

Bulletin of The Heather Society



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Vol. 5 No. 18

Autumn 1999

DIARY OF EVENTS

1999

23 October North East Group

Outing to Cragside

29 October North East Group

AGM - St Matthews Church Hall,

Ponteland

2000

15 January CLOSING DATE FOR BULLETIN

25 March South West Group

Indoor Meeting -

Lytchett Matravers Village Hall

25-28 Aug. INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE



A Registered Charity No. 261407

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Cover illustration *Calluna vulgaris* by Brita Johansson

It was lovely to see so many members at Allen Hall's meeting at our garden in August and it was quite an emotional experience to greet old friends from the West Midland Group, most of whom we hadn't seen for many years. This visit was reported later in The Hereford Times and was then picked up by Radio Hereford & Worcester, who presented a programme from our garden on 23rd August - quite an experience! By the way - bird lovers will be pleased to know that the swallows which arrived here this spring and found that their home had been demolished to make room for our tea room (see Spring Bulletin) - eventually built a nest about the size of a tea cup right outside our front door and successfully raised five very noisy babies in it. Our front entrance was out of bounds for several weeks.

International Conference 2000

Bookings are now being taken for Conference 2000, to be held at Elmhorn, Germany from 25th to 29th August 2000.

Base: Hotel Royal, Lönsweg 5, 25335 Elmshorn, Schleswig -Holstein (330 kms NW of Hamburg).

Friday 25 August until	16:00	Arrival of participants
	18:30	Welcome Party
Saturday 26 August	08:30	Depart from hotel
		Visit to private gardens and a visit to Heidepark Heideberg.
		Lunch
		Visits to specialist nurseries
	18:30	Return to hotel
	19:30	Dinner
Sunday 27 August	09:00	Open Conference then Talk 1*
	09:45	Talk 2*
	10:30	Coffee Break
	11:00	Talk 3*
	11:45 - 12:30	Talk 4*

* These talks will be in English although there may be parallel talks in German.

	13:00	Lunch
	14:45	Visit to the Arboretum Ellerhoop
	17:00	Return to hotel
	18:30	Dinner
Monday 28 August	08:15	Depart from hotel
	09:30	Visit to a porcelain factory
	11:00	Visit to the Westermann heather nursery
	12:30	Lunch
	13:30	Visit to the heather garden at Schneverdingen
	14:30	Walk on Schneverdinger Heath
	about 16:00	Return to Elmshorn
	about 17:00	Arrive at hotel
	from 18:30	Farewell Party
Tuesday 29 August	until 10:00	Departure of participants

The following are approximate prices assuming 100 participants

Double room per person	741Dm (approx. £250)
Single room per person	781Dm (approx. £270)

This includes:

4 bed and breakfast in the hotel; 4 dinners (1 x 5 course, 1 x Gala Buffet, 1 x 3 course and 1 x Buffet.); 1 lunch at the hotel; 2 lunches on outings; Coffee and soft drinks during coffee breaks and coach transport.

In addition *The Heather Society* is planning an excursion by coach:

August 23	Ferry from Harwich to the Hook of Holland then travel to Gouda, Holland (famous for its cheese).
August 24	A day visiting Boskoop, famous for its nurseries in a very typical Dutch setting and the Horticultural Research Centre at Boskoop. Return to the hotel at Gouda.
August 25	Travel to Conference, visiting a German nursery or two en route.
August 29	Travel to southern Holland visiting a superb private heather garden
August 30	Return to the UK

The cost of this excursion cannot be fixed until a better idea of the number of participants is known. Please telephone Diane Jones as soon as possible on 01935 850285 for up-to-date information and to let her know you are interested. The finalised Programme will be printed in the Spring *Bulletin*.

Report on the AGM, held on Saturday 11th September 1999

Chairman, David Small, welcomed members to the 1999 AGM, which was held this year in the comfortable surroundings of the St. Michael's Hotel, Falmouth, during the annual Conference.

David thanked Members of Council for their efforts throughout the year, with especial thanks to Charles Nelson and Ron Cleevely for their work on the International Register and to Barry Sellers for giving up so much of his time to make the Lizard Project a success (see Secretary's Snippets).

We were told that the main threat to the success of the Society is its falling membership and ideas on ways to reverse the trend were needed. One way which is being tried at the moment is the introduction of several booklets aimed at the novice heather grower, which will give advice on different aspects of heather growing. An unexpected outcome of David and Anne Small's decision to supply heather cuttings to *Heather Society* members only, is that several prospective customers have joined the Society so that they can make use of this facility.

The Secretary reported significant developments in the last year, with much progress being made towards the completion of the International Register. A grant of £4,500 had been received from the Stanley Smith Trust to help with this work (see Secretary's Snippets).

Jean Julian had taken on the job of the Society's Registrar, a vital post which fell vacant on the sad death of Bert Jones, and Daphne Everett had agreed for *The Bannut* to be the holding address for any new heathers to be registered.

Much of the work of the Steering Committee is now done by e-mail, thus saving the Society both time and money. The various National Collections are still going forward and the RHS has incorporated *The Heather Society* on to their web site. The Society has been asked to consider putting on a display at Chelsea and Hampton Court. This may be possible if it is done in conjunction with the BHGA but volunteers will be needed to man the stand.

Ron finished his report with a well deserved 'Thank you' to David and Anne Small for all they do for the Society.

The Treasurer, Allen Hall once again presented the Society's accounts in his clear fashion. He explained how the Society's money is invested and said that, although the Society has a healthy bank balance at the moment, this will not last if membership numbers continue to dwindle.

The President and the Vice-Presidents of the Society were all re-elected, as were the Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. However our President, David McClintock indicated that he would like to stand down in the near future. Ron Wing had previously indicated that he would be prepared to continue as Auditor and was thanked for the work he does so conscientiously for the Society.

It was announced that the AGM for the year 2000 would almost certainly be held in London during August. However, dates available at the RHS Halls,

Vincent Square could not be confirmed until October 1999. Maurice Everett asked if it would not be possible to hold the AGM at Wisley, but it was thought that members travelling down from the north would have difficulty getting there. David McClintock offered his house in Kent for the meeting and offered a glass of sherry as well! Final arrangements will be given in the spring Bulletin.

The question of Membership Cards was brought up under AOB. However it was thought that these would only be of any use if they brought extra benefits to the holders and, at the moment, that is not the case.

It was announced that Dr. John Griffiths, in whose honour *Erica x griffithsii* is named, is now **Professor** John Griffiths at the University of Leeds. John, who was attending the Conference with his wife Valerie, was congratulated on his appointment.

Finally, at a surprise ceremony immediately after the AGM, the President presented both Anne and David Small with certificates stating that two *Erica umbellata* plants, which had been collected by them some years earlier, had been considered worthy of being named. It had therefore been decided that the one with pink flowers should named *Erica umbellata* 'David J Small', and the white one *Erica umbellata* 'Anne Small'. This well-deserved honour brought rousing applause from members and left our Chairman and Administrator almost speechless. However, presentations were not yet at an end, as the Yorkshire Group then presented David and Anne with a bread-making machine as thanks for their assistance in setting up the *Calluna* Collection at Harlow Carr.

Secretary's Snippets Ron Cleevely

It is sometime since I contributed these 'snippets' to the Bulletin and as the past year has been quite eventful those members unable to attend Conference and the A.G.M. might like to know just what has happened. During the summer we were all very concerned at the President's accident in Sicily [see Bulletin 5 (17):3-5] - now fully recovered, everyone was delighted to see him in his usual good form at Falmouth and wandering amongst the heathers at Lizard Downs and Trebah Cross.

Undoubtedly, the developments concerning the Society's role as the International Registration Authority for heather cultivars have to be regarded as one of the more significant events of the year. Following the sad loss of our Registrar Bert Jones in August 1998, the tasks of registration and compiling the Register had to be re-assigned to various members of the Technical Committee. A decision was taken by Council to provide the funding for the research needed to complete the Register. An application was also made for a grant to help with these costs to the Stanley Smith Horticultural trust and we were eventually awarded the sum of £4,500 on several conditions, one of which was that the Society would match that figure. The result of all this, is that substantial progress has been made during the summer towards completing the International Register and achieving the goal of publishing it for the 1st International Conference on Heathers to be held in August 2000.

In 1998, the Society benefited from a substantial legacy from Mrs. Joan Lister, who was very involved in the activities of the N.E. Group. During the year it was decided to use some of this money to create a Memorial to her in the garden at Belsay Hall, situated between Newcastle and Jedburgh. This property belongs to English Heritage, who were in the process of renovating that part of the garden containing heather beds. Roy Nichols, Dorothy Warner & John Turner of the N.E. Group realised that this would be a very suitable opportunity to commemorate Joan's involvement with them and the Heather Society. This will take the form of a new wrought iron/wooden seat adjacent to the old heather bed that would be replanted with relatively well known cultivars provided by the Group. A commemorative plaque commemorating Joan Lister and Douglas her husband would be fixed to the seat. At a date to be arranged there will be a special meeting at Belsay Hall.

Over the years, once lists of members were no longer included in the Yearbook, the Society has published separate Membership Lists. The last was published in 1994 and another is now being considered. However, as it is very expensive to produce and distribute these, one solution is to print off such lists only when asked for by individual members. On the other hand, from experience I know it is very useful to be able to pick up a booklet from the shelf when needing to find an address. Members views on this would assist Council in deciding the issue. However, it is also necessary owing to the Data Protection Act, to obtain the sanction of every member that these names can be published and distributed in a list. Consequently, Council has to request that any member, who does not wish his/her name to appear in the next Membership List to notify the Administrator by 1st January 2000.

Our Editor, Daphne Everett, always produces an enjoyable perspective of Society events, but to enforce anything that she might report, I would like to mention another request to our members. At the AGM, I spoke of the possibility of the Society being involved in a joint stand with the British Heather Growers Association at Chelsea 2000 to promote heathers. Another possibility is to participate in the National Science Week in March 2000 that is organised by the British Association for the Advancement of Science. Events for that week can be held anywhere in the country, all that is required is notice of the event (which needs to be related to some aspect of science & the environment), the display and organisers. But events of this kind need to be manned and I need to know the names of those willing to help at Chelsea before we can go ahead; or the names of those willing to participate in, or produce an event for National Science Week.

David McClintock has presented several ideas to Council during the year and thanks to the sterling efforts of Barry Sellers and David Small it was possible to implement the plan of presenting all the cultivars found on the Lizard (and their progeny) to gardens in the region during conference. On Saturday 11th September at two separate events, sets of all these plants were presented to the custodians of gardens at the Cornwall Wildlife Trust Nature Reserve at Allet, north of Truro and the Goonhilly Earth Station Leisure Centre on the Lizard itself. It is intended to produce plaques for display at both sites. If anyone should wish to have a list of these Lizard plants, I can provide a copy.

RHS Heather Competition, August 10th -11th, 1999.

Stephen Richards and Georgina Clarke of the RHS provided information on the prize-winners in this competition held in August, after I had contacted them upon hearing from David McClintock that these competitions were well supported and that 'they were one of the best for many years'. As the RHS does not record the winning varieties, but only the winners and the total number of entries, I had to seek the assistance of Mrs. Mary Bowerman, who very kindly sent the following list of the plants that she had noted down. The total, unfortunately, for this 30th Anniversary of the Heather competition was well below the 98 maximum entered for the 1st in 1969 & even the more recent 'high' of 79 in 1993. However, we have to offer our congratulations and appreciative thanks to those stalwarts who maintain the exhibit staged at these shows year after year.

Ron Cleevely, Hon. Secretary

Class number 1 - (3 Distinct Heathers) entered = 5; staged = 4

- 1st Mrs. Bowerman - *E. cinerea* 'Alfred Bowerman'; 'Champs Hill', 'C.D. Eason'
- 2nd Mrs. Bowerman - *E. cinerea* 'Heather Bank', 'Sherry', 'Apple Blossom'
- 3rd Mrs. Bowerman - *Daboecia cantabrica* 'Snowdrift', *Calluna vulgaris* 'Silver Knight', and *Calluna vulgaris* 'Dart's Hedgehog'

Class number 2 - (*Erica vagans*) entered = 9; staged = 7

- 1st Mrs. Bowerman - *E. vagans* 'Viridiflora'
- 2nd Mrs. Bowerman - *E. vagans* 'Ida M. Britten'
- 3rd Mrs. Bowerman - *E. vagans* 'Hookstone Rosea'

Class number 3 - (*Calluna cultivars*) entered = 8; staged = 4

- 1st Mrs. Bowerman - *Calluna vulgaris* 'Silver Rose'
- 2nd Mr. McClintock - *Calluna vulgaris* - a wild specimen of this species
- 3rd Mrs. Bowerman - *Calluna vulgaris* 'Firefly'

Class number 4 - (Double-flowered *Calluna*) entered = 3; staged = 3

- 1st Mrs. Bowerman - *Calluna vulgaris* 'County Wicklow'
- 2nd Mr. McClintock - *Calluna vulgaris* 'White Carpet'
- 3rd Mrs. Bowerman - *Calluna vulgaris* 'Red Favorit'

Class number 5 - (White flowered *Calluna*) entered = 8; staged = 5

- 1st Mrs. Bowerman - *Calluna vulgaris* 'Elegant Pearl'
- 2nd Mr. McClintock - *Calluna vulgaris* 'Beoley Gold'
- 3rd Mrs. Bowerman - *Calluna vulgaris* 'Mair's Variety'

Class number 6 - (Bud Bloomers) entered = 6; staged = 7

- 1st Mr. McClintock - C.v. 'Amethyst'
- 2nd Mr. McClintock - C.v. 'Reini'
- 3rd Mrs. Bowerman - C.v. 'Alexandra'

Class number 7 - (*E. cinerea*) entered = 8; staged = 7
 1st Mrs. Bowerman - *E. cinerea* 'Champs Hill'
 2nd Mr. McClintock - *E. cinerea* 'Eden Valley'
 3rd Mr. Dyson - Name unknown
 Highly Commended : Mr. McClintock - Seedling of *E. cinerea*
 'C.G.Best'

Class number 8 - (*Daboecia*) entered = 7; staged = 5
 1st Mrs. Bowerman - *Daboecia cantabrica* 'Cinderella'
 2nd Mr. McClintock - *Daboecia cantabrica* 'Atropurpurea'
 3rd Mrs. Bowerman - *Daboecia cantabrica* 'Praegerae'

Class number 9 - (Other heathers) entered = 4; staged = 4
 1st Mrs. Bowerman - *E. terminalis*
 2nd Mrs. Bowerman - *E. x griffithsii* 'Valerie Griffiths'
 3rd Mrs. Bowerman - *E. manipuliflora*

Class number 10 - (Foliage cultivars) entered = 8; staged = 8
 1st Mrs. Bowerman - *E. arborea* 'Albert's Gold'
 2nd Mr. McClintock - *Calluna vulgaris* - Name unknown
 3rd Mr. McClintock - *E. x griffithsii* 'Valerie Griffiths'

Class number 11 - (Decorative) entered = 2; staged = 2
 1st Mrs. Bowerman - Shades of Pink/Red
 2nd Mrs. Bowerman - Shades of Yellow/ Gold

The "New" Database of Heather Names and Your Lovely New Heather.

Dr. E. Charles Nelson

In March 1999, The Heather Society, acting as International Registration Authority for cultivars of heathers, obtained funding from The Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust, to enable the completion of the database and register of heather names.

David Small and I've been working on this project throughout the summer, and we have reached a point where the database seems to be nearing completion, at least as far as hardy, European heathers and their cultivars are concerned – the Cape heaths and their horticultural offspring are also part of the project but that is for the future. There is quite a lot of work remaining – for example finding the original printed sources for about a third of the names – but we have a working database that can be consulted and used.

To begin at the beginning. The database owes its origins to David McClintock who over the past three decades and more has been recording the names of heathers. David published lists of all the names known to him in 1978 and 1985. Albert Julian combined those lists with the results of the cultivar trials at Harlow Carr (Yorkshire) and his own records to produce a more comprehensive list. This was used by David Small to create the first computerised database in 1986 which was refined by him and his wife, Anne,

during frequent visits to David McClintock. When Bert Jones took over the job of International Registrar, he further enlarged and edited this database and then, ably assisted by Ron Cleevely, created a draft checklist of names which was circulated worldwide a few years ago; additions and amendments were again made to the database. Now, new checklists are about to be circulated to Society members for a final check.

The database now – mid-August 1999 – contains 5080 records, each one being a name that has been used for a heather somewhere at some time past or present. (The Cape heaths part of the database stands at 1320 names, but it is not yet complete.) The database includes botanical (Latin) names at all ranks as well as the cultivar names used by gardeners, so it stretches back to 1753 when Carl Linnaeus provided the first Latin names for the plants we grow.

It is now possible, given that there are more than 5000 records, to provide a few interesting facts, although I qualify what follows by saying that we do not have full information about every heather that has been named, and some parts of the database aren't quite complete yet! I must also add that the database includes, as full records, hundreds – thousands! – of "errors", all the misprints, misidentifications, synonyms and downright wrong names that have also been printed. Thus while 5080 names are recorded, about half of these may be dumped into the "error" category!

That leaves about 2500 names – attached, in reality, to actual heathers – for which we have at least some information in the form of a description, some history and a printed reference.

What does the database tell us about heathers? How did they come about? About one-fifth (20%) of our cultivars were wild-collected – this is certainly an underestimate as many of the older ones were probably found in the wild, but their histories are not known with certainty. 300-odd (12%) are reported to have arisen as sports (mutations), while 580 (23%) were seedlings either chance finds or deliberately sown (Fig. 1).

Where did these come from? Germany is associated with 340 heathers, Canada 30, The Netherlands 270, Scotland 260, USA 120, Ireland 110... and so on (see Fig. 2). By far the largest group (more than 800) have associations with England, with about 160 from Surrey, 120 from Cornwall and 120 from Dorset.

Looking at dates associated with the cultivars (Fig. 3), the 1920's and 1930's saw a substantial rise in the number of named heathers available for gardeners. Prior to 1900 about 250 cultivars had been introduced and named. About 150 more came into circulation in the first three decades of this century (1900's-1920's), and the 1930's saw that figure equalled. Not unexpectedly there was a drop in the number of introductions during the 1940's and 1950's, with a dramatic boom in the 1970's and 1980s. 460-odd heathers have been recorded from the 1990's, but unless more than 40 new ones are named between now and the end of this year, the 1990's has seen a decline in new releases. Perhaps we are being more choosy?

And, while only 154 heather names were registered with the International Registrar up to 31 December 1998 – a miserable 6% – plant breeders' rights

have been sought for 178 cultivars (although, properly, only a small proportion of these have been granted rights).

What is the purpose of this enormous database? Its most mundane purpose is simply to serve as a record of heather names, but it has many other uses. It is now also an invaluable archive of information about heathers – where they arose, who raised them, and, of course, what they were called and why. Brief descriptions, mainly taken from David and Anne Small's *Handy Guide*, but also including the earliest published descriptions when these seem relevant, are included. When heathers have received awards or been protected by plant breeders' right, this information is also inserted.

Above all, the database is a vast index of heather names. Why have we spent so much time, and indeed, funds on it? One part of the answer is simple. *The Heather Society*, as International Registration Authority, needs to know what names have been used because within the heather "denomination class" – that includes *Andromeda*, *Calluna*, *Daboecia* and *Erica* (plus *Bruckenthalia*, including all the Cape species) – it is now against the internationally-agreed rules to duplicate cultivar names. Thus if someone has named a *Calluna* after their "Granny Smith" no-one can use that name for an *Erica* or an *Andromeda* or a *Daboecia* (they can and do, of course, use it for an apple!). Similarly a name used for a Cape heath cultivar cannot be used for a hardy *Andromeda* or a *Calluna*, no matter how nice it might be. Repetition of names has happened – and continues to happen! – but is forbidden.

So, if you have a new heather and want to name it, the best advice is send a letter or an e-mail to Jean Julian, The Registrar, (and make sure your name is unique – don't just name it, publish "any old" name, and then discover that your cherished one has been used before and so is rejected internationally and has to be scrapped even in your nursery! Registering the name of your new heather costs nothing – only a postage stamp or an e-mail – and is important because it means that your new plant will have a *unique* name that cannot be used for any other heather, and furthermore no-one can choose a name that *looks* or *sounds* similar. Putting it another way, it's in your best interests to ensure your lovely, new, unbeatable heather doesn't share the name of an inferior, rubbishy old one!

Here are a few other simple "dos" and "don't" about new cultivar names.

All new cultivar names should be in a modern language – they should not contain any Latin words or words that could be confused with Latin words. Any modern language is acceptable. (Latin names can be used as long as they were properly published before 1959. Indeed, many old Latin names properly remain in use.)

New names should not be capable of confusion, when written or spoken in any language, with any other cultivar name within heathers.

New names cannot contain the common names for the plants e.g. heather, heath, ling (or their equivalents in any other language).

And, new names must not contain the words variety, form, seedling, sport, strain, cross, hybrid, selection (or their equivalents in any language).

Lastly they can have as many as 10 syllables, but should not have more than 30 characters.

HELP! If anyone wishes to assist in editing the database entries for their country, region or county, or for their nursery or a nursery they know well, please contact The Heather Society (and the relevant entries will be sent. We would be also delighted to hear from anyone with collections of old heather nursery catalogues. (Come to think of it, there isn't a heather called Zetnet, yet!..... Too late! Sorry, folks, the name's just be booked).

Origin of heathers

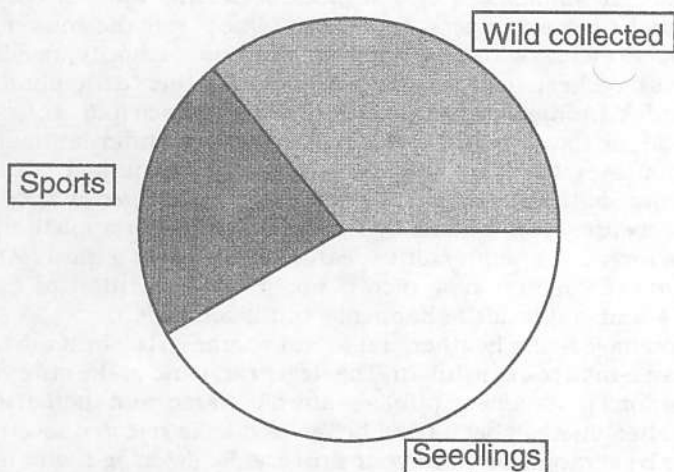


Figure 1. Origin of heather cultivars.

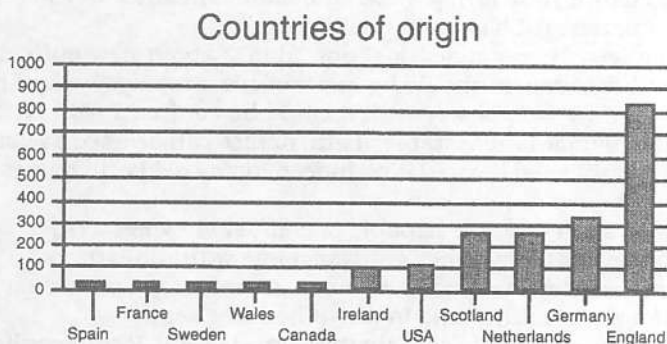


Figure 2. Countries of origin: only those with 25 or more heathers to their credit are included.

Introductions by decade

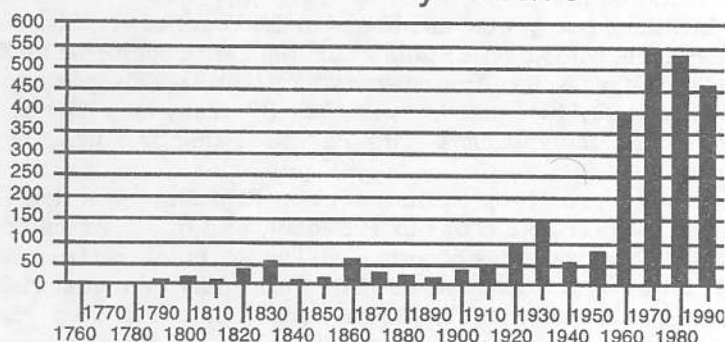


Figure 3. Numbers of heather cultivars by decade.

30 Years ago!

In 1969 the Editor of the *Bulletin*, Constance MacLeod, who was also Hon. Secretary to the Society, was appealing for contributors - still a constant cry from all editors, everywhere. It was reported that a new book, *The Companion to Flowers*, was attributed in the November *Northern Gardener*, to a David Mackintosh, instead of to our own David McClintock. Brian and Valerie Proudley had just sold their nursery at Aldenham and moved to the Forest of Dean. The Ministry of Agriculture were just putting together details of a proposed scheme for Plant Breeders Rights and heather trials were being planned for Wisley.

The Society's first booklet, *A Guide to the Naming of Plants*, by David McClintock, was about to be launched: the selling price was 6/6d, but it was to be distributed free to all members, and a keen young member by the name of Mr. D J Small wrote of the great success he had had with the small-scale propagation of *Callunas*, by rooting the young growths, which were produced above the remains of the previous autumn's flowers, in a mixture of 50% silver sand and 50% fine peat.

In July Mr. & Mrs. Geoffrey Yates welcomed between forty and fifty members from the North, the Midlands and North Wales, to a beautiful nine and a half-acre heather garden, situated in Newstead Abbey Park in Nottinghamshire. A long list of heathers received Awards of Garden Merit that year and members were invited to list the cultivars they would recommend for this honour.

In September 1969, the Society put on a display of heathers at the RHS Show at Vincent Square, under the guidance of Valerie and Brian Proudley and were the proud recipients of a Silver Banksian Medal. The RHS arranged for heather competitions to be staged and the names of two of the winners are still familiar today, namely D McClintock and Mrs. Bowerman (see report on RHS Competition). However, the Mrs. Bowerman of today is a younger

member of that illustrious family, and we are very grateful that she is carrying on the family tradition.

Several 'heathery' people were mentioned in the *Year Book* of thirty years ago. Mr. P S Patrick, who was the Editor at the time, is remembered by *Erica cinerea* 'P S Patrick', a lovely purple *cinerea* which is still widely grown today. Mr. Patrick had sadly just lost his wife, but 30 years later she is still commemorated as *Calluna vulgaris* 'Mrs. Pat', the name by which she was always known.

There was a report of the presentation at an RHS Show of a new *Erica ciliaris*, which had been found by our President, and had been named *E. ciliaris* 'David McClintock' in his honour. David wrote that it had been found "inextricably mixed with a dwarf gorse bush, in Brittany in August 1962."

A lady living in Vermont in the USA, who said she had never seen heather growing in the wild and had never crossed the sea, quoted from a poem by Emily Dickinson which took my fancy:

"I never saw a moor, I never saw the sea,
Yet I know how the heather looks, and what a wave must be."

In 1969 the membership of the Society stood at around 650 (much as it does today).

The Twenty Five Best Heather Cultivars? or, How Useful are Surveys?

Adapted from details supplied by Ron Cleevely

Some time ago, in preparation for a proposed new *Heather Society* booklet, the Technical Committee enlisted the help of Council and asked each member to produce a list of his/her top one hundred heather cultivars. The outcome was 176 names listed under various categories for particular situations or purposes.

The top 25 listed by Council were:

Calluna vulgaris 'Alexandra', 'Alleagro', 'Darkness', 'Silver Rose', 'Velvet Fascination'

Daboecia cantabrica 'Bicolor', 'Praegerae'

Daboecia x scotica 'Jack Drake', 'William Buchanan'

Erica arborea 'Albert's Gold'

Erica carnea 'Ann Sparkes', 'Myretoun Ruby'

Erica cinerea 'Lime Soda', 'Eden Valley', 'Pentreath', 'Velvet Night'

Erica ciliaris 'Corfe Castle'

Erica erigena 'Irish Dusk'

Erica vagans 'Birch Glow'

Erica x griffithsii 'Heaven Scent', 'Valerie Griffiths'

Erica x darleyensis 'Kramer's Rote', 'Jenny Porter', 'Mary Helen'

In order to get a wider view of members' likes and dislikes, delegates at the Norwich Conference (on their way by coach to Winterton Heath) were asked to list 25 of their own favourite cultivars. Amazingly, when all the results were put together at a mammoth adjudication exercise later (during which the adjudicators nearly missed their dinner), it was found that this new survey, taken from a coach-load of people, had produced 179 names between them.

Conference top 25 were:

Calluna vulgaris 'Alexandra', 'Annemarie', 'County Wicklow', 'Dark Beauty', 'Elsie Purnell', 'Peter Sparkes', 'Tib'.

Erica arborea 'Albert's Gold'.

Erica carnea 'Ann Sparkes', 'Foxhollow', 'Golden Starlet', 'Myretoun Ruby', 'Springwood White'.

Erica cinerea 'Eden Valley'

Erica erigena 'Golden Lady', 'Irish Dusk', 'W T Rackliff'.

Erica mackaiana 'Shining Light'

Erica vagans 'Lyonesse', 'Mrs. D F Maxwell'

Erica x griffithsii 'Valerie Griffiths'

Erica x darleyensis 'Arthur Johnson', 'Kramers Rote', 'Silberschmelze', 'White Perfection'.

A comparison of the two lists revealed that only seven of the Council's top cultivars featured in the Conference selection, although four more were listed in their next forty. Similarly, eight from the Conference list were also included in the top twenty five selected by Council and another four were in their top forty.

The new *Recommended List* of 100 best heathers should be available for sale quite soon. It will try to take account of all possible growing conditions, heights, sites, availability etc. and should be a most useful aid to choosing heathers. However, whether the two surveys were in any way helpful to the Technical Committee in its choice of the best cultivars, is another matter altogether.

Heather Hungry Beetle putting Moors at Risk

From The Daily Telegraph 6 March 1999

Large areas of moorland are at risk from a beetle which has been eating its way through heather. Thousands of acres are known to have been destroyed in what experts say is the worst outbreak of the grub. Moorland in Derbyshire's Peak National Park has been particularly affected.

The beetle is the size of a grain of rice but its larvae is responsible for widespread devastation. It chews through the heather, killing the plant and destroying precious habitat for species, including birds, which rely on it for protection. The beetle has left tinder-dry plants which officials say are at risk from fire and which could prevent the regrowth of the heather for many years to come.

The problem was noticed earlier this summer but experts and locals say

they have been shocked by the rapid spread of the beetle. John Lees, Secretary of the Peak Park Moorland Owners and Tenants Association, said: "I've worked on these moors all my life and I've never seen anything like it. A outbreak this extensive is so unusual we've had to resort to books from the turn of the century to find out what to do."

Park officials are now considering the possibility of banning the public from large areas to limit the risk of fires. Large beetle numbers have been reported in moorland in northern Somerset, the Shropshire Hills and the Yorkshire Dales. The Quantock Hills are said to be badly hit, with 80% of the heather infested.

It is not known for certain why there has been a population explosion but some experts believe climatic change might be to blame. Whatever the reasons, officials say they have been left with few options. Mr. Lees said: "One way is to burn the infested areas, but with the moors tinder-dry, we're faced with some very difficult decisions. We want to act quickly to avoid what could turn out to be a disaster for the moors." Rhodri Thomas, an ecologist, warned of the dangers to wildlife. "Hasty actions could make the situation worse," he said.

Having let our Hon. Sec., Ron Cleevely, know that I was trying to obtain some answers to this problem, he has sent me the following helpful information.
Ed.

Heather Beetle (*Lochmaea suturalis*) - See article in *Yearbook* Vol. 2. (81): 23-28, by Dr. M G Morris; which ended: "The answer to *why* there are irregular periodic outbreaks of the beetle must await further ecological research". Simultaneous outbreaks in 1979 were thought to be due to the interaction of favourable weather and the reproductive potential of beetle populations.

***Daboecia* on stamps, and other Heathers**

Charles Nelson

David McClintock reported in the last *Bulletin* (vol. 5, no 17), that Portugal had recently issued a stamp showing *Daboecia azorica*, and asked if there had been any earlier issue showing St. Dabeoc's Heath. There was one issue by Ireland in 1978 showing *Daboecia cantabrica*, portrayed in watercolour by Wendy Walsh (*Bulletin* vol. 2, no. 17: 7).

I tried the Internet for information about stamps issue showing heathers and can now give the following list of heather stamps.

Calluna vulgaris - USSR

Calluna vulgaris - Finland (1990 - reproduced in *Der Heidegarten* 27: 43 (1990))

Daboecia azorica - Portugal (1999)

Daboecia cantabrica - Ireland (1978)

Erica aristata - South Africa (1994)

Erica blenna - South Africa (1973)

Erica carnea - Germany (West Berlin) (1975) (noted in *Bulletin* vol. 3, no. 1: 8).

Erica decora - South Africa (1994)

Erica dichrus - South Africa (1994)
Erica erigena 'Irish Dusk' - Ireland (1990)
Erica tenuifolia - South Africa (1994)
Erica tetralix - Denmark
Erica urna-viridis - South Africa (1994)

Major-General Turpin (Bulletin vol. 3 no. 5: 4) added also a Dutch charity stamp issued in 1927 showing a stylised heather and the arms of the Province of Drente.

Group News

North East

Fourteen members had an enjoyable evening at Bill and Margaret Crow's Nursery at Scots Gap, on July 17th, where we saw some splendid displays of heathers, together with many alpinas. Our thanks again to Margaret for the welcome cup of tea.

The Annual Show, held within the Ponteland Show, on September 11th, was a great success. Entries totalled 83 in the 16 classes, which was a slight increase on last year and all the exhibits were of a high standard according to our Judge, John Gemmel. Well done everyone and thank you to all who participated and helped to make the show-bench so colourful. The public had noticed.

Our next Car-Outing is to Craggside, on Saturday, October 23rd, where we will meet in the Car Park at 11.30 am. Weather permitting, bring a picnic or, if you wish, you can use their facilities.

Our final meeting will be the AGM on Friday October 29th at 7.30 pm in St. Matthew's Church Hall, Ponteland. We will have our usual Faith Supper after the business is over, winding up with members' slides of heathers, gardens, etc.

We look forward to seeing you at all these events.

Dorothy Warner

Yorkshire

On Saturday 10th July, 23 members gathered at Sleightholmedale Lodge, two miles from Kirkbymoorside, to explore Mrs. James' three acre hillside garden. It was most enjoyable wandering through the colourful walled herbaceous borders and the cultivated hillside terraces leading down to the meadow walk way along the lower picturesque valley. Although heathers, apart from *E. arborea*, did not feature prominently there were many interesting and unusual shrubs and plants to fully occupy one's attention.

Our next port of call was Beryl and David Mayne's home and garden in Kirkbymoorside where we were entertained to an ample, varied and very tasty tea. Their heather garden rises abruptly from the house to a vantage point looking out over Ryedale. Advantage has been taken of the steep slope to produce a natural hillside effect by constructing a replica of a natural

mountain stream bed which carries water effectively during heavy rainfall. On either side are small beds of most of the heather species rising to a terrace with its lovely view. We are indeed grateful to Beryl and David for their wonderful hospitality.

The last meeting of the heather group was at the Study Centre, Harlow Carr on Saturday, 18th September when Geoffrey Yates and Peter Vickers entertained us with an illustrated talk on the "History of heather and its nurserymen".

Mulching material has been applied to eight of the twelve beds of the new *Calluna* collection at Harlow Carr and the plot is beginning to resemble the original conception of a continental type heather garden. The remaining beds will be mulched when the land drains have been laid, which it is hoped will be in the next few days. We are greatly indebted to member, Martin Boyd, who has moved and distributed tons of pulverised bark among the plants.

Plans are in hand to lay out the replacement winter flowering collections which are to be alongside the *Calluna* plot allowing curved contours to give greater eye appeal to the integrated whole.

Jean Julian

East Midlands (and West Midlands)

Modesty forbids me to head this report 'East Midlands Group' After our splendid visit to *The Bannut* on August 14th, I should really be calling it 'The English Summer Meeting', because members from 10 counties, from Durham to Wiltshire, attended. Twenty five members, twenty seven if we include our hosts, as we should, were present and these included our Vice-President, Albert Julian, Chairman, David Small, Registrar, Jean Julian and Administrator, Anne Small. This attendance is testimony to the fame which *The Bannut* has already attained in the Society. We were warmly received by Maurice and Daphne who served us coffee and tea for our picnic lunch, and some delicious home-made cakes for tea.

It was a day of sunshine and showers. The sun was warm but tempered with a refreshing breeze and the showers mercifully short and far between. The bright and comfortable tea-room also gave us refuge (and hospitality) during a shower. We had been looking forward to this event for more than a year since Maurice and Daphne first invited us to visit them. Our expectations therefore were high – and, in the event, not disappointed.

There are 11,000 heathers in about 180 varieties planted in the new heather garden and Daphne forbore to estimate how many there are in the old one. Many of the plants were in flower, giving a colourful display in that luscious green, rural setting. Of course, the knot garden attracted a lot of attention, and helped Messrs. Kodak on its way to another profitable year.

We visitors therefore had plenty to see, and much to compare notes about, and, as always, it was a real pleasure to see each other again. It is on a wider basis than the East Midlands Group that I record our thanks to Maurice and Daphne and congratulate them on the creation of a very lovely heather garden.

To help members come down from a high after their *Bannut* visit, Joan and I invite members to visit our own (much) more modest garden in Loughborough on Saturday August 12th 2000 and to take tea with us. Mr. Arnold Stow has kindly agreed to attend and to present his talk 'Heather, Plants and People'. Details in the Spring.

Allen Hall

South West

Since the two meetings reported on in the Summer Bulletin we have had two further meetings (in Hampshire and Dorset) with one still to come.

On Saturday 5th June a group of 22 members met at the garden of Little Barn at Woodgreen on the edge of the New Forest. The garden is normally open under the National Gardens Scheme but Drs Bob and Vicky Crawford who own the garden had kindly invited us to view their "informal garden" as a private party. Bob Crawford was on hand to show us around that afternoon but unfortunately as we started the visit the heavens opened and it rained heavily for a good part of the afternoon. However with the rain gear on and the umbrellas up we continued around the garden and wandered amongst the Rhododendrons and Camellias most of which were now over but herbaceous plants and shrubs were now taking over the flowering. The garden was well wooded and did afford some protection from the rain. Apart from the rain there was a large and attractive water feature with marginal plantings nestling at the edge of the woodland. The rain continued whilst we retired to a large tunnel house where we had refreshment and where we could buy examples of plants seen in the garden. Suffice to say the members took every opportunity to find a plant suitable for that odd corner of their garden. A late clearance in the weather allowed a further wander around the garden for those members who decided to stay on. My thanks goes to Bob Crawford who didn't mind getting wet at all in order that he could share his love of plants with us.

Saturday, 17th July was a lovely bright and sunny day, a complete contrast to the previous reported meeting. Some members met early, for the visit to the garden of Domineys Yard in the village of Buckland Newton in Dorset, to have picnic lunches in the paddock outside of the garden. As I found out later, the edges of the paddock had been planted with some rare trees by our hosts. The garden is owned by Mr. and Mrs. Gueterbock and is open under the National Gardens Scheme but on this day we had a private viewing. We were guided around a garden, nestling in the Dorset Downs, that consisted of plantings of shrubs and herbaceous plants many of which were in flower and, as the sun was shining, we were able to enjoy a leisurely stroll. The garden also had a swimming pool and members had been invited to bring their swimming gear with them and indeed some accepted the invitation and enjoyed "a dip". At the end of the afternoon we all enjoyed tea and cakes, not in a tunnel house this time, but on the lawn.

My thanks to our hosts for a wonderful afternoon.

Further Dates for your Diary:

Saturday 25th March 2000 - This will be the annual indoor meeting at

the Lytchett Matravers Village Hall in Dorset. Members should meet in the hall by 2.00 p.m., where Diane Jones will give an illustrated talk, the title of which is as yet undecided. We've all seen that wonderful garden created by Bert and Diane and no doubt her talk will make reference to that.

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 Heathers shown for foliage effect.

Prizes will be awarded and the Burfitt Bowl (currently held by 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.

Further meetings for 2000 are planned but not finalised. Information on the one described above, and others, can be obtained by sending me a SAE as soon as possible and if you intend to come to a meeting then I would be grateful if you could let me know about 10 days beforehand (Tel: 01703 864336). Once again I am grateful to those people who make the visits possible and I look forward to seeing you all next year.

Phil Joyner

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