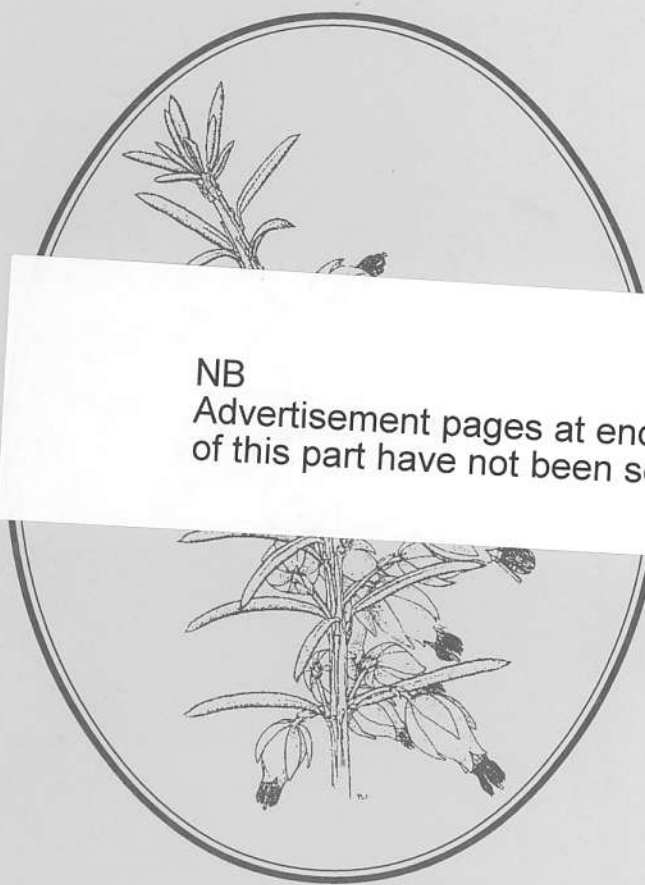


Bulletin of The Heather Society



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Vol. 5 No. 13

Spring 1998

DIARY OF EVENTS 1998

28 March	South West Group	Indoor Meeting, Lytchett Matravers
4 April	Southern Group	Highdown & John Tucker's Gardens
9 May	North East Group	Annual Outing to Castle Howard

15 May **CLOSING DATE FOR SUMMER BULLETIN**

10 May	South West Group	Garden Visit 'Chiffchaffs'
13 June	Yorkshire Group	To be finalised
13 June	GEM	Lecture at University of Nottingham
4/5/July	South West Group	Southampton Balloon and Flower Festival
15 July	North East Group	Car Outing to Bill Crow's Nursery
18 July	South West Group	Visit to Sir Harold Hillier Gardens and Arboretum

4-7 Sept. **ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

6 Sept.	Southern Group	Annual Meeting at RHS Wisley
12 Sept.	Yorkshire Group	To be finalised
12 Sept	North East Group	Annual Show
? October	North East Group	Car Outing to Cragside
30 October	North East Group	AGM



A Registered Charity No. 261407

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Cover illustration *Erica carnea* by Brita Johansson

It is with personal sadness that I report the death of Harold Street (see Obituaries). Harold was indirectly responsible for me being your Bulletin Editor today, as it was he who proposed me for Council 15 short years ago - and once you are a member of Council, someone soon finds you a job to do! On a much happier note - We send belated Birthday Wishes to Vice President Albert Julian, who was 90 on 8th February.

1998 is a red-letter year for the Everett family as, after almost thirty years, we have at last decided it is time to close our wholesale heather nursery. It will be very sad not to have the usual happy crowd arriving in May for the spring potting, and never again to see all the nursery beds laid out in their brilliant patchwork of colours. However we shall continue to run a small retail nursery and we are busy extending the garden, so we won't be bored yet.

28th Annual Conference- 4 - 7th September 1998 **City College, Norwich, Norfolk**

Friday 4th September

- 4.00 pm Registration and Tea
- 6.15 pm Bar Open
- 7.00 pm Conference opened by our Chairman, followed by a talk by Charles Nelson on 'Heathers in the Wild'.
- 9.30 pm Bar Open

Saturday 5th September

- 8.00 am Breakfast
- 9.15 am Talk by Andy Millar, Conservation Officer for English Nature for North Norfolk on 'North Norfolk Heaths and Mires'.
- 10.00 am Coffee
- 10.30 am Visit by coach to Kingfisher Nursery near Wisbech, with a picnic lunch en route near Sandringham. There will be an escorted behind-the-scenes tour around this advanced heather nursery.
- 4.30 pm Return to City College
- 6.15 pm Bar Open
- 7.00 pm Dinner
- 8.30 pm AGM
- 9.00 pm Open Forum (if time permits). Your chance to ask any questions on heathers and the Society.
- 9.30 pm Bar Open

Sunday 6th September

- 8.00 am Breakfast
- 9.15 am Talk by Dr. Ian Small of INRA, France, on 'Genetic Engineering Made Easy'. A talk for everyone on how this science is used to identify heather cultivars and increase our understanding of why some heathers have unusual characteristics.
- 10.00 am Coffee
- 10.30 am Visit by coach to Winterton Heath where we will be met by Rick Southwood, Site Manager of the Broadland Reserves for English Nature. There will be an easy walk to see *Erica tetralix* growing in sand dunes! There will be plenty of time to discover the many white *E. tetralix* and *E. cinerea* and to see the very rare Natterjack Toad which resides here. A picnic lunch will be provided.
- 4.00 pm Return to City college
- 6.15 pm Bar Open
- 7.00 pm Dinner
- 8.30 pm Open forum where everyone is encouraged to join in and solve other members' problems.
- 9.30 pm Conference closed by our Chairman.
- 9.30 pm Bar Open.

Monday 7th September

- 8.00 am Breakfast
- 9.30 am Depart City College

The above Programme may be subject to some minor amendment. The timing of the Group Photograph will be announced at the conference.

The cost of the Conference

Residents for the whole weekend	£167.00	En-suite
	£153.00	Shared facilities
Non-residents, per day	£ 36.00	
Friday evening (includes dinner)	£ 14.00	

Accommodation, dining and lecture facilities have been arranged at Southwell Lodge, the halls of residence of the City College, Norwich and close to the centre of Norwich. As noted above, there will be a mixture of en-suite twin rooms and single study bedrooms with shared facilities - when booking please indicate your preference. The en-suite accommodation is limited to a maximum of 14 rooms and will be allocated on a 'first come - first served' basis. The day-visitor rate includes coffee, lunch, dinner, speakers fees and coach costs where applicable. A quotation can be provided for other options, e.g. leaving Sunday evening. Norwich and East Anglia have many attractions so why not make the Conference part of a holiday to that delightful area.

Bookings can be made by sending £2 (per mailing) to Phil Joyner 84 Kinross Road, Rushington Manor, Totton, Southampton, SO40 9BN. Cheques should be made payable to *The Heather Society*. The booking fee is non-returnable and is not a deposit on the cost of the Conference. Full payment for the Conference should be made by 31st July 1998, **at the latest**. Members are reminded that payment by VISA or MASTERCARD credit cards is acceptable.

Joint Annual Meeting - NEHS & NAHS - September 1997

David Plumridge, Castleside, Co. Durham

Following the highly enjoyable *North American Heather Society* Conference and tour of the West Coast in '96, we decided to give New England a whirl in '97. With much harsher growing conditions we didn't expect to see the heather cornucopia we had experienced in California. However, we thought it would be interesting to see how they cope with weather worse than we suffered in the 95/96 winter when our beloved cinereas, after over 12 years unscathed, were almost decimated. We were also sure that although there wouldn't be the spectacular National Park scenery, we would find other areas of interest during our first visit.

We decided to make the conference location of Falmouth our base for exploring Cape Cod and New England. Conference organiser Harry Bowen was very helpful in finding us accommodation and local car hire. Along with his wife Grace, they continued to make our stay as enjoyable as possible during our three week vacation. We settled in a friendly motel situated by the beach in a typical Cape Cod sandy bay with the island of Martha's Vineyard (complete with wild turkeys!) just over the water. Being after Labor Day and the vacationers gone, beaches were deserted and rates were slashed making it even more enjoyable!

Harry had organised a short but tightly packed Conference. Friday's reception and dinner gave us a chance to renew many old acquaintanceships and make new heather friends. On the Saturday, a coach tour of six Cape Cod gardens started at 8 am. As we have learnt, regardless of age, our American cousins are extremely enthusiastic and despite early starts continue energetically for hours without even a 'ten o'clock'! A supply of Werther's Originals helped maintain our blood sugar levels so we had a thoroughly enjoyable day visiting a surprisingly diverse range of gardens with keen and friendly hosts. One common factor, apart from the heathers, was the forest which encompassed each garden. We were not aware that New England is almost one large wood. We covered five states and it was trees all the way. This meant that even in the more mountainous areas we rarely saw any real scenery - but the fall colours must compensate. Unfortunately we didn't stay long enough to see it at its best, but we did get the flavour from the swamp maples which had turned the most brilliant red colour. We were assured that there would be even better sights later on!

Of the heathers, *Callunas* were predominant in the Cape gardens with a wide range of cultivars being grown. As we found in California, several were new to us. The ubiquitous tree shelter must give a bit of protection from the freezing winter winds, while the acid sandy soil gives good growing conditions, with mulching and some irrigation during hot summer droughts - although it is surprising what well established *Callunas* will tolerate. That they feel at home was evidenced by the amount of self-seeding we observed.

We were too early to see the trees at their best and too late for the heathers! Flowering, except for principally C.v. 'EF Brown', had all but finished, but judging by photos we were shown, August delivers some beautiful colour! Pruning tends to be rather more vigorous with the tendency to bun-shaped heathers rather than the natural looking drifts we aim for. Harry Bowen has been growing and

propagating heathers (and heaths!) for many years and has built up an impressive collection which copes well with the, to us, extreme weather conditions. On the other hand, a relative beginner was making use of bank side laid bare by a mini hurricane to plant up lots of *Callunas*. With most of the planting being from gallon containers he will soon be enjoying a spectacular display.

Although it was the hurricane season (they didn't warn us about that!) the weather was calm throughout our stay. The first half was rather hot and humid with the bugs enjoying our company. It then became nice and fresh with the temperature dropping to around 20C, and to our relief, too cold for the bugs!

Following the garden visits, on the Saturday evening we dined on a classic New England Clambake produced by members of the local Indian tribe (they're not all in the Wild West!). The clams, together with lobsters and veg. are cooked in steam generated by hot rocks under a mass of sea weed. It is fair to say that Rita 'experienced', while I enjoyed the meal! The event took place at the Barnstable County Fair Showground. (You really feel at home in New England with all the British place names!)

The clambake was followed by a quick business meeting with a paper ballot for the new committee. Quite an experience to see a surfeit of volunteers! Guest speaker from "Old England" was our own Peter Vickers. It will come as no surprise to report that he gave a typical no-nonsense practical talk which was very well received. Despite being "separated by a common language" only minor points of translation were necessary.

We revisited the showground on a later weekend with Harry for the local fall show. The pumpkins were even more enormous than we could ever have imagined! Harry has planted heather demonstration gardens at the showground which are doing well. The *NEHS* have similar plots in other parks and gardens which are spreading the word!

On the Sunday Harry had arranged openings at two nurseries, parks and other gardens, this time on a self select, self drive basis. Cape Cod is deceptively long - about 70 miles - so it was impossible to visit them all in one day so we concentrated on the nurseries, leaving the others till later.

We were particularly keen to see Kate Herrick's Rock Spray Nursery. Her 95/96 catalogue had featured two shots of our garden (she was having trouble getting suitable photos of US heather gardens at that time.) She has concentrated on the niche market of heathers, as general herbaceous was getting extremely competitive. This has paid off. She ships a wide range of cultivars (mainly *Callunas*) to several states from her hoop houses (tunnels to us) which provide mainly winter protection. She really knows her business - and her heathers. The scale of the propagation house and its facilities were particularly impressive. Her retail centre was well laid out with a good selection of heathers and a nice display garden (although we should have been there in August for the bloom!). The sales area was 'protected' by a low wooden New England style fence with the rails slotted though the posts. No 10ft mesh fence needed here!

It seems that the crime level on Cape Cod is happily very low. Houses are not decorated with alarm boxes and expensive looking garden machinery is left in open shelters. And even drivers are extremely courteous! Coupled with friendly helpful people, delightful small towns and a lovely coastline all this makes Cape Cod a charming place to visit.

The other nursery, more family size but none the less interesting, was nearer

to our base. We saw quite a lot of Mac and Edna who run their nursery as a 'retirement business'. They pass the winter months producing superb wood carvings. Edna hails from Northampton and after quite a few years, still hasn't picked up a trace of an American accent!. They too produce a wide range of cultivars and have a lot of excellent field grown stock - with a lot of self sown *Callunas* in the nearby forest. They are genuine plantspeople who won't sell plants at the wrong time or if they are unsuited to the customer's garden. Mac had suffered an injury during the cuttings season. Peter Vickers kindly helped out for much of his holiday and we did our bit by helping to 'batten down the hatches' on their large hoop house to help the cuttings along. (Peter's article will cover lots of the technical stuff not included in this report.)

Monday saw the last formal visit of the Conference, This was to a cranberry research station. The fruit is a vital part of the Massachusetts agricultural economy. In fact we saw very little farming activity during our visit. Cranberry harvesting is spectacular and we were lucky enough to see one flooded bog, covered with a huge ring of the red berries, being drawn in after having being dislodged from the shrubs.

We covered the remainder of the 'Sunday Visits' during the rest of the holiday, along with many other places of interest. With the Pilgrims arriving in the early 1600's there's lots of history about. The re-creation of the Pilgrims, speaking 17th century English in their village at Plymouth, together with the 'Mayflower' was particularly fascinating - as was the old sea port and sailing vessels at Mystic, Connecticut and Boston's celebration of its liberation from the English oppressors!

Peter spends September in Cape Cod

Peter Vickers - Dinnington, Sheffield

I was invited to speak at a meeting of the two North American Heather Societies in Yarmouth, Cape Cod, Massachusetts. Rita and David Plumridge from County Durham came too. We all met together over drinks, we visited heather gardens and heather nurseries, we saw Mayflower II and the Pilgrim Fathers' Settlement. We had a traditional New England Clam Bake and they listened to what I had to say.

One of the nurseries we visited was that of Mac Mackinnon, a gruff, tough, 'been doing it my way for years', type of man. In a home-made large polytunnel he had a bench-high propagating bed, 20 ft. long and 8 ins deep, filled with a mixture of local gritty, sandy soil, plus peat, plus perlite, plus extra grit; it felt 'right' in the hands. In the bed were rows of obviously well-rooted cuttings awaiting potting and elsewhere were cuttings ready to be taken but waiting for space in the bed. Mac had had an accident; he fell off the tractor and badly injured his shoulder. He needed help fast, so I changed my address from Falmouth to Waquoit, walked to work each morning and took instruction from Edna, Mac's wife, and Sally Graves, the other member of staff.

I have talked to many groups over the years on the 'propagation of heathers'. I have always said "Take semi-ripe cuttings from this year's growth, from plants under three years old, without rooting compound, but in June or July. Then cover with polythene and keep out of the sun". Now here I was, the same man, being supplied by Edna, with labelled cutting material from quite old plants in late

September. I was taking nearly hardwood cuttings, stripping them at the base, dipping them in rooting powder, then inserting in a slit I had made in the propagation bed. The slit was closed using a wooden tool and the cuttings watered in. The whole bed was watered with a fine rose on the end of a hose pipe once or twice a day, depending on the heat of the sun. They assured me they would root! The polytunnel had a shade netting over it during the summer and the sides were raised. The net was removed at the end of September and the sides let down. The cuttings had no mist spray, no bottom heat, no polythene cover and I was told that the cuttings I had taken would root by the spring. When I returned home to Sheffield I resolved to test this for myself!

I have a conservatory with a tiled roof, half glazed, and with a brick base. A cupboard at one end has a work top over. I filled standard 15 in. x 9 in seed trays with 50/50 peat/perlite and extra grit-sand, and set nodal cuttings of hebe and hardy fuchsia in one tray and 200 cuttings of *Erica x griffithsii* 'Valerie Griffiths' in the other. The cuttings were placed late October and by early December the hebe and the fuchsia are rooted and the 'Valerie Griffiths' nearly so. Pale yellow tips are appearing on each cutting. I have watered the trays more or less daily by floating the trays on water, then draining off. I've been standing them on the cupboard top on an old towel so that the whole operation is mess-free. They are not covered with polythene however there is very little sun so the compost is moist rather than wet all the time.

Rest assured that IF I'm called upon to talk on heather propagation again, this experience will be included!

Letters to the Editor

From - Isabel Guthrie, Technical Assistant, The Heather Trust, The Cross, Kippen, Stirlingshire FK8 3DS

Re. The *Heather Society Bulletin*, Vol. 5 No. 10, Spring 1997

On page 11 of the above volume, T A Julian described his surprise at recently finding evidence of re-growth of *Calluna vulgaris* from stem bases. In the 1960s the Nature Conservancy conducted cutting and burning trials in North East Scotland. [Miller GR & Miles J (1970) *J Appl. Ecol.*, 7, 51]. These studies revealed that heather regenerated most readily when burnt between the ages of 6 and 10 years or when cut between the ages of 6 and 8 years. The decline observed in older stands were attributed to lower stembase densities following self thinning. In practice, fires burnt in old heather sometimes attain high temperatures which may kill heather plants completely.

Further, the paper entitled 'The Morphology of Vegetative Regeneration in *Calluna vulgaris*', concludes that stem base regeneration is derived from persisting dormant buds. The authors suggest that sprouting from old heather is inhibited by secondary wood and, when considered with the lower densities of stem bases found in old heather, can explain the poor regeneration of older stands of heather. [Mohamed BF & Gimingham CH (1970) *New Phytol.*, 69. 734-750].

In 1984 Professor R Wallace wrote:

'Heather, when very old and large, loses vital power, grows slower, and in some cases may even die or be killed by severe frost. When burnt at last it is found to be growing from a few roots. The plants are long in forming fresh shoots, and when they do come, there being but a small extent of them, the sheep and cattle on the grazing continue to pick up every green shoot that appears, because of a want of supply of this kind of food, until the roots die, and grasses of different sorts permanently take the place of the heather'.

[Wallace R (1984) Transactions of the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland, 4th series, **16**, 250-273].

Poor burning practices are therefore nothing new. Where heather is burnt as part of a suitable rotation, the best part of the regeneration is from stem bases. Seed regeneration is slow and unreliable.

Heat has been found to increase the germination rate of seeds. [Whittaker E & Gimingham CH (1962) *J Ecol.*, **50**, 815-822]. A further advantage of burning is the flush of nutrients supplied by the ash. This enables the establishment of other species for a brief period before heather again achieves dominance. This effect is only detrimental to heather when fires are excessively hot or so frequent that the subsequent regeneration from seed is inadequate.

From - J G Flecken, Kerkrade. 31/10/97

When I was reading the results of the Heather Competition at Vincent Square 19th - 20th August 1997 (page 2-3 of the Autumn 1997 *Bulletin*), I was surprised by some cultivar names used in that article.

Allow me to react at the wrong names:

Erica cinerea 'Snow Queen' is an error for 'Snow Cream'.

Calluna vulgaris 'Carnea' is a name unknown by the Registration Authority.

Calluna vulgaris 'Oxshott Common' is not a double flowered cultivar.

Calluna vulgaris 'Elegantissima Pearl' should be either 'Elegantissima' or 'Elegant Pearl'.

It hope you will publish the corrections on these names in the next Bulletin.

Yours truly,

A letter noticed by Eileen B Petterssen during her research at the Newspaper Library at Colindale:

To the Editor of *The Stornaway Gazette* - Christchurch, 10 May 1924

Dear Friends

Will you kindly forward your usual donation of heather to the *Scottish Society of New Zealand* for distribution at our annual gathering in November? The receipt of same has been a source of great pleasure to those who hail from the Homeland and to their descendants in this far-distant outpost of the British Empire. Please post in strong cardboard boxes (not tin) and address as under, to reach here not later than 30th of September if possible.

With kind remembrance from the members of the Society, I remain, yours very sincerely, (sgd.) James Calder, Secretary, Address, PO Box 936, Christchurch, NZ.

Scrap Bowl

A plea from Albert Julian, one of the Society's Vice Presidents.

In recent years membership numbers have fallen steadily until today they stand at just under 700, a level at which subscriptions do not cover the running costs of the Society. This is a cause for concern, particularly as the trend continues relentlessly downwards. Although recent newspaper publicity, Internet web pages and events organised specifically to attract newcomers have been partially successful in attracting new recruits much more action is needed if we are to remain a healthy self-sustaining organisation.

This is an appeal to all our members to 'spread the gospel' and to bring the many benefits of membership to the notice of friends, acquaintances, even strangers who show an interest in our heathers and their culture. Serious attempts to increase the attractiveness of the membership of the *Heather Society* have been, and are continuing to be, made by the Council and should be brought to the attention of prospective members. They would receive the *Yearbook* and three *Bulletins* per year and have available expert advice on all aspects of heather culture and information old and new cultivars. There are free acidity (pH) tests, the loan of 50 or so slides for home entertainment for the mere cost of postage, and a limited number of free returnable season tickets for free admission to ten of the country's Gardens. These include the Northern Horticultural Society's Gardens at Harlow Carr, The Royal Horticultural Society's Garden at Wisley (and other RHS associated Gardens), Kew Gardens and Ness Gardens. In addition, propagation material, sufficient for ten or more cuttings each of *Calluna vulgaris* cultivars and a limited number of cultivars of the other species, is available on request, **free of charge**.

There are regional groups covering the whole country, who hold regular get-togethers in a friendly atmosphere, for discussion, talks and local visits of heather interest, AND an Annual Conference which is the highlight of the Heather year for all who attend.

As one who, many years ago, was persuaded to join the *Heather Society* by an enthusiastic nurseryman member I am sure there are many gardeners and plant lovers unaware of the many advantages to be gained from membership, who could be induced to join.

Yearbooks & Bulletins for Sale

Mr. John Taylor of Monksmill, Castle Douglas, DG7 2NY, is offering the following *Yearbooks* and *Bulletins* for sale. £5 including postage (UK only).

Yearbooks 1983 -1997

Bulletins Vol. 3. 14-20
 Vol. 4. 1, 6-20
 Vol. 5. 1-12 except 9.

Three items from David Plumridge, County Durham

Heather Hotline

The North Pennines Tourist Partnership has exploited the beauty of the moors in bloom by setting up a seasonal "Heather Hotlines to direct tourists to the best areas - just as they do in New England in the fall. In the newspaper report partnership manager, Tony Walker, said: "people have just three weeks to view the heather at its best. It is an amazing sight to see the moors turning purple". The phoneline in 1997 was 01434 382069.

Heather Thatch Revived

At the Ryedale Folk Museum, Hutton-le-Hole, the recreation has been completed of an early 18th century barn with a heather and turf roof. This type of building was quite common on the North York Moors during that period. A little further north at the Beamish North of England Open Air Museum, the reconstruction of a medieval heather thatched cruck framed barn is under way.

Heather Promotion

Garden Clubs are always desperate for speakers. Although my efforts have not resulted in dozens of new members for the Heather Society, they have always been well received and I think I have raised awareness regarding the value of heather in the garden. As a bonus, at my last presentation in Sunderland, the chairman insisted on my accepting a £20 fee which made a useful addition to our local group's coffers. You will find our under-used slide library of great help in making up a varied programme.

It's easy to get on the radio these days to talk about heather. There are three gardeners' phone-in programmes in the North but my last 'appearance' was on Talk Radio (Sundays, 4 pm) when a lady rang in for suggestions for short, low maintenance plants, to replace a small lawn. The resident 'expert' gave suggestions for all sorts of ground cover plants - except 'of course' - heathers! When I rang in he at least had the good grace to agree that a planting of *Erica carnea* would be ideal and couldn't think why he had neglected to mention the obvious. There is a lot of education needed out there.

From David McClintock - Platt, Kent

A sad surprise. When I was at Kew the other day, I went to look at the heather garden, which I had not done for too long. Imagine my surprise when I found - NO heathers, the area cordoned off to be planted with junipers. From one of the staff responsible for that part of the garden I learnt that there is no plan to site hardy heathers anywhere else - there will be just some "Mediterranean ones" in quite a different bed. He said that they had had no complaints so far.....! In the Temperate House young plants of Cape Heaths have been planted to replace the old ones.

From Albert Julian - Askham Richard, York

Visitors to the gardens will have noticed the wire netting which has been placed around many of the beds at Harlow Carr. Rabbits have become increasingly numerous in recent years and it has been found necessary to protect the plants for which they have a liking. Last year we learnt that "Calicivirus", a Chinese virus, had been introduced to the Australian Outback by the Australian Authorities and was proving to be as equally effective as Myxomatosis in eradicating the rabbits. This raised the possibility that we could look forward to its introduction to this country, particularly as subsequently it had been used very effectively in Italy. A veterinary acquaintance said that he had encountered Calicivirus infected tame rabbits but had no knowledge of it in the wild population. Alas our hopes were dashed when we learnt from the Ministry of Agriculture that the disease was rife in wild rabbits in the South of England but was of a more benign nature and that many of the infected rabbits recovered and were able to breed.

OBITUARIES**Brigadier Charles Smith and Mrs Doreen Smith**

It is with sadness that we report the deaths of Brigadier Charles Smith and his wife Doreen in 1997, within a few months of each other.

Brigadier Charles Smith was born in India and spent much of his childhood there. He was a keen sportsman, a devoted churchgoer, a talented DIY enthusiast and, when at last he retired in the 1950s and was able to put down some roots, he became a fine gardener also. His particular loves were heathers and azaleas, which he enjoyed propagating as well as growing. He was a member of the *Heather Society* and a founder member of the Southern Group. At a Thanksgiving Service held for the Brigadier, his son Paddy told the congregation 'If you ever visited 'Greenoge' when the heather bank was in bloom or in May when the azaleas were in full flower, I am sure it is something you will not forget.'

Doreen Smith was a kind and gentle lady who supported her husband during the many years they spent travelling the world in the course of duty. When the Brigadier retired, they were at last able to settle down in Farnham and, while her husband developed his love of heathers and azaleas, she became the family's kitchen gardener. Their garden was 'truly a picture' and it gave them pleasure to open it occasionally to the public at large and to the *Heather Society* in particular.

Charles and Doreen Smith were both in their nineties when they died and were living in their own flat until the end - they had 64 happy years of marriage together.

Daphne Everett

Joan Lister

Sadly I have to report the death of Joan Lister, a long-time member of the North East Group, on September 17th 1997. Until the latter years, when neither enjoyed good health, she and her husband Doug (who died earlier in the year) were regular Conference attenders. Joan had a great sense of humour and she

loved her garden which was literally packed with all sorts of interesting plants which she lovingly cared for. Both she and Doug will be sadly missed.

Dorothy M Warner

Harold Street

Harold Street died peacefully at his home last November, just a few weeks before his 93rd birthday. Harold joined the Heather Society while it was still in its infancy. He was a member of Council for many years and was instrumental in setting up the once thriving Midland's Group; he was also its first Chairman. He and his wife Margaret attended many Conferences. Around 1987 Harold left Birmingham and retired to the lovely Cotswold Town of Chipping Campden, where he continued to grow heathers, albeit the lime tolerant varieties; at one time he could boast that he had 150 cultivars in his garden.

A Memorial Gathering to celebrate the life of Harold Street was held in the Friends Meeting House at Broad Campden, where a very moving tribute was read by his daughter Margaret. By coincidence, just a few weeks before he died, his son Richard and a friend had filmed Harold talking about his recollections of life. This film, interspersed with snippets of early cine-film of Harold and his family, was shown at the buffet lunch which followed the Gathering.

Daphne Everett

Solution to the Crossword in the Summer Bulletin

Across: 1. arborea, 7. besum, 10. rubra, 11. astra, 13. alga, 15. into ice, 16. rang, 19. pipes, 22. Koran, 23. ideal, 24. seaweed.

Down: 1. alba, 2. best, 3. 'Roma', 4. atro, 5. dibble, 6. 'Gwavas', 8. Esk (J W Sparkes), 9. 'Orange Queen', 12. fox, 13. acrid, 14. brakes, 15. inarch, 17. lea (*Erica australis* 'Riverslea'), 18. unus, 19. Pica (Latin name for the magpie), 20. pete, 21. sled (*E. tetralix* 'Silver Bells').

You perhaps won't be surprised to hear that no one claimed the prize for solving the crossword - it was certainly very difficult. I cant help wondering if anyone managed to solve it back in 1967. Can't anyone come up with an up to date one for 1998? Ed

Group News

Yorkshire

At the group meeting held in the Study Centre, Harlow Carr on Saturday, 13th September at 2.30 pm our Treasurer Allen Hall, gave an illustrated talk entitled "Photographing Heathers". Many photographs of his wide ranging work on heathers and heather culture were projected. They included portraits of plants and flowers of the various species, prompting the lively discussion which followed. One of Allen's specialities is close-up photography of individual florets and their anatomy using simple home assembled equipment. Several remarkable examples including South African heathers were shown. We look forward to seeing more of his work in a future session.

Jean Julian showed a few slides of the group's stand at the Harrogate Spring Show and of the Harry Ramsden Heather Garden in flower (winter flowering cultivars) in March 1997. There was little colour when we visited the gardens in June.

The three meetings for 1998 have been fixed for Saturdays, 14th March, 13th June and 12th September when it is hoped that the programme will include illustrated talks *Heathers in the USA* and *New cultivar introductions* with a visit to a local heather nursery.

The preparation of the plot for the new National *Calluna* Collection, is complete with the paths made and the beds ready for the plants. The 2,000 or so plants are in the nursery tunnel awaiting planting.

The Society was requested by Plant Heritage to produce exhibits representing the national plant collections in the gardens at Harlow Carr for the Great Yorkshire Show in Harrogate and at short notice material for a *Calluna vulgaris* table display was prepared. As no *Calluna* plants were in flower at the time, nine medium sized well shaped plants were lifted from the existing *Calluna* collection. The chosen plants covered the full range of foliage colour, silver, yellow, gold and orange and they were exhibited in peat placed on the table provided. Although the Plant Heritage Hall was a little off the beaten track our effort evoked a fair amount of interest.

North East

Here we are half way through January and still waiting for the winter weather to arrive. It has been exceptionally mild ever since October and although we have had quite a bit of rain and some strong winds, nothing in the extreme, for which we have been most grateful.

The spring bulbs all pushed their way through at the end of November, then realised their mistake and have been hanging around for mid-January so as to continue growing. Let's blame it on El Niño! The heathers don't seem to have been affected and are starting to show colour, so we are looking forward to a good show.

We had our AGM on October 31st with only seven members attending, plus our stalwarts, Dave and Beryl Mayne. This very select group had a good evening with some useful discussion and then we enjoyed our Faith supper and David Plumridges' slides which he had taken at the American Conference.

Officers and committee are almost the same:

Chairman	Roy Nicholls
Secretary	Dorothy Warner
Treasurer	Geoff Warner
Hon. Auditor	Frank Thomson

The Committee are: Bill Crowe, Syd Courtney, Rita and David Plumridge and John Turner.

Dates for your Diary:

Saturday May 9th	Annual Outing to Castle Howard. Leave Ponteland 9.00 am by coach
Wednesday July 15th	Car Outing to Bill Crow's Nursery - 7.30 pm.
Saturday September 12th	Annual Show
October	Car Outing to Craggside (date to be decided).
Friday October 30th	AGM - 7.30 pm.

All these ventures will be fully detailed in a Newsletter nearer the time, but do make a note of the dates NOW and endeavour to support these events. Those who do come always enjoy them, so if you haven't participated for a while we would love to welcome you again.

Dorothy M Warner

East Midlands (Gem)

A meeting of the East Midlands Group has been arranged for 2 p.m. on Saturday June 13th 1998 at the Sutton Bonington Campus of the University

of Nottingham.

I am pleased to announce that Dr. John Griffiths has agreed to speak at the meeting on "The Hybridisation of Heathers". Dr Griffiths' work on hybridisation is recognised internationally and the hybrid *Erica manipuliiflora* x *Erica vagans* has been named ". x *griffithsii*" in his honour. Members will be familiar with the excellent *E. x griffithsii* 'Valerie Griffiths' which Dr Griffiths produced by deliberate cross. However, this fine plant, is but one example of Dr. Griffiths' work and members can look forward to a fascinating lecture.

There is no charge, members of other groups are most welcome and the programme is as follows:

Meet at the main entrance of the Campus at 1.45 p.m. where I plan to be to welcome members. - Proceed to Seminar Room 7 by 2 p.m.

- 2.05 p.m. Introduction
- 2.15 p.m. Dr J Griffiths "The Hybridisation of Heathers"
- 3.00 p.m. Discussion
- 3.30 p.m. Tea
- 4.00 p.m. Open Forum. Questions or points are welcome on any subject related to heathers or the Society.
- 5.00 p.m. sharp Close

The Campus is two miles east of the Junction 24 (Kegworth) of the M1 motorway. From the Junction, take the A6 eastwards for a short distance and then follow road signs to Sutton Bonington. The Campus is well signposted in the vicinity of Sutton Bonington. A sketch map of the location can be obtained by sending me a stamped addressed envelope.

It would be a great help to me if people proposing to attend would let me know beforehand since I need to give the College catering manager some idea of numbers likely to attend about a week in advance.

Allen Hall.

Southern

On 20th September, thirty members of the Southern and neighbouring groups, including our President, David McClintock, and our Chairman, David Small, participated in the annual outing to the RHS Wisley. The visit took its usual form of a tour of the heather garden in the morning and a meeting in the lecture room in the afternoon.

For the newcomer, the garden makes a striking impact with its vista of multi-coloured beds of heather set among a variety of conifer species. For the regular visitor the garden also offers the opportunity to seek out heathers of particular interest, or to compare RHS specimens with ones own and of course we chat to one another almost without pause on our way around. This year we were saddened to note the ravaging effect of a new fungus on entire beds of *Callunas*. Some of us had experienced the fungus in our own gardens but not as extensively as this. We understand that specimens have been sent for laboratory testing. Meanwhile, the thought is that the fungus may have been caused by the watering of the heathers in bright sunshine.

The main feature of the afternoon session was a talk, with slides, by David Small. David told us about his visit with colleagues to Northern Spain, in search of the fertile *Erica mackaiana* and about their subsequent journey south where they found a variant of *Erica mackaiana*, *Erica andevelensis*, growing on toxic mine waste. Afterwards David updated us on the continuing dispute between Kurt Kramer and the company accused of stealing one of his hybrids.

The Turpin Cup for the best overall heather display was won this year by Audrey Sprague, closely followed by Cherry Turpin and Ron Wing. Pam Lee

kindly adjudicated. A pleasant afternoon was rounded off with tea and home-made cakes.

Our special thanks must go to the RHS for allowing us free entry to the garden and lecture room, also to David Small for his lecture and to Jean Wing for organising the tea.

Dates for your Diary

Saturday 14th March - Valley Gardens, Windsor Great Park

Saturday 4th April - Highdown Gardens, Ferring & John Tucker's Garden at Findon Valley

Saturday 6th Sept. - Annual Meeting at RHS Wisley

All Members welcome - for details of these meetings please telephone David Sprague (01306 886356)

South West

At the time of writing up the news for the Autumn Bulletin, there was still one meeting to take place so, before I talk about this year's meetings, I will report on the final meeting of 1997.

On Saturday 27th September 1997, members met in the car park of Aurelia Gardens in West Moors in Dorset. This was a garden we had visited two years previously and at that time it was very much a new garden. This time we were back to see how it had developed over the intervening period.

Robert and Magdalene Knight who own the garden, tend it full time and part time respectively. When we first visited they lived away from the site but they have since had a house built adjacent to the garden. The first observation was that the garden was becoming established and the many golden foliage heathers, conifers and shrubs had begun to fill their allotted spaces. When Robert first started to design the garden he was faced with a flat site and he created interest by specialising in coloured foliage plantings in many intricately shaped beds.

Robert and Magdalene walked around with us and Robert, using his now familiar trusty hoe, pointed out the many items of interest. An addition to the garden is a wild-life pond which Robert had recently excavate. Due to the very dry weather and the low water table, the level of the pond was minimal, but at least it was providing Robert with the opportunity to get the pool edges planted up before the level rises again. After the tour of the plantings and some refreshment, we were shown around a collection of rare-breed fowl, where we marvelled at the variations in plumage of the various species on show. As we walked around we were asked questions and a reward for a correct answer was an egg, freshly collected by Magdalene. We finished an enjoyable afternoon with a visit to the adjacent nursery, which gave members a chance to buy some of the plants noted in the garden. My thanks go to Robert and Magdalene who make such good hosts and who spent all their valuable time with us that afternoon.

Meetings for 1998

Saturday 28th March - 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 Arnold Stow on *Heaths and Heathers*. Arnold is a member of the Council of *The Heather Society* and since his retirement from full-time employment, he has been actively engaged in his own garden design and maintenance business. Arnold has been growing and propagating heathers for many years and has an extensive knowledge of the subject. We will also have our two-class table show:

Class 1. A vase or bowl of heathers in bloom

Class 2. A vase or bowl of heather shown for foliage effect.

Prizes will be awarded and the Burfitt Bowl (currently held by Phyllis Kennedy and Anne Pringle) 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. There will be refreshment supplied after the talk.

Saturday 30th May - This will be a private visit to the gardens of Chiffchaffs at Bourton in Dorset. This garden is normally open under the National Gardens Scheme but Mr. and Mrs Potts, who own the garden, have kindly invited us to view their 'garden for all seasons'. The garden is described as having many interesting plants, bulbs, shrubs, a herbaceous border and also a woodland walk. The garden has very good views across the Blackmore Vale, which we have seen from various angles from other gardens we have visited over the years. The garden is at Chaffeymoor, just west of Bourton and is on the north side of the A303. Leave the A303 at the junction signposted Gillingham and Bourton, at the west end of Bourton. Members should meet at the garden for a 2.00 pm start. The garden has a small nursery and a cup of tea will be available at the end of the afternoon. There will be a charge for entry.

Further dates for your diary:

Saturday 4th July - Sunday 5th July - The Southampton Balloon and Flower Festival on the common in Southampton. Your Local Group will be represented at this two-day event. There will be plenty of horticultural interest in the large marquee and there will be open classes for heathers. For further details, or if you would like to volunteer to help man the stand, please contact me.

Saturday 18th July - Visit to the Sir Harold Hillier Gardens and Arboretum. The new heather garden is looking attractive, more details in the *Summer Bulletin*.

Further information on the meetings for 1998 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 before the meeting (01703 864336). I would like to emphasize that the meetings are open, not only to Group Members, but to **all** *Heather Society* members and their friends. Once again I am grateful to all those people who make the visits possible and I look forward to seeing you at those meetings.

Phil Joyner

New Members In 1997

USEFUL ADDRESSES

- Chairman** *Policy matters, major events etc.*
Mr. D.J. Small, Denbeigh, All Saints Road, Creeping St. Mary, Ipswich,
Suffolk, IP6 8PJ. e-mail: heathers@zetnet.co.uk
Tel: (01449) 711220 FAX: (01449) 711220
- Secretary** *Council matters*
Mr. R. Cleeveley, High Croft, Gunswell Lane, South Molton, Devon
EX36 4DH
- Treasurer** Mr. A. Hall, 10, Upper Green, Nanpantan, Loughborough, Leicestershire.
LE11 3SG Tel: (01509) 238923
- 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, Matchams, Main Street, Askham Richard, York, YO2 3PT.
Tel: (01904) 707316
- 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, The Bannut, Bringsty, Herefordshire, 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, Creeping St. Mary, Ipswich,
Suffolk, IP6 8PJ. e-mail: heathers@zetnet.co.uk
Tel: (01449) 711220 FAX: (01449) 711220
- Technical Committee** *Any queries regarding culture of heathers*
Mr. D.J. Small, Denbeigh, All Saints Road, Creeping St. Mary, Ipswich,
Suffolk, IP6 8PJ. e-mail: heathers@zetnet.co.uk
Tel: (01449) 711220 FAX: (01449) 711220
- Steering Committee** *Suggestions for improving the Society, publications, etc.*
Mr. D.J. Small, Denbeigh, All Saints Road, Creeping St. Mary, Ipswich,
Suffolk, IP6 8PJ. e-mail: heathers@zetnet.co.uk
Tel: (01449) 711220 FAX: (01449) 711220
- Group Organisers** *(Remember, you will be very welcome at any local meeting or visit!)*
- East Midlands** Allen Hall, 10, Upper Green, Nanpantan, Loughborough, Leics.
LE11 3SG. Tel: 01509 238923
- North East** Mrs. D. M. Warner, Littlecroft, Click-em-in, Ponteland, Newcastle-upon-
Tyne, NE20 9BQ. Tel: (01661) 823299
- Southern** Mr. D. Sprague, Steps, 5, Deepdene Drive, Dorking, Surrey. RH5 4AD
Tel: (01306) 886356
- South West** Mr. P.L. Joyner, 84 Kinross Road, Rushington, Totton, Southampton,
Hampshire, SO4 4BN. Tel: (01703) 864336
- Yorkshire** Dr. J. Griffiths, 9, Ashlea Close, Leeds, West Yorkshire. LS25 1JX.
Tel: (01532) 863349

Free cutting material

To obtain free unrooted heather cuttings from the *Calluna vulgaris* National Collection at Harlow Carr, contact Jean Julian, Matchams, Main Street, Askham Richard, York EX36 4DH Tel. 01904 707316

Free soil testing service

To have the pH of your soil tested, send an eggcup full of slowly dried-out soil, dug from 15 cm below the soil surface, to Jean Julian, Matchams, Main Street, Askham Richard, York EX36 4DH Tel. 01904 707316