credit is due to our Chairman, to the Officers and Council members and to the Yearbook editor who all put in many hours of unpaid work for the benefit of the Society.*

*Even the production of the Bulletin has changed greatly in recent years. Instead of the hours and hours of typing, cutting and pasting which used to be necessary to produce the final version, much of the material now arrives on computer disk and is transferred straight on to the Bulletin file. What bliss! However - I must be careful what I say here, if I make it all sound too easy I might find I am out of a job.*

## 26th Annual Conference

**6th - 9th September, Dillington House,  
Ilminster, Somerset**

### **Friday September 6th**

4.00 - 5.00 pm Registration and tea.

7.00 pm Dinner.

8.30 pm Conference opened by our Chairman, followed by guest speaker Robin Bush 'Welcome to Somerset'.

### **Saturday September 7th**

8.00 - 9.00 am Breakfast.

9.30 am 'Botanical Illustrations' with an emphasis on heathers - Ron Cleeveley.

10.15 am \* First Workshop session.

11.00 am Coffee.

11.30 am \* Second Workshop session.

**\* There will be a choice of subjects, each member choosing two from the options.**

12.30 pm Lunch.

1.30 pm Depart by coach to Somerset Levels, visiting two sites of interest. Guides from English Nature and Somerset Wildlife Trust.

5.30 pm return to Dillington.

6.15 pm Bar open.

7.00 pm Dinner

8.30 pm 'From Crofters Bed to Queen of Spain, the Story of Heather' - Daphne Everett.

9.30 pm - 11 pm Bar open.

### **Sunday September 8th**

8.00 - 9 am Breakfast

9.30 am Annual General Meeting

10.15 am 'Heather Management of the Quantock Hills' - Tim Russell and Chris Edwards.

11.00 am Coffee.

11.30 am Group photograph.

11.45 am Depart by coach for Quantock Hills visit (with packed lunches).

3.30 pm Afternoon tea - to be arranged.

4.15 pm Visit to Combe Florey (heather) Nursery - Mike Skinner.

5.45 pm Return to Dillington.

6.15 pm Bar open.

7.00 pm Dinner.

8.30 pm Open Forum.

**Conference closed by Chairman.**

### **Monday September 9th**

8.00 - 9.00 am Breakfast.

**The total cost of the Conference from tea on Friday to breakfast on Monday:-**

Residents at Dillington House	£157 (en suite room supplement not included)
-------------------------------	--

Non Residents Saturday/Sunday Daily Charge, which includes coffee, tea, speakers' fees, coach travel etc.	£47.50
---	--------

Friday evening dinner	£16.00
-----------------------	--------

Dillington House can accommodate 50 residents, 17 of whom can have en suite accommodation (8 double rooms and 1 single room). There is a supplement of £10 **per room per night** + VAT for those booking en suite rooms. This is **in addition** to the basic Conference fee.

Bookings in excess of 50 can easily be accommodated at either an hotel or a guest house for bed and breakfast only a mile away. Details and prices will be sent on application when bookings are received - the first 50 bookings will be accepted for Dillington House.

It will help us greatly with planning if members will indicate whether a single or double room is required and whether en suite rooms are preferred.

Bookings, including £2 per mailing, should be sent to Phil Joyner, 84 Kinross Road, Rushington, Totton, Southampton, Hants. SO4 4BN. Cheques should be made payable to 'The Heather Society'. (The booking fee is to cover administration costs and is not a deposit on the Conference fee). Full payment of the Conference fee should be made by 31st July.



### **Payment By Visa And Mastercard Credit Cards.**

Council has made arrangements with its Bankers, The Bank of Scotland, for receipt of payments by means of VISA and MASTERCARD credit cards. This service will be available from 19th February 1996 and credit cards may be used after that date in payment for publications, conference fees and membership fees. The service may be used for orders by mail or telephone and in such cases the Society will require of the person placing the order the kind of information usual for such transactions i.e. name and address, the service or publication for which payment is being made, whether Visa or Mastercard, card number, name stated on the card and expiry date of the card. Specific authority to charge the account with the sum necessary for payment will also be required. It is envisaged that this service will be of particular value to overseas members when sums authorised should be denominated in sterling.

A decision to introduce this service was taken at a Council meeting held at the Horticultural Halls, London on 22nd November 1995. Council had specific regard to a discussion on this subject at the Annual General Meeting on September 10th 1995 in Dublin when many overseas members were present.

*A Hall, Treasurer.*

### **An Introduction to Heathers**

The Heather Society is holding a one day course "An Introduction to Heathers" in conjunction with the Northern Horticultural Society, at Harlow

Carr Gardens, Harrogate, on Saturday, 23rd March 1996, at 10.30 am. Subjects to be covered are species and cultivars, garden design, propagation, planting and garden care and the speakers will be our Chairman, David Small, Diane Jones and Peter Vickers. A tour of the heather plantings and collections in the gardens will be included. It is hoped to stimulate interest in heather gardening and in particular to enlist new members. The charge for the course including tea and sandwich lunch is £5.00. Members and friends who live within "travelling" distance of Harlow Carr will be most welcome.

*Jean Sharpe - York*

## **Future Registrations for the International Register**

The International Register information has been stored on a database for some time. At present we have a large number of names - even I am not sure quite how many - and more are being added all the time. If these are to be published, as they must, I had to 'draw a line' in the database at 31st December 1995, transfer the data to a word processor, and start work on checking and editing in preparation for the publication of our first Checklist.

I will, of course continue to register those eligible plants for which I receive completed forms, and note the names of other new cultivars. These will be held for inclusion in a subsequent edition of the Checklist and, ultimately the International Register. If you should find or raise plants you would like to register, I will be delighted to hear from you.

I can now supply a new registration package with some notes to help with completing the forms. This complies with the requirements of the Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants - 1995, and the forms are designed to cover the full range of species for which the Heather Society is the International Registration Authority.

*Bert Jones*

## **An Irish Whirlwind**

You may remember that I told you in the 1995 Summer Bulletin how our *Yearbook* Editor, Charles Nelson, had become engaged to Dr. Sue Robinson on St. Patrick's Day - and I promised to keep you posted of further developments. Well, not being one to just sit on a good idea, Charles married Sue the following July and is now the proud father (well stepfather anyway) of two teenage daughters, Lucy and Emily. Charles has now resigned his post at the National Botanic Gardens at Glasnevin to work as a freelance botanist and has set up home with his new family at Outwell, near Wisbech; as Charles himself said "there is a dearth of carrot-toppers in Norfolk so I won't be idle". Surely even Gold Blend could not have thought up a romance as good as this one!

Charles is continuing as *Yearbook* Editor and says that articles for the 1997 *Yearbook* are now required. Please send to: Dr. Charles Nelson, Tippiwitichet Cottage, Hall Road, Outwell, Wisbech PE14 8PE. Tel. 01945 773 057 - Fax. 01945 774077.



## Profile of our Treasurer - Allen Hall

My enthusiasm for heathers began on a Saturday afternoon church outing to the RHS Garden, Wisley. Joan and I were thinking of making a new border and we were struck by the colour and variety of flowers and foliage of heathers in the old heather garden. We selected 8 plants from our local garden centre and, two gardens later, clones of some of those plants are still giving us pleasure - *Erica vagans* 'Mrs. D F Maxwell', *Calluna vulgaris* 'Golden Carpet' and *Erica carnea* 'December Red' among them.



In fact heathers fill our garden with memories of people, places and events that have enriched our lives. For example, *E. carnea* 'Ann Sparkes' was a parting gift from our friend Bob Pickering of Formby, *E. x watsonii* 'Dorothy Metheny' always reminds me of General Turpin who gave me the plant, *E. australis* 'Mr. Robert' of the lovely garden at Barncroft Nursery where we purchased ours from Mr. Warner one winter day, and so on. Heather gardens are not just about heathers any more than the Heather Society is.

I have never described myself as a gardener, though I caught the gardening bug from my father. Dad gave me a slice of his garden when I was about 10. He grew vegetables but

apart from one garden when I was newly married and the electrical engineer at the famous Lynemouth Colliery in Northumberland, I have only ever grown flowers. As a youngster I grew dahlias and chrysanthemums to show standards, though I never entered them in the local shows since children were not then allowed in pubs where the shows were held. I also grew vivid sweet peas, and lupins were another favourite.

In the busy years which followed my adolescence, I had little time for gardening. I concentrated on getting my degree at King's College, Newcastle (then in the University of Durham) and in establishing my career as a mining electrical engineer, first in my native Derbyshire and then in Northumberland. My endeavours eventually led me to Fellowship of the Institution of Electrical Engineers and of the Institution of Mining Engineers.

We moved to Cheam, Surrey, from Northumberland in 1964 when I became one of H M Electrical Inspectors of Mines and Quarries and our son

was born in Cheam later that year. My "patch" then covered a similar part of the South East of England as the Southern Group now does. Later, I served in South Wales and after a happy, but heatherless, six years living in Swansea, we came back to Cheam, with our children. I then became a Factory Inspector and the time was ripe for a visit to Wisley!

Naturally a newly stung heather fancier needs advice and I got mine - too late I fear for 'Sir John Charrington' - from Harry van de Laar's book *The Heather Garden*. In the book I also found the name of the Heather Society and by and by we received a letter from Beryl Farrah welcoming us to the Society. That was in 1983. I still have the letter and I have since had the pleasure of getting to know Beryl at Phil Joyner's South West Group meetings. Another find for us that year was the heather garden in the Valley Garden, Royal Estates, Windsor. The garden still remains a favourite and we visit it often.

In 1984 the Factory Inspectorate HQ was transferred from London to Bootle and we moved with more reluctance than I can tell to live in Formby, Lancashire. But after a matter of a few weeks, we felt we never wanted to move again, so happy were we in that fine town and among those friendly people. We joined Bob Pickering when he formed the North West Group and learnt much and received much kindness from the heather gardeners of the North West.

We moved back to Cheam two years but one week after leaving it. My Department wanted me back in the London HQ and I swapped grades from that of Deputy Chief Inspector of Factories to Deputy Chief Inspector of Mines. And we rejoined the Southern Group. I was back home in more than one sense.

The first Southern Group meeting we attended was in 1984 at the Betchworth village hall, near Dorking when General Turpin presented some slides. We were too shy to attend the ploughman's lunch beforehand at "Timberley" - Mr. & Mrs. Jock Vickery's home - though subsequent experience teaches that we need have entertained no fears. Our next meeting had to wait until 1986 when the Group met in the lovely heather garden of Farm Cottage, Dorking - the home of Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Nicholson.

In 1988, I was invited to join the Council and in the summer of 1990 General Turpin asked me to become the organiser for the Southern Group. I took the post with some trepidation but soon learned to enjoy a job which involved closer dealings with the friendly members of the Group. Among them I learned much of what I know about heathers.

I am fortunate that my wife Joan went along with my early interest in heathers and later got involved herself. She regularly enters the heather competitions at the RHS Halls, Vincent Square, London and is a stalwart member of the Southern Group. Even our daughter grows heathers in her garden in Loughborough, Leicestershire (perhaps because she gets the plants free). Our son, now an Australian citizen, still shows no interest in gardening, but then, he doesn't have a garden.

In 1994, Des Oliver, our able and long serving Treasurer, informed Council that he wished to retire from the post and he nominated me to be his replacement. Council endorsed his recommendation and I was elected



Treasurer at the Annual General Meeting in York.

I was able to accept this task because I had by then retired from the Civil Service and hence from a busy post I had held for the previous two years - that of Head of the Channel Tunnel Safety Unit and Member of the bi-national Channel Tunnel Safety Authority. I am still not able completely to shed professional interests, since I am President this year of the Southern Counties Branch of the Institution of Mining Engineers.

Allen Hall

## Briar Pipes

In late November in 1994 I spent a few days in the Algarve to enjoy the winter sunshine and to explore the interior. Visiting my brother who has retired to Faro, he took us into the Monchique hill country and at around 6,000 feet we became aware of lovely extensive white patches on the hill sides which proved to be *E. arborea* in flower. Taking the opportunity to take photographs for the slide library, we came across a yellow foliage sport. In the hope that we had found a potential 'Albert's Gold'-like plant we took a few cuttings. My fingers were not sufficiently green because, on our return home, my efforts to propagate failed miserably. There were *Calluna* and *Erica tetralix*, the latter having a few late and unusually large florets. I live in the hope of revisiting the site later this year to see them in full bloom.

After we returned home, knowing of my interest in heathers, my brother sent me an article that he came across in a local "English speaking" publication, "The Algarve Resident" written by John Measures, a local respected and knowledgeable naturalist which I thought would be of interest to members. The following is an abridged extract.

"There is a wonderful stretch of wild countryside going from the back of Budens through to the west coast. It is largely uninhabited, but there are many isolated homesteads, now all deserted and falling down. But this attractive region is full of wildlife, both plant and animal.

While recently conducting a survey in this area, we came across huge tracts of heather, mainly in the stream valleys which only flow when we have sufficient rainfall. The most prominent, which are seen everywhere in the acid soil regions within the Algarve, are the two species of tree heather (*Erica arborea* and *E. lusitanica*). If left undisturbed these plants can grow into massive shrubs three and a half metres in height. Of these, the white flowered Portuguese Heath is looking exceptionally beautiful at this moment with huge conical spikes covered in white flowers. Many years ago, when we came to live in Portugal, a story was circulating about an enterprising Scotsman who used to send boxes of this flower by plane back to Scotland as "lucky white heather" for New Year's Eve parties. This trade has now ceased as it is more economic to grow it under cover in Scotland and most probably it would now be forbidden to denude the countryside here! With its close relative the tree heath which has white or pinkish flowers, it is slightly frost tender, although it will stand about minus ten degrees centigrade for a night or two.

*E. arborea* has some of the hardest wood known to man, in particular the underground root stock, which, with age produces a large nodule from which

the roots radiate. With great age this can become the size of a human head and in poor slow-growing areas for example in Morocco, Corsica and some regions in the south of France this is "harvested" to produce briar pipes (which is the English translation of the French name for this plant *la bruyère*). The slower the plant grows, the more beautiful the wood appears..... with wonderful whirls and convoluted knots. It won't readily burn by itself, and because of its durability, will take on a very high polish. In some areas where land has been cleared for terracing for pines, eucalyptus or other purposes, many of these beautiful old shrubs are uprooted and destroyed and can be seen dotting the ploughed land. During the 1939-45 World War many cart loads of these roots were collected and taken to railway stations throughout Portugal to fuel the fire boxes of rail engines, as they were unable to obtain the coal needed from their traditional source, Great Britain.

Two fairly common heathers, also seen in the area, are the Green Heather (*Erica scoparia*) with tiny greenish flowers and the Spanish heath (*Erica australis*) with its reddish-pink flowers. Occasionally seen are the Umbellata heath (*Erica umbellata*) a dwarf shrub with rosy-purple flowers, the *Erica tetralix* which is very small and known by two names Bog Heather or Cross-leaved Heath with its rose-pink flowers, the Bell Heather (*Erica cinerea*) with its reddish-purple flowers and a fourth variety the Dorset Heath (*Erica ciliaris*) with its deep-pink pitcher shaped flowers. *Calluna vulgaris* (of a different genus) the common Ling Heather is found on Monchique."

Unknown to most people is the South West Pipe club. Last year it entered a team of five pipe smoking members for the International Pipe Smoking Championships in Copenhagen. It came a modest eleventh out of 20 entrants.

A T (Albert) Julian - Vice President

## Book Review

### International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants - 1995

#### (ICNCP or Cultivated Plant Code).

Trehane, P., Brickell, C. D., Baum, B. R., Hetterscheid, W. L. A., Leslie, A. C., McNeill, J. Spongberg, S. A. & Vrugtman, F. [eds], Quarterjack Publishing, Wimborne, UK, 1995, ISSN 0080-0694, ISBN: 0 948117 01 X, £18.50.

This book controls the naming of plants, selected by man, for agriculture, forestry and horticulture. As such, it affects all who are concerned with those disciplines, yet few of them will ever see it. The new 6th edition was published on 21st November 1995. It has been greatly expanded compared to its predecessor and now consists of 16 preliminary pages, followed by a further 175 of text. [The 5th edition of 1980 was contained in 32 pages].

Despite starting with a Preamble, and following this with a statement of its twelve [governing] Principles, before passing on to Rules and

Recommendations, it is probably not intended for reading from cover to cover in sequence. It is difficult to rapidly assess so specialized a volume, and it is only on prolonged acquaintance with the text that one will fully appreciate all its advantages and, perhaps, find some errors or even drawbacks. In the meantime, suffice it to say that, on first acquaintance, it seems that the new Code may be an improvement on that which it replaces. Its 12 detailed appendices appear to be very useful.

The new Code has dispensed with some of the prohibitions and recommendations of the 5th edition, modified others, and introduced some fresh requirements. The 'Recommendations' on cultivar names have disappeared and been replaced with firm rules. They are summarised here for the information of those who may wish to register plants. However, it is necessary to read the Code for a full statement of the rules.

It is surely a *sine qua non* that new cultivar names **must be** unique. In addition to that, under the new Code they may **not**

- be in Latin form.
- be capable of confusion, when either written or spoken, with any other cultivar name in the denomination class to which they belong. [Appendix IV of the Code confirms that the genera *Andromeda*, *Bruckenthalia*, *Calluna*, *Daboecia* and *Erica* now form such a class].
- exaggerate the merits of a cultivar. (Names such as 'Top White' may no longer be accepted).
- be made up only of simple descriptive words. [Names such as *Calluna vulgaris* 'Long White', *Daboecia cantabrica* 'Blonde' or *Erica carnea* 'Early Red' could not be accepted after 1st January 1996].
- include more than 10 syllables or 30 characters, excluding spaces and single quotation marks.
- contain any punctuation marks except for apostrophes, commas, full stops, hyphens or single exclamation marks.
- include any of the following words in any language - **cross, hybrid, grex, group, form, maintenance, mutant, seedling selection, sport, strain, variety** [or their plurals in any language] or the words **improved** or **transformed**.
- be the name of a genus, either in Latin or a modern language, if the cultivar name is a single word. Such words may be used in names composed of two or more words providing they are not the final word. However, a cultivar name may not contain the botanical or common name of a genus in its own denomination class. [Names such as *Erica carnea* 'Smart's Heath' could not be accepted now. Nor may we have a cultivar called 'Daphne'. However, there could be no possible objection to 'Daphne Everett!'].

The new Code also contains rules governing the use of cultivar-group epithets. It is to be hoped that considerable caution will be exercised before such epithets as *Calluna vulgaris* [Late-flowering Group] or *Erica erigena* [Irish Group] are suggested. It is preferable that such groups are only proposed where it is clear they will be of real value to gardeners and, furthermore that they are likely to enjoy general use. Even under those

circumstances it is desirable that they are not used to duplicate or replace pre-existing or possible future botanical taxa. It must also be remembered that a cultivar may be placed in more than one cultivar group under different criteria of classification. Is there really any great advantage in citing a plant, for example as *Calluna vulgaris* [Bud-bloomer Group] 'Alexandra' or *Erica carnea* [Yellow-foliage Group] 'Aurea'?

A. W. Jones

## Why is White Heather Lucky?

(A reprint of an article from *Country Life*, (January 15th 1970), with acknowledgements to *Heather News - the Newsletter of the North American Heather Society*, who published it in their Autumn 1994 edition).

When and where indeed was white heather first considered lucky? Ask anyone in Britain and you will be told that everyone knows it is so and it has always been so. But has it?

Strangely enough it seems that no-one has ever looked into this, and I have not been able to find any article written on the subject. Stranger still is the apparent fact that it is both largely confined to Britain, and a relatively new belief - or so my enquiries over several years show. Perhaps I should say that these have included consulting every conceivable source: people, books, libraries, gardens, societies or other institutions in any way connected with horticultural, botanical, historical or rural lore. I have twice appealed for help on the radio and I have written to various papers and magazines, including *Country Life*. I am grateful to my numerous correspondents and contacts. So my meagre findings are at least based on wide and thorough efforts.

What have I found? A mere 11 original references to the superstition before 1900 and none before 1855. Practically no book at all, which one might expect to include the subject, even mentions it. The references imply that the belief was well-known but why? Some people say it is because white heather is rare. But those who walk the moors in late summer know they may expect to see it most days; and there are numerous other white or rare objects which in no way are considered lucky, including various albino flowers - I have a note of about 370 among British wild plants alone. I have been told that the belief dates back to Mary, Queen of Scots or, inevitably, to Prince Charles, the Young Pretender. But not a shred of evidence have I been able to find in support.

White heather is a badge of certain clans, but hardly a convenient one to produce for a posse of men at any time of the year. Cluny of Clan Macpherson on one occasion attributed his escape from searchers to the fact that he had been sleeping on a clump of white heather. But if a story like this is the origin of what is now wide-spread acceptance, why is nothing heard of it for over a century after this is supposed to have happened? There is a similar story of the Clan Ranald, which dates back to 1544, when a battle was said to have been won because the MacDonalds stuck white heather in their bonnets. But here is a 300 year gap and I doubt not that a search would reveal numerous other cases where luck was attributed to chance objects, which have not since become generally regarded as being lucky.

After these conjectures - and there have been various others - what are the facts? It is surely significant that the first three definite references, and the first six out of the first ten are connected with Queen Victoria and all but one with Scotland. The earliest is in her *Leaves from the Journal of our Life in the Highlands* under the date of September 29th 1855. Here she wrote: "Our dear Victoria was this day engaged to Prince Frederick William of Prussia..... during our ride up Craig na Ban this afternoon he picked a piece of white heather (the emblem of Good Luck) which he gave to her; this enabled him to make an allusion to his hopes and wishes....." The next one comes from her *More Leaves* when she is describing a drive to the top of Beinn a Bhraigaidh on September 9th 1872 while staying with the Duke of Sutherland at Dunrobin: "Brown (who has an extraordinary eye for it when driving quite fast, which I have not) espied a piece of white heather and jumped off to pick it. No Highlander would pass it by without picking it, for it is considered to bring good luck....." The third quotation is in a letter from Queen Victoria to Prince Arthur, later Duke of Connaught, which is in the Royal Library at Windsor. "..... (I hope the) locket & white heather pleased you & I hope you will take care & put it inside your waistcoat & coat when you ride or go out - as the lockets easily come off, or open & the contents drop out, wh. I shd. think unlucky with the white heather....."

5/7/1866 ?  
The next three 'Victorian' references are in connection with the weddings of Princess Helena on April 28th 1882, Princess Beatrice on July 22nd 1893 and Princess Mary on July 8th 1893, when white heather was included in the bouquets of the bride or bridesmaids.

The other 19th century references are from novels, two by William Black (1841-98) in *Macleod of Dare* in 1878, and *White Heather* in 1885, and *John Herring* by Sabine Baring-Gould (1834-1924) in 1883. In this last it is written: "It is said in the West (of England) that the white heather brings good luck to the person that secures it."

Nowadays white heather is an industry. There are white heather farms north and south. The heathers they grow differ: white heather is in demand on Burns' Night in January, when you will see none in flower on the moors. A tree heath, which originally came from Portugal, is grown commercially in the southwest because there it starts to flower before Christmas, and the trade is supplied from there. I have seen the same heather being hawked in London early in the year. Why people choose to grow this and not one of the superb hardy winter ones I cannot say, but there it is. The normal white heather - the one that flowers late in the summer - is commercially always ling - that is the one that gypsies sell.

For those interested in heathers there is a flourishing Heather Society. But even they cannot tell you just when or why white heather was first considered lucky. Perhaps it was an old Scottish belief which Queen Victoria fostered and made fashionable.

David McClintock



## **Recruit a New Member**

A copy of the Society's new all colour Information Leaflet is enclosed in this Bulletin - please pass it on to any of your friends who might be interested in becoming a member. Further copies may be obtained from:

The Administrator, 'Denbeigh', all Saints Road, Creeting St Mary, Ipswich, Suffolk IP6 8PJ. Tel/Fax 01449 711220

## **European aid for Moorland Improvement**

Since the article "Threat to Heath and Moorland" appeared in the Autumn 1995 *Bulletin* we have had the very welcome news that substantial grants to be spent over a six year period will be made available for "enriching life in rural communities". One third of the money will be coming from Europe, the E.C. "Objective 5B" scheme, and will be matched by sums from the Ministry of Agriculture and the Rural Development programme.

The Northern uplands, which includes a great mass of Pennine landscape stretching from Skipton to the Scottish border and 100,000 acres in the North York Moors National Park, is one area to benefit. The North York Moors is the largest area of heather in the world and represents one twelfth of the U.K. heather stock. The six year programme affects the interests of land owners, farmers, the National Park, the Ministry of Agriculture, English Nature and the R.S.P.B. The scheme will provide 70% of the cost of the clearance of 8,750 acres of bracken, burning and regenerating 23,375 acres of heather, restoring 1,550 acres of heather and 507 acres of grass on bracken cleared sites. The total cost will be of the order of £2 million.

*T.A. Julian*

## **Group News**

### **North East**

The annual General Meeting was the culmination of the North East Group's Heather year on October 27th 1995, and we welcomed thirteen members, plus Dave and Beryl Mayne from Kirkbymoorside. The Chairman reported that we had had a successful year and the Treasurer said that we were managing to keep our heads above water, so that was a relief! Officers and Committee were duly elected and 'The Old Brigade' were returned to duty. Chairman: Roy Nichols, Secretary: Dorothy Warner, Treasurer: Geoff Warner, Hon. Auditor: Bob Scott, Committee: Syd Courtney, Bill Crow, David and Rita Plumridge, David and Mary Roberts.

After the business part of the meeting was over, the rest of the evening was spent viewing David Plumridge's slides that he had taken at the Irish Conference and which were enjoyed by all. We ended with our traditional faith supper and thanks go to all who brought



such mouth-watering fare.

Diary Dates are as follows:

Saturday	May 4th	Annual Outing to Edinburgh Botanical Gardens
Sat. /Sun.	May 18/19th	Open weekend, Houghall, Durham.
Saturday	June 8th	Car Outing to Belsay Gardens. Meet there 2.00 pm.
Wednesday	July 17th	Car Outing to Bill Crow's Nursery, Scots Gap. 7.30 pm.
September	?	Annual Show. Venue and date to be finalised.
Friday	October 25th	AGM. St Matthew's Church Hall, Ponteland. 7.30 pm.

Will our members please note that the Houghall weekend is a week later than normal. This is because the Gardens are running the Open Event jointly with the Farm Open Day and the whole weekend will go under the title of *Houghall Farm and Open Day Event*. The times will be from 11.00 am - 5.00 pm each day. We will be having our Heather Society stand again for the two days and any help with the manning will be very much appreciated.

Full details of all these events will be sent to members nearer the time, but do make a note of the dates now and come and support us.

Dorothy Warner

## Southern

### 20TH ANNIVERSARY MEETING AT THE RHS GARDEN WISLEY

Saturday 30th September 1995.

51 members gathered at the RHS Garden Wisley for the joint Southern and South Western Group meeting which was also the 20th Anniversary celebration of the Southern Group. The party included some new members as well as some who had been involved in the first Southern Group meetings 20 years ago. A number of members informed me that they could not attend, including Miss Ella Filmore, a founder member of the Heather Society. On behalf of the Group, I extend greetings and good wishes to Miss Filmore and all those members who would love to have attended but were not able to.

We were favoured with a mild, pleasant day which made our visit to the heather garden doubly pleasing. Mr. Andrew Collins led this visit. Like many gardens in this exceptionally hot, dry year, the RHS heather garden has suffered some losses from drought. *Erica carnea* had been affected more drastically than other species.

Many of us gathered in the excellent Conservatory Cafe for lunch and the conversations continued until it was time to go to the lecture room for the afternoon's events. It was thrilling to welcome our President, David McClintock, who had spent a lot of the morning inspecting labels in the Heather Garden, and our Vice-President General Pat Turpin and Mrs. Cherry Turpin.

The main event of the afternoon was a reminiscence by Mrs. Pamela Lee, National Secretary, on the Southern Group. She brought to life sunny afternoons and delightful companions of yesteryear and reminded us that we are still enjoying the same kind of benefits nowadays.

Mr. Des Perry and Mrs. Gwen Eggar judged the heather competition. There was a good selection of flowers on view and their task was not an easy one. However their choices fell as follows:

Best vase of heathers chosen for foliage - Mrs. Pamela Lee. Pamela had based her selection on *E. arborea* 'Albert's Gold';

Best vase of flowers in bloom - Mrs. Mary Bowerman who won with a *Calluna vulgaris* seedling;

Best flower arrangement in which heathers predominate - Mrs. Mary Bowerman. This arrangement was an autumnal glory of deep reds and russets, the flowers on some of the tall spiky *Callunas* having faded to their winter hues.

Mrs. Bowerman was also awarded the Turpin Trophy to hold until 28th September 1996.

The Chairman, Mr. David Small, conducted an open forum after the manner of the Heather Society Conferences. There was a lively exchange of views and information. Mrs. Diane Jones responded to a question on selecting heathers to bloom the year round on chalky soil. This item was of particular interest to newer members. She started in

November with *Erica erigena* 'Irish Dusk', and *E x darleyensis* cultivars such as 'Silberschmelze' which flower early and have long flowering seasons. She said that *E. lusitanica* flowers through the winter in milder spots. *Daboecia cantabrica* varieties take over in May and are soon supplemented by *E. terminalis*. A choice species for the middle and late summer is *E. manipuliiflora* and the probable hybrid 'Heaven Scent'. This brought the reply full circle and the company to tea.

So we came to the close of another memorable heather year and the commencement of the third decade of the Southern Group.

#### PROGRAMME FOR 1996

The Group has an interesting and varied programme ahead and I am grateful to our prospective hosts. Naturally they will be interested to know approximately how many people to expect and it will be a help if you can let me know beforehand if you intend to participate. I hope that this request will not put you off attending if you decide to come at the last minute - I only need to get an idea of broad numbers.

#### Newsletter and sketches

A newsletter complete with sketch maps of the venues is available. Please send a stamped addressed envelope if you would like a copy. My address is: 18, Albury Avenue, Cheam, Sutton, Surrey. SM2 7JT. Telephone 0181 224 7775.

**Saturday March 30th, Bracken Hill** - Our President, David McClintock, invites us to see his garden. Gather at his home - 'Bracken Hill', Platt, Sevenoaks, Kent at 2 pm. Platt is about a mile and a half South of Junction 2 on the M26 motorway and six miles east of Sevenoaks. The drive to the house is 100 yards west of Platt village hall and Platt Mill (now a store) on the South side of the A 25, half a mile or so East of the cross roads at Borough Green. Only those with limited mobility may park at the house. The rest of us are asked to park behind Platt Mill. This is a splendid opportunity to meet our President and see his collection of heathers and books.

**Sunday May 19th, Great Comp** - Members of the Dutch Heather Society - Ericultura - are visiting England as part of their celebrations of their 25th anniversary. On 19th May, their tour takes them to Great Comp, Borough Green, Sevenoaks, Kent. They have invited the President, Chairman and members of the Southern Group to join them for the visit which begins at 2 pm. The normal group charge for entry of £2 each will apply and the Tea Room will be open after the visit. Great Comp is situated on Comp Lane which leads off the west side of the Wrotham Heath - Mereworth Road.

**Saturday July 27th, Denbeigh Heathers** - We have a visit to our Chairman's garden at Denbeigh Heathers, All Saints Road, Creeting St Mary, Ipswich, Suffolk. Meet there at 11 am. We should take picnic lunches and folding chairs. The Chairman plans to give an in-depth workshop on all aspects of propagating heathers including kinds and use of mist propagation units. He will provide cutting material (but bring your own if you wish to propagate a special cultivar). Our cuttings will be placed in a mist propagation unit and later restored to us at the meeting at Wisley in September so that we can see how well we have done and discuss the results. David also intends to give some practical guidance on recognition and treatment of fungal disease. There will be an opportunity to purchase heathers from David and Anne's extensive stock. Let me know if you need help with travelling arrangements. Members in the Eastern and North London Groups are particularly invited to attend this meeting which is on their doorstep - figuratively speaking of course.

#### For your diary:

**Saturday August 10th**, Joint meeting with the South West Group, Iping & Stedham Common and Zeneca, Fernhurst

**Saturday September 28th** - Visit to Wisley & Heather competition

Allen Hall

### South West

Another year has passed and we have managed to meet several times during that period, and hopefully members have enjoyed the visits arranged for them; I was however disappointed at the turn-out for one of those visits. The last year has also seen several members of our group attend the field-trip to Connemara and the Conference in Dublin.

The combination of good weather, good company, good organising and superb scenery made that a resounding success. This year the Conference will be based in South West Group territory, at Ilminster, and even if members can't attend the whole Conference I hope they will join us at least on one of the days. Further details on the Conference will be found elsewhere in this *Bulletin*.

### Report on the two final meetings of 1995:

On Saturday 30th September, South West and Southern Group members met at Wisley on the occasion of the Southern Group's 20th anniversary. Allen Hall had taken advantage of the free entry for Societies affiliated to the RHS, to enable Heather Society members to visit the heather garden. Andy Collins from Wisley kindly led the group. Regrettably the long hot summer had taken its toll and there were many signs of drought damage, however the members enjoyed their tour of the garden and we were most grateful to Andy for spending time with us. After lunch we assembled in the lecture room and enjoyed the reminiscences on the early days of the Southern Group from the Society's Secretary Pamela Lee, followed by an Open forum led by our Chairman, David Small. The afternoon was rounded off with the announcement of the results of the Table show and refreshments prepared by Joan Hall. My thanks go to Allen for organising an enjoyable day and arranging good weather.

The last event of the year was an extra meeting in the village hall at Lytchett Matravers, where South West and Southern Group members got together and viewed some of the photographs and slides taken on the field trip to Connemara and at the Conference held in Dublin. The members present were not just those who had attended the trip but also those interested in attending future Conferences. The afternoon was also an opportunity for members to get together late in the season and have a chat on our favourite topic. After the photographs and slides, refreshment was served and members departed full of enthusiasm for attending next year's Conference.

### Meetings for 1996

Saturday March 30th - This will be the annual indoor meeting at the Lytchett Matravers Village Hall, in Dorset. Members should meet in the hall by 2.00 pm, where we will have a talk by Dr. Nigel Webb of the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology at the Furzebrook Research Station near Wareham. Nigel's subject will be *The Ecology of the British Heathlands*. The talk will be followed later in the year by a visit to the heathland south of Wareham (the home of *Erica ciliaris*). We will also have our two class Table Show:

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

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

Prizes will be awarded and the Burfitt Bowl (currently held by Anne Pringle and Maureen Clark) will be awarded to the exhibitor with the most points.

Lytchett Matravers is situated six miles from Poole and one mile west of the Poole-Blandford road. The village hall is on the west side of the High Street, just north of the Rose and Crown Inn. Ample parking is available close to the hall and a charge will be made to cover expenses.

**Saturday May 11th** - On this occasion we will be visiting the garden of Waterdale House in Wiltshire. The garden is advertised in the Yellow Book and belongs to Mr. and Mrs. Julian Scymour. The garden is four acres in extent and is woodland with *Rhododendrons*, *Camellias*, *Acer*s and *Magnolias*; there is also an ornamental water feature and a bog garden. Members should meet at 2.00 pm at the garden where I am informed that parking will be available. The garden is reached by leaving the A350 Blandford-Warminster road just north of East Noyle and travelling west to Milton; the garden is signed in the village. Refreshments will be available during the afternoon.

### For your diary.

**Saturday August 10th** - Joint visit with the Southern Group to Iping and Stedham Commons, Surrey in the morning and a visit to Zeneca Garden at Fernhurst, Haslemere, Surrey in the afternoon.

**Saturday September 21st** - Afternoon visit to Hartland Moor and possibly Stoborough Heath in Dorset to view *Erica ciliaris* and its hybrids with *Erica tetralix*. The tour will be led by Dr. Nigel Webb.

Further information on the meetings described above can be obtained by sending me

two SAEs as soon as possible and if you intend to come to a meeting, I would be grateful if you could let me know about ten days beforehand (Tel: 01703 864336). Once again I am grateful to those people who make the visits possible and I look forward to seeing you at one or more of the above meetings.

*Phil Joyner*

## New Members In 1995

### Zone 1

A.

I.

## USEFUL ADDRESSES

- Chairman** *Policy matters, major events etc.*  
Mr. D.J. Small, Denbeigh, All Saints Road, Creeting St. Mary, Ipswich,  
Suffolk, IP6 8PJ. Tel: (01449) 711220 FAX: (01449) 711220
- Secretary** *Council matters*  
Mrs. P.B. Lee, Birches, Kingswood Firs, Grayshott, Hindhead, Surrey,  
GU26 6EX.. Tel: (01428) 604947
- Registrar** *Naming of heathers*  
Mr. A.W. Jones, Otters' Court, Back Street, West Camel, Yeovil,  
Somerset, BA22 7QF. Tel: (01935) 850285
- Slide Librarian** *Hire of slides*  
Miss J. Sharpe, 3 Selby Road, Fulford, York, North Yorkshire,  
YO1 4RD. Tel: (01904) 632263
- Yearbook Editor** *Articles for the Yearbook*  
Dr. E.C. Nelson, Tippitiwiche cottage, Hall Road, Outwell, Wisbech  
PE14 8PE. Tel: (01945) 773057 FAX: (01945) 774077
- Bulletin Editor** *Notes, articles for the Bulletin*  
Mrs. D. Everett, Greenacres Nursery, Bringsty, Worcestershire,  
WR6 5TA. Tel: (01885) 482206 FAX: (01885) 482206
- Advertising** *Adverts, advertising rates etc. for the Bulletin*  
Mr. A. J. Stow, Widmour, Limmer Lane, High Wycombe,  
Buckinghamshire, HP12 4QR. Tel: (01494) 449397
- Administrator** *Membership, Subscriptions, Orders for publications etc.*  
Mrs. A. Small, Denbeigh, All Saints Road, Creeting St. Mary, Ipswich,  
Suffolk, IP6 8PJ. Tel: (01449) 711220 FAX: (01449) 711220
- Finance Committee** *Society's finances*  
Mr. A. Hall, 18 Albury Avenue, Cheam, Sutton, Surrey, SM2 7JT.  
Tel: (0181) 224 7775
- General Purposes Committee** *Suggestions for improving the Society*  
Mrs. D.H. Jones, Otters' Court, Back Street, West Camel, Yeovil,  
Somerset, BA22 7QF. Tel: (01935) 850285
- Publications Committee** *Society's publications - or lack of!*  
Mr. P.L. Joyner, 84 Kinross Road, Rushington, Totton, Southampton,  
Hampshire, SO4 4BN. Tel: (01703) 864336
- Technical Committee** *Any queries regarding culture of heathers*  
Mr. D.J. Small, Denbeigh, All Saints Road, Creeting St. Mary, Ipswich,  
Suffolk, IP6 8PJ. Tel: (01449) 711220 FAX: (01449) 711220
- Group Organisers** *(Remember, you will be very welcome at any local meeting or visit!)*
- North East** Mrs. D. M. Warner, Littleroft, Click-em-in, Ponteland,  
Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE20 9BQ. Tel: (01661) 823299
- Southern** Mr. A. Hall, 18 Albury Avenue, Cheam, Sutton, Surrey, SM2 7JT.  
Tel: (0181) 224 7775
- South West** Mr. P.L. Joyner, 84 Kinross Road, Rushington, Totton, Southampton,  
Hampshire, SO4 4BN. Tel: (01703) 864336