


*Bulletin of The  
Heather Society*



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*Vol. 5 No. 8*

*Summer 1996*

## DIARY OF EVENTS 1996/7

### 1996

- |              |                                    |   |
|--------------|------------------------------------|---|
| 17 July      | North East Group                   | Visit to Bill Crow's Nursery, Scots Gap                               |
| 27 July      | Southern Group                     | Visit to Denbeigh Heathers  |
| 10 August    | Southern Group<br>South West Group | Joint Meeting - Visit to Iping and Stedham Commons and Zeneca Gardens |
| 20/21 August |                                    | RHS Show & Heather Competition, Vincent Square                        |
| 14 September | North East Group                   | Annual Show   |
| 15 September |                                    | Closing Date Autumn Bulletin  |
| 21 September | South West Group                   | Tour of Hartland Moor   |
| 28 September | Southern Group                     | Visit to Wisley & Heather Competition                                 |
| 25 October   | North East Group                   | AGM   |

### 1997

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|---------|------------------|-----------------------------|
| 5 April | South West Group | Annual Indoor Show and Talk |
|---------|------------------|-----------------------------|



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

Cover illustration *Erica ciliaris* by Brita Johansson

*In May of this year, a plant auction was held at Hergest Croft Gardens in Herefordshire, in aid of the NCCPG (National Council for the Protection of Plants and Gardens). The plants were auctioned by Sotheby's and the auctioneer was assisted by Roy Lancaster and John Simmons. Maurice and I put a collection of (what we hoped were) interesting plants into the sale, including a plant of Kurt Kramer's hybrid between Erica carnea and Erica arborea 'Alpina' - E x. oldenburgensis 'Ammerland', in a one litre pot. Roy Lancaster gave it a superb pre-sale presentation to the audience and when the bidding started it sold for £15.00; I wonder if this is the highest price ever paid for a one litre heather? The plant was certainly looking very attractive, with pink flowers and pink tips to the foliage. The auction was part of the celebrations to commemorate the centenary of Hergest Croft Gardens.*

*I am sure that everyone will wish to join in sending sincere congratulations to our President, David McClintock, who was recently awarded the prestigious Victoria Medal of Honour by the Royal Horticultural Society, 'in recognition of his distinguished work and devoted service to horticulture'. Our own Society has been very fortunate to have had the benefit of his great knowledge, experience and energy over almost 30 years.*

## 26th Annual Conference

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

Bookings for the 26th Annual Conference in Somerset are already near full capacity, but late bookings may still be sent to Phil Joyner, including £2.00 per mailing address, at 84 Kinross Road, Rushington, Totton, Southampton, Hampshire SO4 4BN. Cheques should be made payable to the Heather Society.

The full programme and cost was published in the Spring *Bulletin*, and members are reminded that the full payment of the conference fees are due by 31st July. When booking or sending conference fees will members please state their preferences for workshop sessions. Phil will provide information for anyone wishing to pay by credit card.

## RHS Show 20th -21st February 1996 Competition Results

**Class 5.** 1. Mrs Joan Hall, 2. Mrs Joan Hall, 3. Mrs Bullivant

**Class 6.** 1. Mrs Joan Hall, 2. Mr David McClintock, 3. Mrs Joan Hall

### A 'Society' Wedding

On 19th March the Society's Slide Librarian, Jean Sharpe, and Vice President, Albert Julian decided to save a few lines in the Membership List by becoming Mr & Mrs TAJulian. It couldn't have happened to two nicer people! Congratulations to them both!

### 25th Anniversary of the Dutch Heather Society

The Dutch Heather Society, Nederlandse Heidevereniging 'Ericultura', celebrated its 25th anniversary on 13 April by holding a one day seminar at the University of Utrecht.

To mark the occasion, Council decided to present our Dutch colleagues with an engraved paper knife where the handle had been made out of compressed, dyed stems of *Calluna vulgaris*. With my poor knowledge of Dutch, I attended the seminar with some trepidation.

I need not have worried, upon my arrival Anne Kämena, the Secretary, made me very welcome and introduced me to their Chairman, Paul Pacilly, whom I had never met. There were many old friends there including Kurt Kramer who was representing the German Heather Society., Herman Blum,



*David Small presenting gift to Paul Pacilly, Chairman of the Dutch Heather Society*

who had done so much for the Dutch Heather Society over the years, was, alas, unable to attend.

Despite the Dutch Heather Society's membership having fallen from over 1000 to about 250, there were around 110 attending the celebrations and most strikingly many in their twenties and thirties. Falling membership was the main topic of conversation between the two Chairmen in the few brief moments we had together.

The first talk was by W. Nieuuman, who I understand lectures at the University. He outlined the requirements for peat gardens as opposed to heather gardens. Anne Kämena kindly translated when I needed it. Harry van de Laar followed up with a picture show of a wide ranging show of ericaceous plants. He showed a few heathers, 'Guernsey Plum' which was in fact 'Guernsey Lime' (I told him afterwards!).

In the afternoon, there was a very amusing talk by Wim Oudshoorn who knew how to entertain. It was a great pity that I missed many of his jokes. This was followed by a slide show of visits made by the Dutch Heather Society over the past 25 years. In doing so, I had a good insight into Dutch Heather gardens - not one had a lawn! I tackled Harry van de Laar about this afterwards and he replied by saying the Dutch always thought it very odd that the British grew heathers surrounded by lawns.

We then had a tour of the Botanical Gardens, particularly the peat garden. It was a beautiful day with butterflies hovering over the heathers (many wrongly named!).

We concluded the celebrations with a glass of rose wine laced with kirsch in one of the glasshouses. After the formal thanks, I presented Paul Pacilly with the engraved paper knife and Kurt Kramer presented them with a bottle of wine made from heather. In return we were presented with a copy of *Ericultura's* latest booklet listing cultivars which do particularly well on the continent using our Society's Colour Chart to aid descriptions.

The trip was very well worthwhile. Since we lost contact with Herman Blum, we have lost contact with the Dutch. This brief visit has to some extent restored contact, although it was also very clear is that their Society is not a Heather Society. I do not know if it ever was, but it is clearly a Society with little interest in heathers but a deep interest in other ericaceous plants particularly, *Cassiope*, *Vaccinium* and *Rhododendron*.

There has been talk of forming an International Heather Society based on the Heather Society but if this was ever likely, it would need to have a wider interest than just the ABCDE (*Andromeda*, *Bruckenthalia*, *Calluna*, *Daboecia*, *Erica*) of our Society.

## Phantom Cultivars

This is not an essay on such cultivars as *Calluna vulgaris* 'Spook' or even *Erica x darleyensis* 'Ghost Hills'. It is an attempt to prevent the creation of self-perpetuating errors - something which can happen all too easily when cultivar names are given in a journal as august as the *Year Book of the Heather Society*.

There seems to be persistent, if non-existent cultivar, *Calluna vulgaris*

'Winter Rubin'. It appears *loc. cit.* 1994: 42, 43 and 1995: 57. Starting at the most recent reference, it is stated "In error listed as a cultivar of *Erica carnea* (*Yb Heather Soc.* 1994: 43). However, on turning to that reference the following statement appears:- "This is a legitimate replacement name for 'Kramer's Rubin' (*Yb Heather Soc.* 1993: 44) requested by the introducer". [No mention of *Erica carnea*]. The 1993 citation does refer to *Erica carnea* 'Kramer's Rubin', and describes it as "Dark pink". However, *op. cit.* 4(1): 52. records the registration of *Erica carnea* 'Kramer's Rubin' under Registration No, 112, giving the flower colour as bright H14. Checking the Registration File I find that the forms for Reg. No. 112 do cover *Erica carnea* 'Kramer's Rubin', but the front page carries a pencilled note in David McClintock's handwriting saying "Later changed to Winter Rubin". Finally, the records of Bundessortenamt show that Kurt Kramer was granted protection under plant Breeder's Rights for *Erica carnea* 'Winter Rubin' on 31st March 1995. It is thus clear that the correct name for the cultivar under discussion is *Erica carnea* 'Winter Rubin'. It has a rather upright, compact habit. The foliage is dark green [RHS 136A] with yellow and bronze new growth in the Spring.. The flowers are H14 [Heliotrope, RHS Red-purple group 67A], with dark, chocolate brown anthers. It blooms in the early and middle period for the species. *Calluna vulgaris* 'Winter Rubin' never has, and never will exist.

I was somewhat perplexed by the description of *Erica carnea* 'Winter Snow' [Reg. No. 118] in "Cultivars Registered in 1993, *Year Book of the Heather Society*, 1994, 35. This contains the phrase "more erect than 'Schneekuppe', blooming later, **and calyx half the length**". Since the ratio of calyx to corolla length is reasonably constant in *Erica carnea*, this phrase suggested either a very small flower or one with an atypical appearance. However, the plants I had obtained, from two sources, showed flowers of the usual appearance, which were rather large for the species. David Small assured me that the plants he had supplied were true to name. Once again, direct reference to the Registration file provided the solution to this problem. The phrase David had used in answer to the question how does it differ from other cultivars? "Calyx half length corolla as 'Schneekuppe' but later in flower. Not so erect".

Careful measurement have shown that for most cultivars of *Erica carnea* the sepals are between three fifths and four fifths of the length of the corolla. Both 'Schneekuppe' and 'Winter Snow' fall within that range. However, in the case of these two cultivars the sepals are both curved and diverge from the corollas so that they only appear to reach half the distance from the base of the corolla to its tip. In all save this one point, an accurate description of *Erica carnea* 'Winter Snow' had been provided. It was the transcription which was capable of causing confusion.

*The Registrar*

## Natural History Museum Visit - 9th March 1996

I must admit that when the idea of visiting the Natural History Museum was suggested, it did not initially fill me with much enthusiasm. The reason?

Well I usually much prefer to keep attacking the weeds in the Spring and to spend a whole day out of a weekend, needs careful consideration. However, Ron Cleevely's idea deserved encouragement and I enlisted.

Unlike the other twenty plus members who met on Saturday 9th March, I had never visited the Museum before. What an experience! I have obviously spent too much time attacking the weeds over the years and not enough time visiting this fascinating building which bears no resemblance to the dusty dark and generally boring places visited on schoolday forays some forty plus, well to be more accurate, fifty plus years ago!

My first impression was the magnificent ceiling in the entrance hall consisting of large tiles each depicting a flower. Following an introductory talk, in which to our surprise we learnt that 300 scientists are based at the Museum, we visited the Botany library and saw a display of early literature including illustrations of heathers in the Andrews, Forbes and other publications. Also visited was the Herbarium and we were shown selected specimens of Ericaceae.

The major highlight on a day of many was a visit to the Rare Book Room where we were shown an outstanding collection of books and archive material connected with Natural History. What was literally quite amazing was the quality of the colour in the illustrations in these books, some 300 hundred years old. Normally the general public would never see these exhibits, but thanks to modern technology, the Museum, in trying to overcome reduced funding from Government, has started work on producing CD-ROM's for sale

After lunch there was an illustrated lecture on significant botanical literature by Malcolm Beasley the Botany Librarian and the visit ended with Ron Cleevely showing a selection of slides of illustrations from books on heather. A most illuminating and enjoyable day

Arnold Stow

## Window Boxes

In early December we spent a few days Christmas shopping, in Belgium, centred on Blankenberge. Bruges and the nearby township of Sluis in Holland were visited, and it would appear that hanging baskets so popular here in the U.K., are not used in this region. However window boxes of all shapes and sizes were to be seen fronting shops and public buildings and gracing the majority of houses in the town centres.

In the boxes which still retained the faded summer plantings there were numerous *E. gracilis* plants and several contained *Callunas*. The fresh winter plantings were dominated by winter flowering Ericas; a typical layout consisted of *E. carnea* interspersed with winter flowering pansies.

Jean Julian

## A Plea from Canada

Our administrator, Anne Small has sent on to me part of a letter that she received recently from Lois Addison of Bedrock Gardeners in Ontario, Canada.

*Lois says "I am frequently asked about drying heather. Could you direct me to a source of information about which cultivars are the best for cutting and drying and about drying techniques?" She goes on to say "We are on a campaign here to get more people growing heathers and heaths in their gardens. While our winter temperatures can hit - 40c, we are usually blessed with good snow cover. This year after a very dry summer we have had over 160 cm of snow."*

*I have often dried heathers in the past simply by neglect, just by putting the cut stems into a vase of water and allowing the water to evaporate away slowly. The blooms have lasted in good condition for several months. However there is probably a much better way of doing it so, if anyone has any information for Lois, please send it to the Bulletin, as the information will certainly interest many of our UK members as well. Ed.*

## How These 26 years have Flown!

### Profile of the Society's Secretary - Pamela Lee

I still have a copy of the article in the Daily Telegraph dated August 24th 1968, which introduced me to heathers for the garden. The opening paragraph caught my eye: the writer, Gordon Forsyth, advocated them as the ideal plants to 'keep the margins of a drive clearly defined and attractive throughout the year, without requiring a lot of attention'. My husband, Geoffrey, and I had just bought our first house near Hindhead, Surrey, on a plot that had been heathland before the intrusion of pine and birch seedlings. The surface of the drive was appalling , with six foot widths of neglected coarse grass on either



side. With four small children, I was not likely to be spending much time gardening, but the drive had to look reasonable. I recalled that my parents had a neighbour who grew heathers and could give me some advice. Yes, this was Constance MacLeod, who enthusiastically told me about the Heather Society and the helpful people I could meet by joining it. She put me in touch with my local heather specialist - nurseryman Peter Davis, who advised me on my first purchases. They both suggested that I make the acquaintance of 'Papa' Horace Hale, while his heather garden, not far from us was at its best.

The following year, in 1970, I met many other members of the Society at Champs Hill, the Sussex home of Alfred and Margaret Bowerman, both



of whom where then members of Council: he became Chairman a year later. Soon after that I was asked to share the driving with Ella Filmore, taking Constance to Grantley Hall, Yorkshire, to an informal weekend of the H.S. Northern Group. This was to become the first of our Annual Conferences, all of which I have attended.

My parents joined the Society and in 1972 Constance, calling on my father's banking experience, asked him to become Hon. Treasurer. Urged by the officers of the Society, early in 1975 I circularised our membership in Surrey, West Sussex and North East Hampshire, suggesting that we formed a group in our area. The first meeting was held in August at the home of Vice president, Dr Violet Gray, one of our local G Ps: it was initially named the Mid-Southern Group.

It had been decided to hold the 5th Annual Conference, September 1975, in the south and Margaret Bowerman, as Chairman of the Events Committee, asked me to find a rendezvous. She offered her garden as one of the visits and I was asked to plan the rest of the programme, take the bookings and do whatever needed to be done for a conference. (I was grateful then that David McClintock had earlier encouraged me to dig out my portable Olivetti and revise my long-neglected typing skills to help him prepare some of his articles for publication.) Mrs MacLeod asked me to find a more efficient printer for the *Bulletin* and to begin proof-reading each issue, which I have continued to do ever since.

In 1976 Alfred Bowerman invited me to join the Council and, since both my father and Constance wished to retire immediately, I became involved in the negotiations to transfer the main administrative work to professionals at Harvest House in Reading (see the Summer *Bulletin* of 1977). When Major General Turpin, then a member of Council, was elected Chairman, he suggested that I should become Hon. Secretary. However I was reluctant, arguing that in view of the administrative changes there was no need for this office. In the event it turned out to be quite a busy one!

After three years we were obliged to withdraw from Harvest House, as their charges had risen so steeply. Des Oliver, the new Treasurer, and I had many problems coping with their frequent staff changes and were most relieved when Ken Farrah kindly volunteered to take over the administration. However, there was a six month interim period during which all the Society's business had to be conducted from my home.

With three meetings of Council for 20 years (I missed one through being in hospital), plus the AGM, you can imagine how the correspondence, Minutes and much else has accumulated! The opportunity to see the RHS Flower Shows on Council Meeting days and I have enjoyed competing - with a degree of success - in the heather classes.

The Group was re-christened 'the Southern' when we included Kent and East Sussex, following the closure of the Weald and Thanet Group. Many kind members invited us to their gardens and entertained us to tea: we learned something new from each one. During the 10 years that I organised activities, we held 45 meetings in four counties.

In 1981, the late Brig. Lucas Phillips, writer of many gardening books,

visited our garden with members of the Group. I had great trepidation about him coming, as he always spoke his mind. It was the wallflowers that he took exception to, he said I ought to find something more interesting to grow in 'that important position' edging the terrace. One of the plants I have there now came from a cutting from his garden. Members also came for a buffet lunch in 1985, but by then the local deer were visiting regularly and continue to come, eating everything of value within reach, so despite our efforts, we cannot live up to the high standards which he achieved in his own 'Small Garden'.

When I was staying in Southern Spain a few years ago with my son and his family, I was thrilled to find an isolated plant of *Erica terminalis* growing beside a beautiful rock pool in the mountains. My son took a quick snap-shot and this was published in the 1993 *Yearbook*, as it is a rare plant in that area. The following year while I was once again visiting the family in Spain, David McClintock invited me to join him and the author of the local flora for a day of botanising. *Erica scoparia* was abundant, but we were delighted to find, eventually, a few clumps of *Erica terminalis*, which bore unusually long inflorescences. Last September it was a great thrill to take part in the field trip to Western Ireland when, under Charles Nelson's guidance, we saw all the native Irish heaths (details are in the Society's current *Yearbook*).

During this period my family have grown up, with children of their own, my parents have died and so have many members I remember with affection. I am grateful for the many friends I have made over the years in the Society, who have helped me weather all the crises and worries that occur in family life. Those who have never yet attended one of our annual conferences have a pleasure in store, for that is where one is sure to find like-minded people who may become life-long friends, while learning more about heathers and how to grow them better than ever.

## Profile - Diane Heather Jones née Cook

I was born in Queen Charlotte's Hospital, Marylebone, London on 12th December 1938, the first of two daughters to Jessamine Ivy and Walter George Cook. Our family home was in the NW London suburb of Edgware - then in Middlesex - which I wasn't to leave until I married Bert Jones in 1962.

My early love of the outdoors with picnics and long cycle rides into the open countryside of the adjacent 'Green Belt' and beyond, and my attempts at 'helping' my father from a very young age both in our garden and on our allotment through the war years, has I know, been important as training for my eventual love of gardening. I was introduced to the rural way of life when we were evacuated during the latter part of the war, at the age of five years, to the village of Flore in Northamptonshire. The close and friendly village community made an impression on me, as did my first few months at the village school.

Back home in Edgware, I continued my schooling at the local primary school to the age of 11 years, and then, after taking the 11+ examination, I won a scholarship to the North London Collegiate School for Girls at Canons

Park, then a direct grant school. It is in very beautiful grounds, with the elegant 'Old House' dating from the 18th century. The terraces and gardens around the house and newer purpose built school buildings were planted with many fine trees, herbaceous borders, and a rose garden. Beyond was the open parkland to the house, where our playing fields were situated. It was, of course, a great privilege to be educated in such a school and such a setting - the latter helping me to appreciate the beauty and heritage of great gardens in this country.

My academic achievements at school were centered around mathematics, sciences, geography and music. Literature and the arts have always been more for pleasure than academic study for me, and I was no sports person - cycling was my only passion in that area.

I chose not to continue into the Upper 6th with 'A' levels, as a university course was not in my sights. I chose textile technology as a career, with my first job in London at the laboratory of British Celanese in the Hanover Square office. It was here that I met Bert Jones, who came six months after my arrival) to work between his National Service and the start of his University studies at Manchester in September 1957.

I moved to the laboratory of Marks and Spencer in their head office in January 1958 and was there for 12 years until our elder son was born.

Much of our life, both before and after our marriage in June 1962 is recorded in Bert's profile in the Summer *Bulletin* of 1995. I obviously do not want to re-write any of his account - or even dare to criticise it - but simply to elaborate and, where possible describe my own special interests in heathers.

During the first eight and a half years of our marriage we moved from West London, to Taplow and then to Somerset, where we have certainly grown roots. It is now  $25\frac{1}{2}$  years since arriving at our present home and we enjoy the benefits of living in such a lovely area of the country. My time and energy in the early years here was devoted to raising a family, gardening, and getting



*Diane with the Society's President, David McClintock*

involved in the local community.

Our sons were educated locally and I still retain a close interest in the primary school, having been a governor for 14 years. I served as a parish councillor for a number of years, have been active as a WI member both locally and at County level, and in July 1984 was honoured to be appointed as a magistrate to the Yeovil Bench. This work is interesting and challenging, with a certain amount of on-going training.

The garden and my small heather nursery business takes up much of my time, but since we started selling heathers in 1974 it has provided much pleasure and opportunity for meeting other gardeners.

In my spare time I enjoy music, driving, meeting with family and friends, and visiting other people's gardens

As gardening has become a major interest it is the shaping and planning which has become most important of all. I realise that I do not set about this task from an artistic point of view, but very much from a practical standpoint. Gardens and gardening are to me an essential link with nature and all living things, not only plants, and so often we need to work within the constraints of what we have around us, including the climate and soil.

Our mutual love of heathers began by chance when we were introduced to John Letts' garden. The impact that that garden had on me is unforgettable and has taught me many lessons. One I have learned since is that it is essential to know about the climate and soil conditions a plant is used to in the wild. As gardeners we so often think we can put a plant where we want to see it growing, and it fails miserably. This is hardly surprising when the geographic regions plants originate from are so diverse in climate, altitude, and soil conditions. And yet if a chance seedling flourishes we are often amazed. We should all be continually learning through experience.

I must now say a few words of encouragement to the newer members of our Society. We were fortunate to join the Heather Society very soon after having become interested in heathers as garden plants - it was in John Letts catalogue that we saw the Society mentioned. Since our joining, very nearly 30 years ago, our knowledge has gradually grown, largely through the literature and activities of the Society. We have found too that our annual conferences (we have only missed one since our first at Dartington Hall in 1973) are of particular benefit because we meet with other members and discuss informally so many aspects of heather growing.

I was privileged too to be asked to edit the *Bulletin*, a job I enjoyed for 12 years, and to become a member of Council.

Do I have an ambition? The answer is definitely yes. I would love to travel more widely to see all the heather species growing in the wild. We enjoyed a holiday on the Greek island of Paxos in 1993 where I saw *Erica manipuliflora* in its native habitat for the first time. Last year we visited Brittany, in May, and then Connemara in September. Now our two sons have flown the nest this ambition may yet be fulfilled.

Diane Jones

## Looking Good?

Some of our international members have commented in the past that many of the heathers the Society recommends are unsuitable in harsher conditions. On a March visit to Cherrybank Gardens, Perth, the home of the Scottish National Collection of heathers, I had a great opportunity to assess the hardiness of some cultivars following a very severe winter in that part of Scotland. There was a particularly long period when the temperature dropped to  $-18^{\circ}\text{C}$  with biting easterly winds and no snow cover.

It came as no great surprise to find most *Erica australis*, *Erica lusitanica* and *Erica manipuliflora* killed outright, but finding *Erica australis* 'Mr. Robert' hurt but by no means dead was a huge surprise! More of a surprise was to see that no *Erica cinerea*, except 'Alba', appeared to survive. There was no signs of life in any of the *Erica ciliaris* cultivars. Again, there was no signs of life in any cultivars of *Erica mackaiiana* irrespective of whether they originated in Ireland or Spain. Amongst this scene of desolation, all cultivars of *Daboecia* seemed to have survived although damaged. Most *Erica x darleyensis* had unsightly patchy damage where large branches had been hit whereas other branches were untouched. Most *Erica vagans* cultivars were defoliated.

In general younger plants seemed to survive better than older plants.

Of the others? - well here is a list of cultivars looking particularly good and I have a list of those looking particularly bad if anyone is interested.

*Calluna vulgaris*

Amongst the grey foliage plants 'Beoley Silver' and 'Velvet Fascination' were best.

Very few of the orange foliage plants fared well but 'Manitoba' was excellent.

Of the red foliage cultivars 'Blazeaway', 'Bonfire Brilliance', 'Kirsty Anderson', 'Sesam', 'Sir John Charrington' and 'Talisker' were best. 'Boskoop' was not far behind.

Amongst the spring tipped cultivars, 'Fred J. Chapple', 'Kerstin', 'Moon Glow' and 'Springbank' were easily the best.

None of the yellow foliage cultivars fared well, all showing some winter browning but 'Dart's Parrot' was distinctly better than the rest.

None of the doubles fared particularly well

Other particularly notable cultivars were 'Alba Elegans', 'Bognie', 'Cuprea', 'Emma Louise Tuke', 'French Grey', 'Glenfiddich', 'Hollandia', 'Josephine', 'Mrs. Alf', 'Nordlicht', and 'Perestrojka'.

*Daboecia*

All cultivars seemed to have survived but 'Early Bride' was particularly looking good.

*Erica arborea*

'Alpina' and 'Estrella Gold' showed only a little tip damage, 'Albert's Gold' showed more damage.

*Erica carnea*

All of the golden cultivars showed winter browning except 'Ann Sparkes', 'Bell's Extra Special' and 'Golden Starlet'. 'Altadena' was particularly poor.

'Christine Fletcher' and 'Springwood White' showed damage, the rest were satisfactory, but 'Rosalie' and 'Wintersonne' were outstanding.

*Erica tetralix*

'Swedish Yellow' was outstanding, a brilliant gold with no damage. 'Ruth's Gold' also survived well but nowhere near as bright. All other cultivars showed a degree of defoliation with 'Bartinney', 'Helma' and 'Tina' best.

I cannot pretend this list is exhaustive but perhaps something useful has come out of this particularly severe winter.

## Good And Not So Good News Of Heather In The Wild

Following the articles, in earlier bulletins, on the prospects for moorland heather I am delighted to report that one of my childhood country haunts, Beacon Hill, in the Charnwood Forest, Leicestershire, is to have its extensive bracken cover cleared and the heather restored to its 18th century state. The hill will be surrounded by woodland eventually, which will thin as its gets higher with the open top entirely covered with heather. The work will be carried out with the help of expert advice from "English Nature". The heather seed for sowing, when the ground has been cleared, is to be donated by a local golf club. A general attack on the encroaching bracken is to be made as evidenced by a recent notice issued by the Leicestershire Parks Service asking for volunteers with heavy boots to walk the bracken to stamp it down in the area surrounding the hill in the Beacon Country Park. The following is an extract from the local newspaper, Leicester Mercury, which gives the details of the project.

"One of the best known beauty spots in Leicestershire could be set to turn purple. Beacon Hill is likely to have a purple covering every autumn once work to restore its former state as open heathland is completed. County Hall workers are set to move in this week to clear the peak of bracken, and begin an eight year process of re-sowing the 10 acre area with heather. The work, being carried out with the help of English Nature, will restore the hill to its natural state and help wildlife in the area. English Nature assistant conservation officer Wendy Brooks said: 'Heather not only provides a valuable wildlife habitat, such as a nectar source for bees, but also a dramatic visual display of purple flowers throughout the autumn.' She added: 'Once Beacon Hill is restored to its former glory rare birds such as the nightjar and the woodlark will be encouraged as well as a wealth of commoner species.' Environmentalists hope the restored hill can also provide a better home for specialised creatures such as the Charnwood spider, found at very few sites in Britain."

Charnwood Forest, an area to the north of Leicester, is an attractive rural playground for the citizens of Leicester and has an interesting history. Near the Charnwood village of Newtown Linford, Bradgate Park covers many acres. There is a hill, "Old John" which is a popular vantage point overlooking Leicester and there are a number of widely distributed "stunted" oak trees. The Park belonged to the Grey family for many years. Lady Jane Grey, the nine days Queen, was a member. When she was beheaded, the oak trees in the

park were "beheaded" in sympathy and some remain in this state to this day.

The not so good news is that 70 acres of heather land on Allerston High Moor, one of the most attractive areas of the North York Moors is being ploughed up by the owners, probably for tree planting. The North York Moors National Park's officers had reached an agreement to manage the land, maintaining the covering of heather but by a most unfortunate misunderstanding this agreement has been broken. The loss of this heathland which adjoins National Trust property seems to be permanent.

A T Julian

### **Wisdom From the Past**

In *Calluna vulgaris* the difficulty of sorting out the good varieties from the indifferent is intensified by the fact that the number of these named forms is very large, there being at least a score of White Heathers alone, each claiming some individual distinction. That many do not deserve special recognition from the point of view of garden value must be admitted, more particularly when one realizes that minor characteristics are often the outcome of local conditions and cannot always be relied upon for permanency.

A. T. Johnson, "A Selection of the Dwarfer Heaths", *The New Flora and Silva*, 1931, III: 52.

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Novelties in the heath garden have not been rare during the last quarter of a century. In that period the Ericas and their near allies have enjoyed so steady a rise in popular esteem, they have attained a place of so much prominence in our garden, that an influx of new varieties was an inevitable concomitant to their progress.

Not all the new arrivals in the world of garden Heaths were born for immortality. Indeed, perhaps the majority of them fail to put up a claim for distinction and horticultural value sufficiently strong to win them a familiar name.. On the other hand we have in most species some few which stand out among their fellows, conspicuous in superiority . . . . .

A. T. Johnson, *The New Flora and Silva*, 1932: IV: 156.

*Bert Jones, who sent in these two articles, points out that "they were not written by a raving ericaphobe, but by a man who had already written The Hardy Heaths, [The Gardeners Chronicle, 1928], and was to dower us with such cultivars as Calluna vulgaris Hiemalis (Syn. Johnsons Variety)(1927) and Erica x darleyensis Arthur Johnson (by 1952)." Ed.*

### **National Heath Week 7th - 15th September 1996 - 'Get into Purple ...'**

English Nature, together with the National Trust and the RSPB have decided to coordinate their efforts to inform the general public of the need for

conservation and management of lowland heathland in Britain by organising a National Heath Week. It is intended to arrange several important events that will result in major media exposure, as well as numerous local activities in the main heathland areas of the country. At the moment (May), full details are not available. However, this information will be distributed later in the summer through the media under the logo 'Get into Purple ...'. The Heather Society has been in contact with the organisers and details will be displayed at our Conference in Somerset, which begins the same week.

It became apparent, when the various organisations concerned with the conservation of heathland carried out various management operations that the public disliked what they deemed to be 'interference with the heathland', particularly 'the desecration caused by the removal of the trees'. A survey on the public's attitude to the "value of heathland" carried out at centres in Surrey, Dorset and Devon, confirmed the need for a campaign to improve public understanding of such sites. Many believed that these ancient man-made habitats were 'natural landscapes' and did not understand the necessity for management operations. Yet, all recognised the value of such areas for the conservation of wildlife and as space for social activities, acknowledging that some degree of control was necessary. Inevitably, the views of the survey respondents varied according to their region, but the majority requested more information about such habitats.

Further information, either on the 'attitude survey' or the National week, can be obtained from 'English Nature' organisers at St Dennis, Cornwall - 01726 824982.

Ron Cleevely

## Heidi fur Gorbi

In 1990 when Michael Gorbachov had made those startling changes in Russia, German nurserymen arranged to present him with a heather garden in appreciation of his achievements. The scheme was called 'Heide fur Gorbi' (Heathers for Gorbachov).

It came to full fruition on 5th July, when the official presentation was made in Moscow in connection with the Golden Jubilee of the main Botanic Garden. Unfortunately Gorbachov was not there, his place being taken by the Director of the Garden, Professor L Andreev. The party also visited St Petersburg, where they found the Botanic Garden in very poor condition.

The gift consisted of no fewer than three thousand eight hundred plants, of twenty five different sorts. Twenty three German growers travelled to Russia for the event (from 3rd to 10th July 1990). One of these was Kurt Kramer, who has raised many of the most exciting new heather introductions of recent years, including *Erica x darleyensis* 'Kramer's Rote' and the bud-blooming *Callunas* 'Alexandra' and 'Melanie'.

It is hoped that, if we can obtain a list of the cultivars that were sent, we can perhaps gain a useful addition to our knowledge of heather hardiness, bearing in mind Moscow's somewhat extreme winter temperatures.

Kurt Kramer started his nursery in 1970, when he was aged 27, which now



covers 2.5 hectares, including 1390 sq. metres of glass. In 1994 he produced 350,000 plants but his main business is selling cuttings, mostly in plug form, of the remarkable range of hybrids he has introduced to the trade in the last few years. It was written up in some detail in issue 9/94 of *Deutsche Baumschule*.

David McClintock

## BOOK REVIEW

**Regional Wildlife Series** published by Dial House/Ian Allan Publishing  
NEW FOREST: ISBN 0 7110 2294-1; NORFOLK BROADS: ISBN 0 7110 2295-X;

PEAK DISTRICT: ISBN 0 7110 2293-3.

All are Paperback with 64 pages at £4.99.

This new series of Regional Natural History guides illustrated by colour photographs is intended to provide a handy pictorial reference to the main aspects of the fauna and flora in areas of Britain that are popular with holiday-makers and tourists. The first three became available during 1995 and were devoted to the limestone dales of the Peak District; the most extensive and richest surviving British wetlands in the Norfolk Broads; and southern England's easily accessible area of forest and heath in the New Forest. All three have been written and compiled by Paul Sterry.

Each of those published so far have achieved their objective and provide a concise, well-produced and superbly illustrated colourful guide. They are worth buying for the photographs alone which are ideal for the identification of many species that occur in these regions and will also ensure that specialists will be referring to the copy on their shelves.

The guides are divided into sections that deal with all the habitats found in the area, featuring the most characteristic and conspicuous members among its Birds, Mammals, Reptiles, Butterflies, Dragonflies, other Insects, Shrubs & Trees, Wildflowers, non-flowering plants, & Fungi. There is a separate entry for all the taxa illustrated. Short articles on aspects of human activity associated with the region, or its habitats, augment each section.

The New Forest guide briefly refers to *Calluna vulgaris*, *Erica cinerea*, *E. tetralix* on p. 50; Bilberry (p. 51); Heathland fires on p. 31; that on the Peak District has entries on the same species (p. 46) and also Cowberry (p. 47); inevitably the diverse wetland habitats dealt with in the guide to the Norfolk Broads lack any mention of Ericaceae.

These books are an admirable reference to the natural history of each region, containing a diagrammatic map together with informative lists of 'Places of Interest' and on 'Useful Addresses' that will be helpful to tourists and other visitors. These are well worth the price and we can only look forward to the others to be published in 1996 that will deal with Snowdonia, the London region, and the South-West coast; - the last could be available at the Society's September conference. I was delighted to find them amongst the 'new acquisitions' of the libraries I visit and they would certainly please

anyone lucky to receive one as a gift. The only drawback, is that they do not lend themselves to use in the field, but then you could be like me in believing that such books should be kept on the shelf and only used to confirm sightings &c., or else as preliminary reading to any excursion.

*Ron Cleevely*

## Group News

### North East

On May 11th a total of 27 members and friends enjoyed the Group's Annual Outing which, this year, was to Edinburgh Botanic Gardens. It wasn't a promising start by any means with the rain lashing down and accompanied by a cold wind, but Edinburgh was the object and to Edinburgh we went. However, the weather improved considerably and we all enjoyed the afternoon in the gardens. Surprisingly there were a lot of rhododendrons and azaleas in full bloom and there were even some drifts of daffodils in good condition. A new feature at the gardens is the East Gate. This was specially commissioned, and made in polished steel, by a Cumbrian blacksmith. The whole gate is made up of individual rhododendron buds surrounded by leaves, and these are joined together at the leaf-tip - the overall effect being of filigree work. Really splendid! A lot of work has been done on the heather beds, some of which had suffered due to either last summer's drought or last winter's frost. Whatever the reason it had been devastation but, as always, the garden was immaculate.

The following weekend we were at Houghall in County Durham where we had our usual Heather Stand at their 'Houghall Farm & Open Day Event'. This was the first time that the farming side at Houghall College had joined forces with the Horticultural faculty. The past few years had seen a decline in the numbers attending the Horticultural event and, by combining the two faculties, they hoped to increase attendance. Our thanks go again to the regular stalwarts who helped to man the stand for two days.

The next meeting will be on July 17th, when we meet at fellow member Bill Crow's Nursery at Scots Gap at 7.30 pm. Heathers will be on sale so we look forward to seeing you all there.

I am delighted to be able to tell you that our Annual Show is being incorporated with the Ponteland Flower Show this year. For some time we have been disappointed that so few of the public have seen our Show and it was suggested at the last AGM that we approach the Flower Show Committee with the idea of joining in with them. They were more than receptive to our suggestion and have been most helpful in every way. Our show is completely independent of the Ponteland Flower Show and will be exactly the same as in previous years with our own judge, and the entrance fees and prize moneys originating from us. What the Flower Show is doing is giving us the space and staging but, the great thing as far as we are concerned is, that we are guaranteed a good attendance; the numbers are usually between 400 -500 people. The other thing of course is that we might just get the bonus of some new members. And when will this glittering spectacle take place? On September 14th, in Ponteland Memorial Hall. Staging will be between 9 a.m. and 11 am, when judging will commence, and the show opens to the public at 1.00 pm until 4.30 pm. Schedules will be sent to members nearer the time.

It seems a long way ahead but a reminder that the AGM is on Friday, October 25th, in St Matthew's Church Hall, Ponteland at 7.30 pm. Wishing all our heather members a good summer.

*Dorothy M Warner*

## Southern

On Saturday March 30th, 30 members gathered at the Bracken Hill, the home of our President, David McClintock. It was a cold day but David, compensated for that by making us most welcome, even though he was not feeling well. He described his garden, since he was not able to accompany us on our tour, and spoke with obvious affection about the many special heathers growing there. We saw a fine *E arborea* 'Albert's Gold', one of the first clones to be planted, an old *E. australis* Mr Robert which has a trunk 2 inches in diameter, some fine *E. x veitchii*, none of which were in flower because of the cold weather, *E. arborea* *E. manipuliiflora* and much else. We were glad eventually to escape from the cold into David's fine library. Over tea we enjoyed talking to David and visiting his herbarium. It was in this house that the Society's register of heathers, now the international register, was first compiled. The Group added its congratulations to David on the award of the Victoria Medal of Honour which had been announced in the current edition of "The Garden". The Society owes much to David McClintock and so does the Group because he has supported and encouraged its activities from its inception more than 20 years ago.

### 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 find that you are able to come at the last minute.

### Newsletter and sketches

Please send a stamped addressed envelope if you would like a copy of a newsletter which has sketch maps of the venues. My address is on the inside back cover.

### 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.

**CALLING LONDON - Members of the North London and Eastern Counties Groups are particularly invited to attend this meeting which is on their doorstep - figuratively speaking of course. Saturday August 10th - joint with the South West Group, Iping & Stedham Common and Zeneca, Fernhurst.**

A visit is arranged to Iping and Stedham Common led by Mr John Mycock of the Sussex Downs Conservations Board. Meet in the car park at Iping Common at 10.45 for an 11 am start. Iping & Stedham commons are on the South side of the A272 road 2.5 miles west of Midhurst, Sussex. Mr Mycock will help us appreciate the heathers and wild life on the extensively restored Commons. The visit will last for about an hour and a half - the going is level and easy. Bring folding chairs and a picnic lunch to eat on the common if it is fine. In the afternoon, we have planned a visit to the garden of the Zeneca (ICI) Headquarters, Fernhurst, Haslemere, Surrey; arrive at 1.45 p.m. for a 2 p.m. start. General P G Turpin, then our Chairman, wrote enthusiastically in the *Yearbook* for 1990 about this garden

which is not open to the public.

From Midhurst, take the A286 road north to Haslemere for about 4 miles. About 1 mile south of Fernhurst, on the left is the Kings Arms public house and opposite, i.e. to the east, there is a road signposted to the village of Henley. 50 yards along this road on the north side is the entrance to the Zeneca Headquarters.

**Date for your diary: Saturday, September 28th** - All-day Visit to Wisley. Garden tour in the morning & a talk on Heather Garden Design by Diane Jones in the afternoon. Joan and I very much look forward to seeing you at these meetings. Of course members from other groups will be welcome.

Allen Hall

## South West

### Report on the first two meetings of 1996:

On Saturday 30th March, South West Group members met at Lytchett Matravers Village Hall in Dorset for the annual lecture and Table Show meeting. I was pleased to have many of our regular members present and also our Chairman, David Small and his wife Anne. The speaker for the afternoon was Dr Nigel Webb from the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology at the Furzebrook Research Station near Wareham, who has written books and articles on heathland ecology and has also written in the 1990 *Yearbook* on insects and the heathland. Dr Webb's subject this afternoon was '**The Ecology of the British Heathlands**' and his illustrated talk covered many of our heathlands, including the one south of Wareham - the home of *Erica ciliaris*. After the talk and the questions which followed, the social part of the afternoon began with taking refreshment and chatting on our favourite topic. The Table Show was then judged and the results were as follows:

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

1st. Val Davis, 2nd. Phil Joyner, 3rd. Anne Pringle

#### Class 2. A vase or bowl of heathers shown for foliage effect:

1st. Phil Joyner, 2nd. Anne Pringle, 3rd. Maureen Clark

I was fortunate enough to be the winner of the Burfitt Bowl for most points overall, but prizes were presented to members placed in the competition. My thanks go to my wife Lin, my mother, and Val Davis for their work in the kitchen. Thanks are also due to Nigel Webb for his talk and to Lorna Farrow for judging the Table Show.

On the afternoon of Saturday 11th May members met at the garden of Waterlade House at Milton near East Knoyle in Wiltshire. Whilst I thank those members who telephoned or sent their apologies for their absence at the meeting I cannot hide my disappointment at the single figure turnout at the meeting. My apologies were embarrassingly given to Mr & Mrs Julian Seymour who own the house and garden, but I was gratified by their understanding response. There followed a conducted tour of the 3 acres of woodland and garden. Many mature rhododendrons, camellias and magnolias were in full flower in and around the woodland, with bluebells and wood anemones carpeting the woodland floor, it was very peaceful, with only the birds breaking the silence. After the tour, Mr and Mrs Seymour provided us with refreshment and continued to give us their time to discuss their wonderful garden. Members also had the opportunity to buy some of the plants observed in the garden and course they did just that. The garden opens under the 'Yellow Book' scheme and was due to be open the next day, so I am even more grateful to Mr & Mrs Seymour for devoting their precious time to such a small group. Finally that afternoon, we drove about 200 yards further up the hill from the garden to a viewpoint, looking south to Shaftesbury and the North Dorset Downs, west over the Blackmoor Vale and north-west towards Stourhead

and Alfred's Tower - what a breathtaking view to end the afternoon.

**Saturday August 10th** - This will be a joint visit with the Southern Group to Iping and Steadman Commons, Surrey in the morning and to Zeneca Garden, Fernhurst, Hazlemere Surrey in the afternoon. The visit to the Commons will be led by Mr John Mycock of the Sussex Downs Conservations Board who will introduce us to the flora and fauna of the Commons. Members should meet in the car park at Iping Common at about 10.45 am for the start of the tour at 11 am, but bring picnic lunches to be eaten after the tour and please remember to bring your folding chairs because it will be a beautiful day. For full directions see the Southern Group News and I am grateful to Allen Hall for organising these two visits.

**Dates for your Diary: Saturday September 21st** - Dr Nigel Webb will lead a tour of Hartland Moor and possibly Stoborough Heath in Dorset.

**Saturday April 5th 1997:** Annual indoor meeting at the Lytchett Matravers Village Hall, joint meeting with the Southern Group, when Ron Cleevely will be giving a talk on a Cape Heath related subject.

Further information on the meetings described above can be obtained can be obtained by sending me to SAEs as soon as possible and, if you intend to come to a meeting I would be grateful if you would let me know about ten days before the event (telephone: 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*

## HIGHLAND HEATHERS

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## USEFUL ADDRESSES

- Chairman** *Policy matters, major events etc.*  
Mr. D.J. Small, Denbeigh, All Saints Road, Creeping 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*  
Mrs J. Julian, 3 Selby Road, Fulford, York, North Yorkshire,  
YO1 4RD. Tel: (01904) 632263
- Yearbook Editor** *Articles for the Yearbook*  
Dr. E.C. Nelson, Tippitiwitchet 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,  
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- Advertising** *Adverts, advertising rates etc. for the Bulletin*  
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- Administrator** *Membership, Subscriptions, Orders for publications etc.*  
Mrs. A. Small, Denbeigh, All Saints Road, Creeping 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** *Suggestions for improving the Society*
- Committee** 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, Creeping 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, Littlecroft, 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