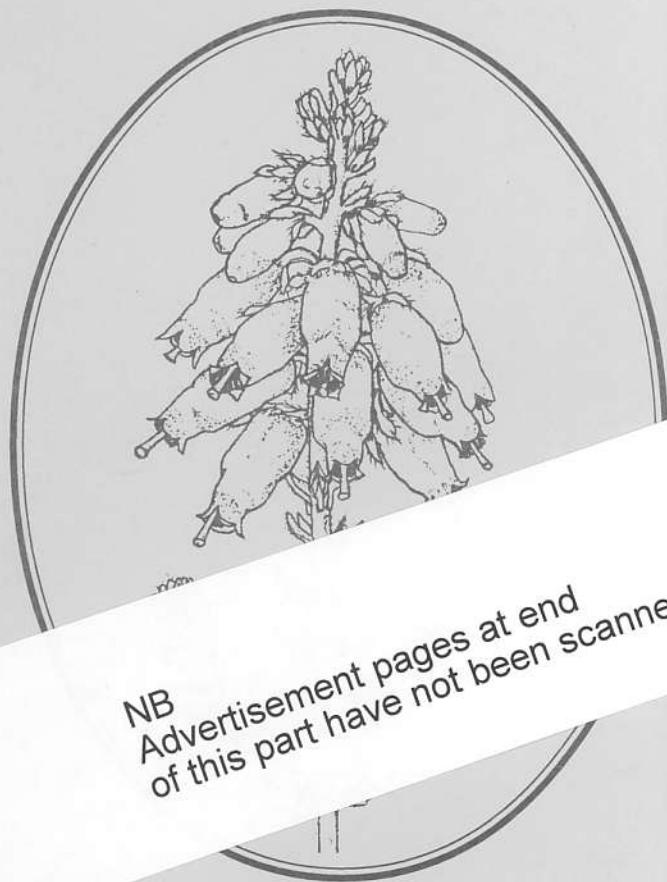


*Bulletin of The
Heather Society*



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Vol. 5 No. 14

Summer 1998

DIARY OF EVENTS 1998

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 Hilliers Gardens and Arboretum
4-7 Sept.	ANNUAL CONFERENCE	
6 Sept.	Southern Group	Annual Meeting at RHS Wisley
12 Sept.	Yorkshire Group	New Heather Introductions
12 Sept	North East Group	Annual Show
15 September	CLOSING DATE FOR AUTUMN BULLETIN	
19 September	South West Group	Meeting to be arranged
26 September	Southern Group	Visit to Heather Garden, Wisley & Talk by Mrs Mary Bowerman
? October	North East Group	Car Outing to Cragside
30 October	North East Group	AGM



A Registered Charity No. 261407

Editor: Daphne Everett, The Bannut, Bringsty, Herefordshire, WR6 5TA.
Telephone/Fax: 01885 482206

Cover illustration *Erica ciliaris* by Brita Johannson

What a wonderful show of winter/spring heathers we had this year. Everyone I have spoken to agrees that their heathers have never looked better; all due, I presume, to a not too hot summer, followed by a not too severe winter. Not that it has all been good news. The 9000 plus heathers, that I planted out before Christmas in our new heather garden (where part of the nursery used to be), spent so much of January under water that the area was named 'the paddy field'; it was so wet, for so long, that I began to despair of any of the plants surviving. However, not only have most of them survived, they are now putting on some nice healthy growth, with the promise of a colourful summer and autumn show to come. Wonderful plants heathers!

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

Friday 4th September

- 4.00 pm Registration and tea
- 6.15 pm Bar open
- 7.00 pm Dinner
- 8.30 pm Conference opened by our Chairman, followed by a quiz to help everyone to mix.
- 9.30 pm Bar open

Saturday 5th September

- 8.00 am Breakfast
- 9.15 am Talk by Andy Millar, Conservation Officer for North Norfolk for English Nature 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 stop at Sandringham en route. After a talk by Peter Bingham there will be an escorted, behind-the-scenes tour of this advanced heather nursery.

Sunday 6th September

- 8.00 am Breakfast
- 9.15 am Talk by Dr. Ian Small, a director of Research, 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 on 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* and *E. cinerea* growing in sand dunes! There will be plenty of time to discover the many white *E. tetralix* 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.

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.

Accommodation is still available for the Conference, although, at the time of writing there are only two en-suite rooms left. However there are several single study bedrooms still available and to avoid disappointment it is advisable to book as soon as you receive this Bulletin.

Resident for the whole weekend	£167	en-suite
	£153	shared facilities
Non-residents, per day	£ 36	
Friday evening (includes dinner)	£14	

Bookings can be made now 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 should be made by 31st July 1998 at the latest. Members are reminded that payment by VISA or MASTERCARD credit cards is acceptable.

The Late Mrs. Joan Lister

A tribute to the late Mrs. Joan Lister appeared in the Spring Bulletin. Subsequently, we learned that Mrs. Lister had made a generous bequest to the Society and I would like to express the appreciation of Council for this. Council budgets the Society's expenditure most carefully in order to ensure that our income is used to give the best possible service to members, and would like to do more, particularly in making more advisory publications available to Members. Joan's bequest will enable some of this work to go forward more quickly. Thought is being given to ways in which the Society might remember Joan. In the meantime, opportunity has been taken of a restructuring of the Society's reserves to name a new investment account "The Heather Society Joan Lister Fund" in her honour.

Allen Hall, Treasurer

Secretary's Snippets

Ron Cleevly

In the past the Secretary has often used the *Bulletin* to inform members of the Society's activities and Council's deliberations and I propose to do this if the Editor has sufficient space.

One of the questions, or problems raised at recent Council meetings has been that of future Conferences. Our usual pattern is to decide a possible venue, then solve the difficulty of suitable accommodation and finally devise a varied and interesting programme. It is becoming more & more difficult to accomplish this at a cost members expect and still provide the facilities and comfort required. Among the advantages that a Conference has to the Society is that by holding the AGM at the same time we can be sure that members have the chance to participate in, and be informed of, Society business. However, when discussing arrangements for 1999, it was suggested that perhaps a change might be considered. Over the years various members of the Society have made joint visits outside the UK. It should be possible to organise a package trip with a 'Heather theme' to Normandy/Brittany; Holland/Germany; Scandinavia; or Northern Spain as an alternative to a UK Conference but at a similar cost. Council would be pleased to hear your views on this.

Having recently enjoyed visits myself to the Malvern Spring Garden Show and then the RHS Garden at Rosemoor. I wonder whether perhaps one of our annual meetings could be held in conjunction with a similar event or centre. I know that one of the northern Alpine Garden Society groups had a long weekend at Malvern, attending that Show and visiting nurseries and gardens in the region. As a Society affiliated to the RHS we can obtain a reduction in entrance fees on the day. Incidentally, if one of the *Heather Society* regional groups should wish to attend any of the RHS Shows, by booking in advance as a group, they can obtain a reduction. As Secretary, I receive the forms by which this can be arranged.

In order to promote the Society, as well as increase funds, Council is looking into the subject of car stickers, engraved wine glasses, a decorative/thematic mug, promotional pens, further sweatshirts and even organising an annual raffle. Would you want to purchase any of these? - or do you have any other suggestions?

During the year the Technical Committee has made progress in several projects; the revised list of '*Recommended Heathers*' should be available in 1999. They have formulated the titles of booklets for a series on heather subjects, two of which are already in process. Some headway has been made with the International Register, despite the serious illness of the Registrar (who we are delighted to learn is steadily recovering after his operation). In his stead, I expect to attend the 3rd International Symposium on the Taxonomy of Cultivated Plants to be held at Edinburgh in July, where the Society intends to display a poster about our efforts as the Registration Authority for Heather Cultivars. Whilst little on the main programme concerns us, we need to publicise our own role and perhaps impart some of our experience to those embarking along the road of computerised Registers and databases. Inevitably, there will also be further discussion on the Code and the suggested changes, most notably on the proposed new term "culton".

A number of members, especially those of the Southern Group, our President, as well as David & Beryl Mayne and Allen & Joan Hall will be aware of the RHS Competition Classes at the Autumn Show in which heathers can compete. Can I give an 'early warning' that 1999 will be the 30th anniversary of the first occasion that this competition was devoted to Heathers. One way of marking the event would be for entries to exceed the maximum number of 98 attained in September 1969 (96 in 1973; 93 in 1982; 79 in 1993). Why not have a practice run this year to gain experience?

A few details of the events that have been arranged for 'Heath Week' - Sat. July 11th - Fri. July 17th have come to my notice (see *Heathland, Heathers & History* later in this *Bulletin*). Tickets cost £5 for RHS members & £10 for non-members and as an Affiliated Society of the RHS, I would suggest that *Heather Society* members should point this out and ask for a £5 ticket. Full details of events in Sussex, can be obtained from Steve Berry, English Nature : Tel. (01273) 476595; or Andrew South, RSPB : Tel. - (01273) 775333.

There will be a heathland conference arranged by the Sussex Archaeological Society at Sullington on 11th July (tickets £8) - write to Jill Allen, Sussex Arch. Soc., 7, Heathfield Road, Seaford, BN23 1TH. No doubt English Nature together with the various Wildlife Trusts will be organising similar events in other counties throughout the UK that week. I would like to be informed of any other events that members may hear of.

Although members often use their cameras at Conference and on field excursions, very few prints have been sent to the Secretary for inclusion in the Society's Photo albums. In recent years, apart from the Group photograph, I have only added a few of my own and some from John Plowman. Perhaps we should institute competitive classes for heather/heathland photographs to ensure a few additions.

Finally, reading through the old *Bulletins* again, I note that Mrs. MacLeod & Mr. Ardron had bound sets of the early *Yearbooks* to circulate. Does anyone know whether these have survived?

Heathers on the Scillies

Jean & Albert Julian - Askham Richard

Last year we had a late summer holiday in the Scilly Isles, in early October. Before starting we were unaware of the presence of any heather on the islands so were delighted to find, on Tresco, a dense covering of *Calluna* with a little *E. cinerea* on a few acres of a wind swept hill facing the Atlantic, with no prominent competing vegetation such as grass or vaccinium. The very thin, podsolised soil interspersed with wind blown sand covering the granite rock, combined with the salt spray and exposed windy conditions (the wind is almost ever present in the Scilly Isles) had produced a close covering of an assortment of bun shaped, very dwarf and prostrate plants with a good sprinkling of reindeer moss. There was an infinite variety of form, habit and foliage colour and one felt a sense of excitement at seeing such an extensive natural rockery of unusual neat, compact and attractive individual plants. Perhaps the late Bob Brien experienced similar emotions when he first saw his St. Kilda heathers.

Bryher, to which one can walk, from Tresco, at low tide has a very similar

heather covering of a windswept elevated area. It was October so there was no evidence of the colour of the flowers. In fact it would appear that the plants were not very floriferous as there were few dead heads to be seen. On Tresco, we also found a number of *Calluna* plants exhibiting multibracteate characteristics and some wheatear *E. cinerea*.

Cuttings of several of the more unusual plants were taken and we are hopeful that with such a large variation of shape and foliage to choose from we have selected some plants with genetically fixed dwarfing characteristics which are worthy of introduction. David Small, our Chairman, is propagating the cuttings and we await the outcome with considerable interest. He also tells us that our ecologist member, Nigel Webb, mentions these two unique areas of heather in his book, "Heathlands".

Bracken which seems to have established itself in all parts of the world could be seen around Tresco also. In one area of level ground we saw that the fronds were almost completely flattened. A local farmer told us that he used a "bracken roller" to keep the bracken in check. Fortunately the heather is safe from invasion as the soil nutrient levels, which are obviously adequate to maintain the heather, are quite insufficient to support bracken.

What Did Become Of Those Rooted Cuttings?

Pamela Lee

The results of the Propagation Workshop at Denbeigh were reported in the Bulletin of Autumn 1996 on page 16. David Millis described in Spring 1997 his experiences, when he and his wife potted on their 500 plus cuttings – at a cost: of one black eye! Now nearly two years have passed since members of the Southern and Southwest Groups were invited to take cuttings from material supplied by the Chairman and his wife, which were then so carefully nurtured by them in their mist propagation system.

I was unable to attend the workshop on the 27th July 1996, but on a visit to their home a few weeks earlier, David and Anne very kindly allowed me to fill a tray with 273 cuttings, thus enabling me to participate in the Group exercise. I thought it might be of interest if everyone involved were to follow on with a report of the success rate of these plants when they were eventually planted out in members' gardens.

Obviously we did not all use the same cutting material and the results will have been affected by many different conditions during the growing on period. However, for what it is worth, I shall lead off and hope that others will follow by describing their experiences.

When my tray was brought to Wisley on the 28th September, 19 cuttings had died – possibly through being under mist for three weeks longer than the others. Even so, returning home with 254 rooted cuttings, I realised that careful organisation was called for to avoid a complete mix-up in names or further loss at this early stage. I was advised not to wait until the spring but to pot them on as soon as possible.

I prepared the exact number of plastic pots as there were cuttings, lining them up in a narrow strip of ground between a low brick wall and the side of

the potting shed. (I thought that this area could more easily be protected from the predations of magpies and a variety of four-footed interlopers). The area was just the right size for 254 x 3+” pots, each of which I half-filled with a compost mix. Name labels were prepared – using an index letter for each cultivar to obviate the need to write out lengthy names. It then took me two mornings to complete the transfer of cuttings, top up, firm the compost and label the pots. As these were already in their permanent positions, no carrying around was necessary – so no risk of a black eye, only a very stiff back!

During the winter, regretfully, there were tremendous losses, mainly as a result of the plants being submerged for too long under melting snow, ice and incessant rain. I couldn't face moving them but occasionally found time to cover the area with plastic sheeting. The summer of 1997 came and there were long periods of drought: sadly a few more succumbed, bringing the total losses to 139. I was going to keep this shameful secret to myself – especially after seeing the healthy, well-fed plants that the Southern Group's Chairman brought to Wisley in September 1997. However, another member subsequently revealed that, in their case, every single cutting had been lost in the tray before being potted on. This gave me enough courage to tell my story!

Obviously, I realised, I would never make it as a heather nurserywoman. However, I was delighted to have 115 excellent plants, which enabled me to replant whole areas at once. The heathers' delicate roots just touched the walls of the pots and were not a tangled mess, as with many containerised plants that are offered for sale. I am most grateful to the Smalls who devoted so much of their time then and also later when organising the second Propagation Workshop, held during the Annual Conference at Penrith for the benefit of members from other parts of the country.

I hope my young heathers which have never been fed and are obviously well hardened, get their roots down quickly into our dry sandstone soil, as erratic heat waves can also do much damage. The following is the result of my assessment, the first column showing the number of rooted cuttings which were potted up at the end of September 1996 and the second the number planted out into the garden.

Specie	Cultivar Name	Received	Planted
<i>E. australis</i>		9	0
<i>E. cin.</i>	'Velvet Fascination'	13	1
<i>E. cin.</i>	'Celebration' ✓	13	1
Cv	'Kinlochruel' ✓	12	2
<i>E. cin.</i>	'Stephen Davis'	12	3
Cv.	'Red Favorit'	13	5
Cv.	'Melanie' ✓	13	5
Cv.	'Fritz Kircher'	13	5
Cv.	'Alexandra' ✓	10	5
<i>E. x Veitchi.</i>	'Albert's Gold' ✓	10	5
Cv	'Amethyst' ✓	12	6
Cv	'Arabella'	13	6
Cv	'Annetto'	13	7
<i>E. vagans</i>	'Birch Glow'	12	7
<i>E. tetralix</i>	'Con Underwood'	13	8
<i>E. carnea</i>	'Ice Princess'	11	8

<i>E. carnea</i>	'Challenger'	13	9
<i>E. x Darl.</i>	'White Perfection'	12	9
<i>E. x Olden.</i>	'Ammerland'	13	10
<i>E. x Erig.</i>	'Superba'	<u>13</u>	<u>12</u>
		254	115

Although the best results may be attributed to hybrid vigour, the poor showing of some of the other cultivars may well have been due to their positioning. The plants nearest to the shed were often submerged for longer, as they caught the run-off from the gutterless roof. In addition, those which grew fastest during the spring were better equipped to survive summer droughts.

We should very much like to know about other members' experiences. Ed.

Propagation Workshop - Conference 1997

Anyone in the UK who attended the workshop at Penrith last year and has not yet received their cuttings, please let me know. We have one tray left which has lost its owner's label.

Anne Small

Heathland, Heathers and History

Monday 13th July, 2 pm at the Lecture Theatre, Wisley Garden

Did you know that heathland once covered the land where Wisley Garden now stands? National Heath Week (11 - 19 July 1998) gives us the opportunity to celebrate heathland and learn more about its place in history.

In an illustrated talk, Dr. Rob McGibbon, Project Officer with the Surrey Heathland Trust, looks at heathland in Europe as a whole but especially in Surrey. Over many centuries, heathland has provided people with food and fuel. In more recent times it has given us colour for the garden and has become an important recreational resource.

After the talk, there will be a guided tour of the RHS Wisley Heather Collection, accompanied by Andy Collins, Supervisor of Howards Field. Tickets: £5 for RHS members, £10 for non members and must be booked in advance. Send a cheque (made out to the RHS) and a S.A.E. to: Administration Dept. Royal Horticultural Society, Woking, GU23 6QB. Please include daytime telephone number and RHS number if applicable. (See also *Secretary's Snippets* earlier in this *Bulletin*!)

Book Review

Botanica

This is the name of a large volume published in the UK by W H Smith for Mynah of Sydney (ISBN 609 183 6166). It is on the lines of the huge RHS A - Z Encyclopedia and, published in 1997, is right up to date.

Numerous heathers are pictured and described, including Capes, which can do well down-under. Among the photographs are *Calluna vulgaris* 'Anchy

Anne' (presumably 'Branchy Anne') 'Heidesinfonia' ('Heidesinfonie') and 'Kerstin', *Erica* x *darleyensis* 'Dunwood Splendour' (syn. 'Arthur Johnson'), 'Mrs. Parris Lavender' and 'Mrs. Parris White', *Erica mackaiana* 'Galicia', 'Maura' and 'Shining Light', *Daboecia* 'Creeping White' and *E. cinerea* 'Kerry Cherry'. Others raise eyebrows - *Erica erigena* 'Alba Compacta' looking like 'W T Rackliff', *E. x darleyensis* 'Epe' with white flowers, *E. erigena* 'Ewan Jones' with apparently dark foliage, and 'Silver Bells' is an *E. x darleyensis* synonym for 'Silberschmelze' and not an *erigena*. Who knows *E. cinerea* 'Crimson King', succinctly described just as 'Crimson'? I wonder who misadvised them? Nevertheless this is a useful publication generally but can be difficult to obtain in this country. It is remarkable value at £30.

David McClintock

**A Note on Ken Wilson's article
'Heathers in a Plantsman's Life' in the Yearbook 1998.
Ron Cleevely**

During the various stages of processing material for the last *Yearbook* an important sentence was omitted from this contribution. Consequently, readers would gain a false idea of the sequence of events Ken Wilson describes, especially relating to the formation of the North American Heather Society. In fact, as he pointed out to me in a letter "...it sounds as if Pamela Harper would not have sent plants if Mrs. Gray had not been visiting her son in North America". Further, the assumption that the arrival of these plants influenced the formation of the NAHS is also wrong, as he pointed out to me in a letter of 23rd April 1998.

As other information in his letter adds to that in his article, I thought it worthwhile printing it for all our members.

Ken said: "I had joined the UK Heather Society after coming to the University because of the fairly extensive collection on Campus, and it seemed the obvious way to renew my interest in these plants. How I came to contact Pamela I don't remember. A year or two later I received a letter from Mrs. Gray as outlined in the article. I think I was the only member of the Heather Society in British Columbia and perhaps because I was at the University where her son also worked that she wrote to me.

After I had returned from overseas and settled into work again, I thought it might be interesting to see if other members of the Heather Society, living on the West Coast of America, would like to visit UBC and talk about heather etc. It took several letters before a common date was agreed upon (see p. 25 in *Yearbook*.) It was the result then of Mrs. Gray's request which led to the formation of the Pacific North-West Heather Society. As this group grew larger and began to cover the whole of the North American continent, the name was changed to its present name of NAHS.

Eventually, as the Society became well established and the Botanical Garden developed, I became involved in establishing a North American Diploma in Horticulture. I also helped in establishing a virus tested orchard of flowering cherries for the British Columbia Nursery Trades. With both these commitments I just had to drop other interests. I had also, in what spare time I had, helped my son David to establish his nursery growing heathers and miniature roses,

which I carried on with after I retired in 1980. Now of course I can't quit gardening, not even for pleasure. My doctor keeps telling me "Don't you dare quit!"

Members may know that David Wilson named a heather he had raised after his father. *Erica x williamsii* 'Ken Wilson' is a cross between *E. tetralix* 'Hookstone Pink' and *E. vagans* 'Mrs. D F Maxwell' and David Small writes in *The Handy Guide* "...the flower colour needs to be seen to be believed." This cross represents the efforts of three significant heather nurseries: Hookstone, Maxwell & Beale and now that of David Wilson. Let us hope that they follow the doctor's warning and produce other high quality cultivars.

(Ken Wilson also wrote an interesting article for the 1975 *Yearbook*, in which he described the establishment and evaluation of a large heather planting at the Botanical Garden, University of Columbia).

'A new use for Moorland Heather' -from the Gazette & Herald sent in by Beryl Mayne of Kirkbymoorside Yorkshire

A pioneering Ryedale company has solved the problem of what to do with all the county's heather. The North York Moors is the largest expanse of open heather moorland in the country, but traditional methods of burning old growth to encourage fresh green shoots for sheep and grouse have been questioned because of their environmental damage.

Now Kirkbymoorside farmer Dave Coussins and partner Peter Kay have found a novel way of exploiting North Yorkshire's most abundant crop. Instead of burning, the heather is cut and bagged for sale in garden centres as an environmentally friendly super mulch. Mr. Kay said "Burning damages the top soil and can kill other species of plants and animals. We make sure the heather is regularly mown, rather than burnt, throughout the year - preserving the habitat for the rejuvenation of flora and fauna which would otherwise be destroyed. The danger of wide-spread fires and atmospheric pollution is also reduced".

Ecologists at the North York Moors National Park have broadly welcomed the new initiative. Park ecologist Sue Rees said: "This could be a useful source of extra income for moorland farmers. In the last few years there has been a great increase in the amount of cutting taking place and it is good to have a balance of heather management rather than just relying on burning which can be damaging". But the park have also issued guidance on cutting heather after concerns that land-owners might be tempted to over-cut for a short-term profit. Unlike heather burning, farmers face no restriction on how much they cut or when they do it. Ms. Rees added "Cutting can do particular damage when the ground is very wet as tractors will tear up the peat."

North Yorkshire heather is already much sought after abroad as filtration material. It is even used in air filters that remove smells from abattoirs in Holland. But much larger quantities could be sold to gardeners across the country if the mulch plans take off.

One large bag of the stuff costs between £2.45 and £2.99 and increasing numbers of North Yorkshire garden centres are already agreeing to stock it. When applied to paths and gardens the heather clippings create a dense

under-carpet of finely interwoven stalks - suppressing weed growth and greatly reducing evaporation. The "carpet" protects the roots of plants in hot weather and from frost in winter.

The Pale *Erica carnea* **Brita Johansson - Sweden**

Red, redder, reddest seems to be the breeder's ambition. It is understandable, as striking colours certainly attract people in the garden centres. In the garden a softer colour range is often preferable and I would like to put in a plea for the pale *E. carnea*.

My predilection for these plants may depend on the special atmosphere of a Scandinavian spring - hard to describe. The nearest I can come is probably some sort of intangible melancholy. I guess that Eileen Pettersson (from Norway) understands what I am talking about. When the *Anemone nemorosa* (wood anemone) and *Hepatica nobilis* cover the ground in light groves and forests, strong colours may seem aggressive and out of place, even in the garden.

Delicate pastel coloured paintings can be created using the pale flowering and the white *E. carnea* together with yellow and orange-tinted cultivars. 'Clare Wilkinson' is invaluable 'Lake Garda' can also be used, though somewhat colder. 'Golden Starlet', 'Rosalind Schorn', 'Altadena' and 'Sunshine Rambler' can play the 'yellow part' and don't forget the wonderful 'White March Seedling'. I have heard someone's remark that it isn't pure white - that's just the point - the reddish pedicels make it look like a *Cassiope*. If something darker is wanted for a background I have found Fritz Kircher's 'Hamburg' a good choice. These cultivars are but a few of the suitable ones.

Big drifts of each cultivar is no advantage. A pastel coloured planting is nicer when the mosaic pieces are small and the colours blend in with each other. Your winter flowering bed need not look like it has always done. Why not try something new?

If you like Brita's ideas for a 'new look' heather garden, all the cultivars she mentions (with the exception of *E. carnea* 'Hamburg') are listed in the new **Handy Guide to Heathers**, complete with details of where they can be obtained. Ed.

What's in a Name.....!

'White Lawn'

David McClintock

The introduction of that excellent and distinctive cultivar *Calluna vulgaris* 'White Lawn' was due to our past Chairman, Pat Turpin. He noticed it in the garden of a Mrs. Cowan at Farnham, who had received it in the 1960s from Gilbert Barratt of Mytchett, who in turn had probably got it from a nursery in Scotland. However, it had no name. When Pat showed it to me he was wondering what to call it and I suggested 'White Lawn'.

Shortly afterwards, Bill Mackenzie, the former Curator of the Chelsea Physic Garden, told me that his mother had died and he had been searching her garden at Loch Awe for her special heather, which had been collected in

the hills by a forester called Graham. Sadly however, it was nowhere to be seen. I asked him what it looked like and he replied that one could not mistake it, as it was "flat as if a steam roller had gone over it". Soon after this, I was able to show him 'White Lawn' and he was delighted to confirm that it was indeed the same cultivar.

Later I discovered that C.v. 'Graham's White' (an unpublished name) was being grown at Edinburgh Botanic Gardens, but when I went to see it in their nursery the plant proved to be a very ordinary erect white. However, by then the name 'White Lawn' was well established so 'Graham's White' was effectively superseded. In cultivars, unlike in Latin names, the Registrar is not bound to accept an earlier name if a later one has gained currency.

Punch's Dessert

Taken from a letter sent to our Chairman by Nigel Willis of Highland Heathers

Some years ago, whilst working at the *Highland Heathers* nursery in Scotland, Kathleen Gorie found a sport with bright magenta flowers and golden foliage, growing on a *Calluna vulgaris* 'Firefly'.

Soon afterwards, Kathleen, with her husband and dog Punch, drove into Lochgilphead to do the weekly shopping. Having put the groceries in the car, she and her husband went off again, leaving the dog behind. You can guess what happened - while they were gone the dog got restless and began to tuck into the goodies on offer. Also in the car was some of the, as yet unnamed, *Calluna* and, having had his fill of the groceries, Punch started on this as well. Hence was born *Calluna vulgaris* 'Punch's Dessert'!

'Punch's Dessert' is available commercially and can sometimes be found under its synonym 'Highland Cream'. It has magenta (H14) flowers, and erect golden foliage in summer, fading to yellow/green later in the year. Height 45 cm, spread 50 cm.

Is *Erica cinerea* 'Rijneveld' extinct?

D J Small, Chairman

It has been reported from Holland that the cultivar *Erica cinerea* 'Rijneveld', which originated from R Zwijnenburg's Nursery, is no longer available in that country. It was in the National Collection at Cherrybank Gardens, Perth but all the plants were lost in the very severe winter they had two years ago. It was never part of the National Collection at the RHS, Wisley. I would be grateful to learn if any member of the Society has plants of this cultivar.

Group News

Yorkshire

The '98 season started on Saturday, 14th March 1998 with 21 attending to listen to a talk on "Heather in the USA" given by member, David Plumridge. He, and his wife, Rita, attended the last two North American Heather Society's Conferences; Eureka, California in 1996 and Cape Cod, Massachusetts in 1997. They saw much that was unusual and interesting on which he discoursed in a pleasantly informal manner, helped by David Small and Peter

Vickers both of whom had been to one or other of these events.

The fine set of slides, among which were ones illustrating gardens visited on the East and West coasts, were the outstanding shots of Colonel Jim Thompson's wonderful heather garden in Manchester, California, probably the finest in both continents. It was illustrated on the front cover of the 1997 *Yearbook*. Later Peter Vickers demonstrated two models of small battery driven shears (miniature hedge trimmers, shrubbers in American parlance) ideally suited for heather trimming.

Our next meeting on 13th June will be at Peter Harrison's nursery, Forest Bungalow, Hundred Acre Lane, Worksop, where we shall see how a successful nurseryman raises many first class plants of the various heather species. Members will receive instructions on how to find the nursery in due course. The subject of our talk for the meeting, 12th September will be "New Heather Introductions". The name of the speaker will be published later.

With the help of group volunteers we have made good progress with the planting of the new National Calluna Collection in Queen's Meadow. At the time of writing, 24th March, eight of the beds have been completed and only four remain to be planted. The inevitable loss and damage to a small number of plants and casualties caused by rabbits has been covered by another propagation programme, for which once again we shall be indebted to David and Anne Small.

In anticipation of the clearance of the *E. carnea* and *E. x darleyensis* collections from the trials area and their resiting, cutting material of all the cultivars has been taken from the existing plants for propagation by David Small. He will provide the plants suitable for planting in 1999.

Jean Julian

Southern

The highlight of the spring outings was the visit by 18 members to John Tucker's secret and surprising heather and conifer garden in Findon, between the South Downs and Worthing, on 4th April. *Secret?* Well, certainly secluded. It lies up a narrow, easily missed, private lane off the A24. The skilful way in which John has planted his boundaries conceals the post-war development that abuts the property on three sides; you feel as if you are in a world of your own. *Surprising?* Certainly, in the way that John has planted trees within the garden, so as to provide new interest as you follow the winding paths, or peer into newly-revealed corners - surprising too, because John is in an area of England that is essentially chalk. It was for me, and I guess for all of us, an instructive as well as a pleasing experience. These occasions are also rewarding for the opportunity they give for chatting. Exchanges that were enhanced this time by the delicious tea John had himself prepared for us. I commend his scotch pancakes! My problem is always to decide at what moment to get up and thank our host. Is the lull in the talk a need to regain breath - or are the topics completely exhausted? I hope I may not have intervened too soon. Thank you again John for giving us such an enjoyable time.

Most of us had spent the morning visiting Highdown, a garden created by Sir Frederick Stern, three miles west of Worthing and, since 1967, owned by Worthing Municipal Council. The Garden demonstrates to great effect the variety of plants that can be grown on chalk; narcissi, hellebores, and flowering cherries were particularly attractive at the time of our visit. I was fascinated by the double-headed white daffodils.

On 14th March, a similar sized group, including our President, David McClintock, had visited the heather garden, part of Valley Gardens, in Windsor Great Park. These gardens, and the Savill Garden which compliments them, were created before and after the war by Sir Eric Savill. The Valley

Gardens extend to 400 acres, with plenty of trees and shrubs on a grand scale. The philosophy for its heather garden at least, is, we are told, to plant and then to leave to nature. We were of differing views as to the effect. Truly there were some outstanding beds of winter/spring heathers. At the same time it seemed to me, and to one or two others, that some recent plantings were in need of attention if they were going to survive. Some of us visited the rest of the Valley Gardens and the Savill Gardens after lunch.

Our next meeting will be a visit to the heather garden at Wisley; 10.45 am for an 11 o'clock start, on Saturday 26th September. I must say that the *Callunas* were looking pretty sick from last summer's fungus when I was there recently. The main lecture of the afternoon, 1.45 for 2.00 pm, will be a talk which Mrs. Mary Bowerman has kindly entitled *Something For Nothing*, which traces the development of the garden at Champs Hill. In addition there will be the usual heather competition. We hope that members may be less modest this year in coming forward with their achievements. For next Spring I invite those members who might like to see my own modest efforts in situ, to visit us in Dorking on the afternoon of Saturday 27th March. Details later!

David Sprague

South West

On Saturday 28th March, South West Group members met at Lytchett Matravers Village Hall in Dorset for a lecture and Table Show meeting. I was pleased to have many of our regular members present and also Ron Cleevely and Nigel Webb who were our speakers in the previous two years. The Speaker for the afternoon was Arnold Stow, and Arnold gave an excellent and amusing talk on heather cultivation, illustrated with some excellent slides. Arnold is an experienced heather gardener and indeed has several other horticultural interests, in particular the growing of hardy geraniums. After Arnold's talk, and several questions, the members enjoyed the social part of the afternoon, taking refreshments and chatting on our favourite subject. The Table show was then judged and the results were as follows:

Class 1. A vase or bowl of heathers in bloom

1st. Phyllis Kennedy, 2nd. Anne Pringle, 3rd. Val Davis

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

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

Anne Pringle was the winner of the Burfitt Bowl for the most points overall, but prizes were presented to the others 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 Arnold, who, with his wife Josey, travelled a long way to give us a talk, and to Lorna Farrow for judging the Table Show.

Future Meetings

Saturday 4th July, Sunday 5th July - *The Heather Society* will have a display table at the Southampton Balloon and Flower Festival on Southampton common. As last year, the Society will not take part in the competitive displays and will concentrate on educating the public in heather culture and in the advantages of belonging to the *Heather Society*. Open Heather classes feature within the Festival and if any member is interested in these or in manning the stand, then please contact me by letter or telephone.

Saturday 18th July - Visit to Sir Harold Hillier Gardens and Arboretum. The new heather garden was looking very attractive last autumn and will be well worth a visit this summer. A guided tour has been arranged for 2.00 pm to take in the items of interest in the Gardens at that time of year and of course to visit the heather garden. Members should assemble in the car park near the entrance to the Gardens from 1.45 pm. The cost of entry will be £3, assuming that we can assemble a group of at least 10 persons and there will be an additional charge of £1.50 for the guide. RHS members will be allowed in free on production of their RHS membership card. The Gardens are

situated between the villages of Ampfield and Braishfield, 3 miles north of Romsey in Hampshire. The Gardens are signposted clearly from the Romsey to Winchester road. Hilliers Nursery has a Garden Centre adjacent to the car park and there is also a picnic area. There are also tea rooms within the Gardens.

Saturday 19th September - Despite my commitments in September, it is still hoped to arrange a venue for a meeting on this date and, hopefully, details will be announced in the South West Group circular to be published in June.

Dates for your Diary

Saturday 26th September 1998 - Southern Group visit to Wisley. Please see Southern Group for details. South West Group Members will be made to feel very welcome at this meeting.

Phil Joyner

USEFUL ADDRESSES

Society's Website: <http://www.users.zetnet.co.uk/heather>

- Chairman** *Policy matters, major events etc.*
Mr. D.J. Small, Denbeigh, All Saints Road, Creeting 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 Tel: (01769) 573833
- Treasurer** Mr. A. Hall, 10, Upper Green, Nanpantan, Loughborough, Leicestershire.
LE11 3SG Tel: (01509) 238923
- Registrar** *Naming of heathers*
Mr. A.W. Jones, OTers' 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, Tippitwichtet 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, Creeting 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, Creeting 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, Creeting St. Mary, Ipswich,
Suffolk, IP6 8PJ. *e-mail:* heathers@zetnet.co.uk
Tel: (01449) 711220 FAX: (01449) 711220
- Group Organisers (Remember, you will be very welcome at any local meeting or visit!)**
- East Midlands** Allen Hall, 10, Upper Green, Nanpantan, Loughborough, Leics.
LE11 3SG. Tel: 01509 238923
- North East** Mrs. D. M. Warner, Littlcroft, 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