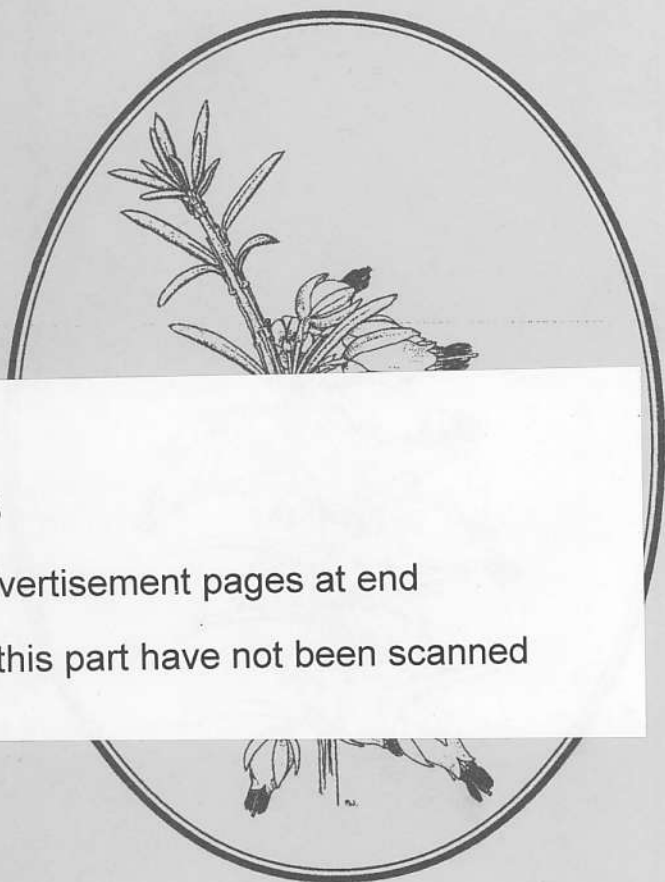


Bulletin of The Heather Society



Vol. 5 No. 19

Spring 2000

DIARY OF EVENTS

2000

- 25 March Yorkshire Group Talk by David Plumridge, Harlow Carr
- 25 March South West Group Annual Indoor Show, Lytchett Matravers
- 6 May North East Group Annual Outing, Harewood House
- 6 May South West Group Garden Visit , 7 Norton Bavant
- 15 May Deadline for the Summer Bulletin
- 10 June Yorkshire Group Talk by Geoffrey Smith, Harlow Carr
- ?? July Yorkshire Group Visit, to be arranged
- 19 July North East Group Evening Visit to Bill Crow's Nursery
- 29 July South West Group Visit to David Edge's Nursery, Verwood
- 12 August East Midlands Group. Meeting at the home of Allen Hall
- ?? August North East Group Possible visit to Raby Castle
- 25/29 Aug. International Conference in Germany
- 9 Sept. North East Group Annual Show
- 16 Sept. Yorkshire Group Talk by David Mayne, Harlow Carr
- 30 Sept. Annual General Meeting at Buxton
- 27 October North East Group AGM



A Registered Charity No. 261407

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Cover illustration *Erica carnea* by Brita Johannson

At the beginning of November 1999 (back in the last millennium), - whilst doing my usual morning circuit of the garden with our two Shelties, I was struck by the unusual number of heathers which were already in bloom. Here in Herefordshire the winter/spring flowering heathers rarely show any colour before mid-December at the earliest, yet Erica carnea 'December Red', 'Ice Princess', 'Golden Starlet', 'Lohses Rubin', Erica x darleyensis 'Mary Helen', 'Kramers Red', 'White Perfection', 'Darley Dale' and 'Ghost Hills' were all in flower. Perversely, Erica erigena 'Brian Proudley', which, many times in the past, has flowered for us as early as October, was still in tight bud. Of the summer flowering heathers which were still showing colour, the most outstanding was Erica ciliaris 'Mawean' which was still putting on a brilliant show, with 'David McClintock' not far behind. What a strange season it was! I wonder how others found it? Please write and let us know.

Early notice of our Annual General Meeting Saturday 30th September 2000

As we do not have a domestic Conference this year, the AGM will be held at the Portland Hotel & Park Restaurant, Buxton on Saturday 30 September 2000. There will be an afternoon of talks on the South Africa Field Trip followed by the AGM. For those staying over, there will be an Open Forum after dinner. Full details will appear in the *Summer Bulletin*.

On the Sunday morning, there will be a Council meeting and, hopefully, a visit to a local garden for non-Councillors. Make it part of a super weekend visiting the local attractions of the Peak District.

Cost: £28 for day delegates which includes morning coffee, buffet lunch, afternoon tea and biscuits.

£65 per person for double occupancy (£68 for single room) includes morning coffee, buffet lunch, afternoon tea and biscuits plus 3 course Table d' Hote dinner and breakfast

The hotel only has 22 bedrooms (all en suite) so, to avoid disappointment we need to make early bookings with the hotel. Please let me know if you wish to attend as soon as possible.

David Small,
Chairman.

International Conference 25th to 29th August 2000

The final bookings are now being taken for the first International Conference on Heathers, to be held at Elmshorn, Germany. The programme is as follows:

Friday 25 August

16:00 Arrival of participants.

18:30 A Welcome Party. (Knowing the Germans, this will be very good)

Saturday 26 August: A visit in the morning to private gardens and a visit to Heidepark Heidberg followed by lunch and a visit to specialist nurseries in the afternoon. Dinner at 19:30

Sunday 27 August: At present there will be 2 talks in the morning: "Die Formenvielfalt der europäischen Heiden" (The wide diversity of forms of European heathers) by Kurt Kramer. Being a superb photographer, I am sure we are in for a treat. "Placing heathers on the Tree of Life" by Ian Small. This talk will trace how DNA testing is used to augment conventional botany to establish the relationship between species. After lunch, there is a visit to the Arboretum Ellerdorp.

Monday 28 August: Visit to a porcelain factory followed by a visit to Westermann heather nursery. After lunch there is a visit to a heather garden at Schneverdingen and a walk on the nearby heath. I think there is a fantastic village there which sells all sorts of things made from heather. In the evening there is a Farewell party.

The cost of the Conference is 755Dm (approx. £253) per person for a twin room, or 795Dm (approx. £266) per person for a single room. Participants will be invoiced directly by the tour company employed by *Gesellschaft der Hiedefreunde*. Although credit/debit card is probably the most convenient way of paying, it carries a 5% surcharge.

Mini Tour by Mini-bus

Those members who are attending the International Conference can also join in a mini-tour of Holland and Germany should they wish to. The tour is as follows:

Wednesday 24 August: Mini-buses leave Somerset around mid-day collecting participants at various points (to be arranged). Overnight stop at Pipp's Ford (B&B) near Ipswich.

Thursday 25 August: Ferry from Harwich (dep 10.55) – Hook of Holland (arr. 15.25)

Travel to Schiphol airport to pick up passengers at 17.00. Travel to Gouda. Overnight stop at Hotel Campanile (2*)

Friday 26 August: Travel to Elmshorn.

Tuesday 29 August: Travel to Bad Zwischenahn. Visit to the heather trial grounds

ERRATA - Mini Tour by Mini-bus

The error is in the early dates of the mini-tour.

The tour starts on **Wednesday 23 August** from the south of England.

Thursday 24 August is when the tour travels by ferry from Harwich and also picks up from Schiphol Airport NOT 25 August as originally stated.

Friday 25 August is the day we travel to Elmshorn near Hamburg.

around. Overnight stop at Hotel Campanile (2*), Gouda.

Thursday 31 August: A morning visit to two heather nurseries in Boskoop. Travel to Schiphol (arr. 14:00) to drop any passengers travelling by air. Travel to Hook of Holland for ferry (dep. 16.05), arriving in Harwich at 18:50. Overnight stop at Pippes Ford (B&B) near Ipswich can be arranged.

Friday 1 September: Mini-buses travel to Somerset after breakfast dropping participants at various points (to be arranged).

The anticipated cost of the mini-tour is **£214 (per person) for two sharing £266 for single travel.**

The above costs include the cost of the ferry, hire of mini-bus, fuel and accommodation en route. It does NOT include meals en route and assumes 12 passengers per coach. It does NOT include the extra B&B nights at Pippes Ford near Ipswich.

For passengers alighting at Schiphol deduct £42.

For those interested in either the Conference or the mini-tour or want further information please write to David Small, Denbeigh, All Saints Road, Creting St. Mary, Ipswich IP6 8PJ or email at heathers@zetnet.co.uk by **31 March**.

Secretary's Snippet Ron Cleevely

Having resurrected this method of keeping members informed of events & decisions of Council I need to continue. Yet, at the moment, three weeks before the next Council meeting, there is little of consequence to report. No doubt, our deliberations in February will change the situation! However, following my mention of the possibility of producing a new Membership List, I can report that this is in hand and, subject to Council's approval, will be available on the order form accompanying this *Bulletin*. With regard to the possibilities of participating at Chelsea 2000, or organising events for National Science Week in March 2000, I have to relate that owing to very few members offering to assist in either project, it has been recognised that it is impracticable for the Society to become involved in either event.

Browsing through the Bulletin of the Alpine Garden Society, shortly after the Falmouth Conference, the President, noted a request from the producer of Channel Four's programme "Real Gardens;" for those gardeners intending to make significant changes or developments in their gardens, to allow them to be featured in the forthcoming series. Various suggestions were made as to those members of *The Heather Society*, who might be prepared to participate, and Ron Wing, when approached, valiantly offered to subject himself to this ordeal by 'experts' & the media as any changes he made were effected. Although Ron's offer was considered, other gardens were eventually selected from the huge response to the original notice. But I know that Council was extremely appreciative of his willingness to demonstrate that the gardens of Heather Society members are not solely devoted to heathers, but can be very diverse, while considerable variation occurs in the Ericaceae anyway, as we all know.

Towards the end of 1999, I heard of the loss of Mr. Hector Claugher, a member of the Society since 1980. He had thoughtfully ensured that his full set of the Yearbooks was bequeathed to us, in order that these could be made available to another member or organisation, needing to refer to them. The bequest also contains many numbers

of Vols. 3, 4 & 5 of the Bulletin.

Several members at the Falmouth Conference, expressed an interest in the splendid tartan attire worn by our speaker Howard Kernow from the Cornwall Wildlife Trust. Barry Sellers intended to publish the details of this Cornish tartan in the Yearbook Report, but as space was limited it has had to be published here:

"The tartan of Kernow (Cornwall) is 60 inches wide and made from 100% pure wool; it is only available from An Gernyk, St. Hillary, Penzance, Cornwall TR20 9DQ.

The dominant colour of purple represents the profusion of heathers found growing on the moors of Cornwall. This is interspersed with a band of red, representing the colour of the beak and legs of the Cornish Chough, this in turn is bounded on both sides by a thin golden-yellow line to depict the gorse amongst which the heathers are found growing. In the centre of the pattern, which repeats every 4+ inches, is a white cross on a black background, the cross of St. Prian, the national flag of Cornwall."

As yet, the RHS has not included mention of our web-site amongst those listed on its own Home page, nor has any mention been made in their 'Web Watch' feature published at intervals in *The Garden*. Still it is worth looking at such sites, if you are generally interested in all aspects of horticulture. Among those I have visited are these: ; www.vineweevil.org.uk [giving details of the pest that seems to have suddenly become a major scourge of both garden and potted plants, although our Primulacea suffered as far back as 1982]; <www.personal.umich.edu/~agrxray> [this site provides floral radiographs of numerous garden flowers; the only member of the Ericaceae so far is that of Azalea, but look at the frilly edges of Cyclamen leaves, or the attractive pattern produced by Honesty]. Among those devoted to trees which apart from providing photographs also yield information on books, other associated organisations &c. &c. are: for Britain: - which covers 30 species of British trees; & for North America: which has tree range maps from the out-of-print atlas by Elbert Little.

Fantasy Fortnight **Susie Kay**

It had seemed like an eternity since the idea of a field trip to South Africa, first proposed at the Dublin conference in 1995, was happening. After months of decisions on what clothes, what shorts, what footwear; here we were, ten of us in an immigration queue at Cape Town, bleary eyed after a 12 hour overnight flight, but all expectant for what was ahead of us.

Outside Ted and Inge Oliver were waiting to greet us. Bags loaded into a luxury coach we heard the first of many talks from Ted, delivered in impeccable prose with an encyclopaedic knowledge of his surroundings. As we neared our hotel we passed a spanking new prison with a big welcome sign over the gates; this produced much laughter as we bowled through our own security gates to the Steenberg Country Hotel, immaculate grounds and wonderful view of Constantiaberg. Luxurious rooms, but no time to test the bed, as there is so much to see and do.

A drive into Cape Town so that Ted and David could conduct some bureaucratic exercise on export permits, whilst the rest of us wandered through the Company Gardens, magnificent unusual trees, and then all together again to learn our new routine. Our new coach, which was probably the oldest in the fleet, ground it's way slowly up Signal Hill to the vantage point, where we all leapt out to admire our first

Cape Heath growing in the wild – *E. baccans*. Much photographing and examination under hand lenses, and the beginning of the great cutting exercise.

Back to the hotel for good food, good chatter and illuminating lectures from Ted, plus of course, imbibing the local wines. Poor Alan Kay, the newest member of the heather society became our sommelier for the rest of the trip.

Ted expected us to be on the coach by 08:30 am. every morning, there was a groan from one person, but, I have to point out, she was never late for the bus departure.

The first whole day was at Kirstenbosch and the Cape folk should be rightly proud of their National Garden. We were treated to a tour of various functions that support the gardens. In the potting area local volunteers were busy working, all were members of the Botanical Society of South Africa, who had been trained in nursery skills and provided a valuable service. Their potting mixture was pulverised pine bark and sand and they seemed very expert. Many members were then heard gasping and oohing and aahing as we were in the section dedicated to ericas. So many cape heaths arranged before us, a veritable cornucopia, or should that be ericacopia? But these were not for cutting material.

Out to the actual *Erica* garden with James Townsend. Warm sunshine and Table Mountain in all its glory as the setting for our first picnic lunch with sun birds dipping their long beaks into proteas surrounding the *Ericas*..

To the research centre and Ted and Inge's office in the herbarium, but not before one of our group was lost and two way radios brought into use in the search. A superbly arranged facility all neatly organised with rows and rows of sliding trays full of *Erica* specimens. The amount of botanical knowledge contained in this building was



The South African party at Cape Agulhas, the southern-most point of Africa. Left to right, Diane Jones, Barry Wulff, Ted Oliver, Ella May Wulff, Peter Bingham, David Edge, our driver, Susie Kay, Barry Sellers, Alan Kay, Anne Small and David Small

awe inspiring. Next we visited the shop where many goodies were available, not least the book section.

On to a real tourist day as we ascended Table Mountain by a fabulous new revolving cable car, along with hundreds of other tourists. Mixed with the tourists were dassie (an overgrown hamster like creature, but more closely related to the elephant) and we had strict instructions not to feed them, the dassie that is.

The afternoon was spent ascending Constantiaberg in our ancient bus through a logging camp with thick mud. Our driver was valiant in his efforts when we met a car descending on the single-track road with a precipitous drop to the side. Several members thought it wiser to go on foot even though it was uphill. A private road led to the FM station at the top and we all enjoyed the walk down through the fynbos with all its Cape Heaths

Penguins for Wednesday on Boulder Beach, the Jackass variety, which were cordoned off, but again the cameras were clicking. On to the Cape of Good Hope and the scenic drive along Chapman's Peak with spectacular views. Dinner that night was in the wackiest restaurant any of us had ever been to – not one piece of china, flatware, glasses or even chairs, tables and cloths matching. This was after we had driven round downtown Cape Town, up and down streets, phone calls back to the hotel, inquiring of passers by to try to find the place, but it was all worth it – fabulous food and service.

By this time, a couple of our members were beginning to go down with hideous colds. It was rumoured had been imported from America, but who knows? Eventually 8 out of 10 of us suffered at some time along with the driver. Only Ted, David Small and American Barry were immune. South African pharmacies did even better out of us than Kodak.

Time to move via Stellenbosch, Ted's home town, and renew acquaintance with Deon Kotze (Dublin field trip 1995), who is now Curator for the University Botanical Gardens. He gave us a comprehensive guided tour showing us his plans for replanting. We were the first to use his new outdoor café.

To Elsenberg, a research station where they are looking at commercial prospects for Cape fynbos plants. The nurserymen were in their element with much exchange of views.

As we were now in one of the principal wine growing areas, lunch had been arranged at a winery during which we had the chance to taste several of the estate's excellent wines. But, no time to relax, back to Stellenbosch where Ted took us on a guided tour of some of the beautiful Cape buildings of this university town.

Across wonderful mountain passes to Franschoek, settled by the Huguenots and meaning French corner. On the way we passed a sign to Kylemore, I thought I was back in Connemara and wondered which Irish family had settled there.

We all had enormous rooms in the Quartier Francais, with giant beds and fireplaces.

Having collected Inge and Gerhard Kirsten, one half of the authorship of "*Ericas of South Africa*", now well advanced in years but still a great walker and botanist, we ascended Elandsbloef. The walk was led by Gerard Hansford, who later in the day took us to his very own *Erica* that he found about three years ago. A very tiny species (*E. hansfordii*) but with wonderful ornate yellow flowers hiding under stands of *Erica bergiana*. First we had to be transported in stages in trucks down tracks and then ford a stream, some did this in their bare feet, some just walked through in their all terrain sandals. Very much a white cream and yellow day for the *Ericas* with *E. leucanthera* being the most prominent. All the while, bags are being filled with cuttings, hundreds

of photographs and much note taking.

Sunday was to go up Jonaskop with a road up the mountain, so a new bus had been supplied, but somehow we seemed to miss the gear grinding and wondering if we would make it up the next hill. Again this was a private road and Ted had keys to open the various gates. We think there were mountains all around us, but the cloud had come down and taken the world away. Despite the sneezing and coughing, three members chose to walk down the road with its hairpin bends and out of the mist one would catch glimpses of fantastic limestone rock formations and ericas everywhere.

Time to move again, but the new bus is smaller and has no boot, so all the suitcases, holdalls, carrier bags and not forgetting the packed lunches have to be stored on the back seat, somehow there was still room for everyone to have a seat.

Back down to the coast via Gordon's Bay and Betty's Bay with a stop off at The Harold Porter Garden and then to a most fabulous valley in the Kogelberg. A young warden took us on a short walk up towards the mountains, knowing exactly where the various *Ericas* were in flower, particularly *E. campanularis*. All of the places we visit are nature reserves and to walk in the Kogelberg a pass is needed and only 12 visitors are allowed each day. A wonderful place if, like me, you like mountains. I was distraught to hear that this is one of the areas of fynbos, which has been destroyed by the recent Cape fires. We can only hope that the smoke regeneration (see *Yearbook* 1999: 23) really does work.

So to Hermanus, the whale watching capital of the world, with a town crier to announce when they are in residence. We were not disappointed. Their fog horn calls or shouts of joy are really something. A visit to Fernkloof nature reserve, again staffed by volunteers, where we met Pricilla, a very grand lady, but again a remarkable botanist who has inspired many others.

Lunch was in a special cave where you can watch the whales as you dine. Some members then couldn't resist a visit to the local nursery, where they were presented with several Cape Heaths to take home.

The writer of this short piece went for a walk along the coastal path and actually swam in the surf (pictures to prove it). The masses of *E. plukenetii* were a sight to behold, as were in quite a different way the Herculean efforts of the dung beetles.

Alan and Peter decided to play golf whilst the rest of us were treated to a special day at the estate of Thys de Villiers. His land is covered in Cape Heaths and encouraged by Ted he has become a botanist. On arrival we were given tea and coffee and then climbed into two Land Rovers. David Edge was in his element and fascinated by the extras that had been fitted to the vehicles. Away we went, through the scrub and sometimes on tracks, up and up to the clouds again. Forever leaping out, he showed us 35 different species, all in flower. Our interest more and more fired by the enthusiasm for our dear *Ericas* shown by these guides. A long drive back and as usual most people fell asleep. This was the norm every afternoon; it must have been the mountain air as there was no alcohol in the picnic lunches.

On to the southernmost point of South Africa, Cape Agulhas. The wind seems to have got up to near hurricane strength, so after a very quick group photograph with the lighthouse in the background we continued our journey to Arniston, our refuge for the night. It is about this time that someone suggests that the Society should have a timeshare somewhere in the Cape. David Edge is appointed temporary treasurer and various suggestions are made as to where it should be. Even if we can't run to a timeshare, how about the next AGM? The ideas on funding became more outrageous.

Time to head north again, the wind has calmed, but the sun is getting hotter. We

are all very good with hats and cream. Miles and miles of dirt roads, which thankfully were dry, so you have only dust to cope with. A large cobra was spotted and the coach screeches to a halt so that all can see. Ted and others had warned us about the reptiles, but this was our first sighting. Although we never saw the "big 5" we had seen lots of wildlife, ostriches, baboons, springbok, tortoises and birds galore.

To another beautiful house and a trip to see a different crop. Honeybush-Tea, which we had tasted at Kirstenbosch. Very refreshing. The farmer had tried growing *Erica daphniflora* as a commercial proposition, but had not been too successful, higher hopes for the honeybush.

To Klippe Rivier, where we had taken over the entire hotel. Major, an Irish Wolfhound and his new playmate Molly, a four month old pup as big as my fully grown Border collie, met us. My husband and I had been given the honeymoon cottage, set apart from the rest of the hotel. The temperature was now up in the nineties, but there was a swimming pool!

Joanne, the chef manager, treated us to a wonderful meal. The setting for this very Cape Dutch house was in view of the Langeberg Mountains and we felt we were in paradise. Our main concern being how to keep the plants and cuttings cool. We had seen so many Cape Heaths, Anne Small kept a running record and said we were up to 150 species. So some people had been working very hard. Barry had been collecting seeds so his load was much lighter.

On route we passed an old town called Barryville, so stop again as we must have a photograph of the two Barry's proclaiming their town. Always the cry was "where can I get more film" and somehow we always managed to find a shop. How I admired the dedication of Diane, who photographed every specimen against a dark background, her trousers, and her copious note taking and how can Ted remember every single name, not just the *Ericas*, but the Restioids, the orchids for Ella May, the *Leucadendrons*, the *Proteas*, in fact every plant we saw.

The next day dawned even hotter and a much depleted party set off for the Grootlebos Wilderness area. Four stayed behind and were taken into Swellendam, the second oldest town in South Africa, by Joanne. The brave explorers returned, very red in the face and exhausted by the heat, to join us in a very welcome dip in the pool.

Goodbye to Major and Molly and on to our last day of *Erica* spotting in the beautiful town of Greyton. A wonderful welcome by some German settlers who had their very own nature reserve and then a guided tour by a very upright 83 year old, up the trail we went. As he walked along, he was pulling up the occasional weed, usually a pine seedling and announced that he and his wife righteously weeded this 2000 acre reserve to make sure only the indigenous plant grew and were not overtaken by aliens. Here we found *E. ovina*, which it was felt would make a superb pot plant back in Europe. Down the trail to a magnificent lunch provided by our hosts and a chance to look round their delightful garden and talk about *Ericas*.

How hard to leave the mountains, the flowers and the vastness into the traffic and people for our last night. As befitting their status David and Anne were awarded their own grand apartment complete with sherry and port bottles.

Our final few hours before departure were spent in shopping in various areas. Some of us visited Silverhill Seeds, some went to Kirstenbosch and some went to the Waterfront shopping mall in Cape Town. Being in need of some retail therapy I managed all three. David and Anne spent their day setting up new relationships, which they hope will lead to cross continent traffic in cuttings, and understanding.

At 5 pm it was goodbye to Ted, Inge and our driver. Ted probably heaved a huge sigh of relief. As with any trip there were problems with accommodation and transport

with David and Ted sorting these out, thus giving the rest of us a chance to have the most wonderful time.

P.S. Dear David, when can we go again to see the other 600 we missed.

North American Heather Society Conference, Sept. 17-19 1999 David Plumridge

It was the turn of the Northeast Heather Society to host the annual conference. As Rita and I had thoroughly enjoyed their Cape Cod event two years before - and wished to see more of New England - we decided to reserve our place. However, this soon meant work! Donald MacKay asked us to give a presentation. After some apprehension we thought this would give us an opportunity to disclose our "secret area" to our American friends. When they visit Britain the North East is a little more than a no-man's land as they scurry from York to Edinburgh.

The agreed subject became "Heathers and the North Pennines". This fairly open title would allow consideration of both the natural and cultivated varieties, which thrive in the area. Although I had spent my childhood and beyond roaming our moorland, I found I still had a lot to learn about grouse moor management and how it is responsible for the glorious swathes of purple heather on the uplands. Fortunately our local keeper with his lifetime of experience was able to make me realise that there was a lot more to it than burning off a patch of heather now and then! While taking slides of a local shoot some of the guns showed interest in my project and one moor owner from North Yorkshire was kind enough to give me several minutes of his time for more useful snippets of information. Whatever you think of "blood sports" there is no doubt our heather moors would seriously deteriorate were it not for the attention they are given for the benefit of the grouse.

We also have some good examples of lowland heath and it was pleasing to hear about the attention given to its conservation by *English Nature* and other local conservation groups and agencies.

To show the local *Calluna* at its best, slides had to be taken right up to the last minute. You can imagine the relief when the last box of slides arrived from the processors on the morning of our departure to Newcastle airport!

After that all went exceedingly well. Friends John and Gail Safstrom from Minnesota picked us up at Boston. They had kindly invited us to share their three-week tour of New England and Canada. We ambled up the coast staying in delightful B&B's in lovely little seaside towns and arrived on schedule on the Friday at the Conference HQ in Rockland, Maine.

The Conference organisation and support documentation was well up to the standard we have come to expect. A few didn't make it because of hurricane Floyd, but the 45 who did seemed to enjoy themselves. Luckily, my talk was the first item on the agenda so I was able to relax and enjoy the rest of the proceedings. Donald MacKay had "kindly" advised the audience to listen very carefully, as the speaker's version of northern English would be difficult to decipher, and volunteered to translate where necessary. Despite this handicap, the gist of the message seemed to get through and not too many sleepy heads were noted.

There was only time on the Saturday for one of the two scheduled talks. Fortunately we managed to persuade Harry Bowen to give us a late night private viewing of his slide show. This was a programme of slides and notes he has put together to give to gardening clubs and other interested groups. As might be expected from such a long established and able heather grower and propagator, it provides a valuable introduction to the subject from a North American angle. Possibly such a programme could be considered for use in the UK? It would certainly take out the hard work of producing your own show. I know from experience that gardening clubs, church groups, WI's etc. are always on the lookout for talks. I have already given two repeats of my Maine talk and am scheduled for three more in the locality. It can't do any harm to sow a few seeds of heather propaganda around your area!

Harry's talk got eased out by a combination of an overrun by the Maine lobster dinner (great fun - but not for the lobsters!) and the talk by Dr. Donglin Zhan from the University of Maine. He described his scientific trials of *Ericas* and *Callunas* with regard to planting date and various forms of winter protection. He also carried out laboratory freezing tests on stem and leaf tissue samples. It was revealing to note, for example, in that part of the world, without winter cover, the *Erica carnea*, *E. vagans* and *E. x darleyensis* in the trial suffered 100% mortality. Should anyone wish to see the full results I would be happy to supply a copy. David Small has already been supplied with one.

The feasting and lectures were accompanied by visits to private and public gardens as well as taking in some of the delightful coastal scenery. Unlike back home, where our *Callunas* were just starting to make a show, their main flowering period was over so it was a little disappointing from that point of view. It was particularly pleasing to see the new demonstration planting of 30 varieties of heather at the Merryspring Horticultural Nature Park arranged by the local group with the help a donation by the Rock Spray nursery - all helping to fly the flag for heather.

Later in the trip our "tour guide" Gail included a visit to Donald MacKay's retreat in Vermont with lovely mountain views. We were surprised to find an *Erica cinerea* in bloom. Donald probably stole it from high up on a Scottish mountain - hence its hardiness? While he has excellent tree belt shelter, an area where the ground can freeze down to five feet can't be considered conducive to easy heather growing. Despite this he has *Calluna* sprouting all over the place from cuttings he just sticks in the ground after trimming his heathers with a lawn mower set high!

While we may feel we suffer harsh growing conditions in the North Pennines, they are nothing compared to the extremes experienced by our heather friends in New England. So we are very grateful for the much greater range of varieties that we can grow in comparison. Still, they certainly enjoy their heather growing and it was a great pleasure to be with them once again and enjoy more of that lovely part of the world in the fall.

The History of *Calluna vulgaris* 'Elegantissima' and 'A Memoir of 'Walter Ingwersen' David McClintock

In checking names for the Register, care was needed in sorting these and similar names. That able plantsman Walter Ingwersen (1866-1960), who founded the firm in 1928, came across his plant in the Minho mountains north of Coimbra in N. Portugal, still in flower in March that year. He called it 'Elegantissima'.

He described it as "of truly elegant habit, developing immensely long flower spikes, frequently more than a foot in length and sometimes as much as 18 ins. loosely set with pretty lilac-pink flowers produced from October to December". "The most elegant of all heathers" as Rev C E Lyttel (1869-1944), President of the Alpine Garden Society, wrote a month before he died.

It was quite widely grown: I remember it well. Its only drawback was that it was somewhat tender and the winter of 1940 did it no good. Norman Webster of Forres wrote that it was not hardy there, but at Nairn (twelve miles to the east) it never failed to survive. He attributed this to the lighter sandy soil, but surely careful placing for the best microclimate will have accounted for more.

A year after Walter's discovery, F Sennen (1861-1937) published the name *Calluna elegantissima* as a species (which, rightly, W Beijerinck (1891-1960) reduced to a form of *Calluna vulgaris*). This was for a plant growing "sur plusiens points du massif de Tibidabo" in Morocco, where Beijerinck also saw it. Its flowers were "violet ravissant plus ou moins clair sur le tard de l'automne." It has been claimed since from Spain. There are specimens at Kew and Wageningen.

Some time after the war, with my growing interest in heathers, I noticed that 'Elegantissima' had been used since 1906 on the Continent for a white-flowered plant, and even by three nurseries in England. So, about 1970, Walter's plant became distinguished as 'Elegantissima Walter Ingwersen'.

Ten years later however, Chris Brickell, then our Chairman insisted that, since part of the name was in Latin, (which had been forbidden since 1959 for a cultivar), the whole name was illegitimate, however sensible. So the offending word was cut out and we were left with just 'Walter Ingwersen', the third name his plant has had. But this correction was no longer needed, despite the full trinomial being listed by Haalboom in 1975, said to flower in October, and not later, so it is unlikely he had the true plant. Meissner listed "our" 'Elegantissima' from E Germany in 1970 with no hint of its tenderness. Hard evidence that it still existed after the war is lacking, but hopes were freely expressed that it might have survived the harsh winters of that period.

Will Ingwersen (1907-1990) saw a seedling at Tremans, Geoffrey Pilkington's (c1885-1971) garden near Horsted Keynes. Geoffrey had had the true plant and Will hoped that it might have left a descendant. But, when he showed it to me, it did not look right. He propagated it as "Tremans" but gave it up after two years. It is however still available. Later, he had another hopeful at an RHS Show, but agreed that it would not do. This he had had from Geoff Yates, then of Tabramhill Nursery, who had it from Frank Hamer of Sunnymount Nursery, who said that he had had it from Walter Ingwersen. Geoff tells me that Frank re-propagated his heathers every year. Even if the plants were killed, the cuttings should have survived.

Meanwhile, in 1967, the name 'White Elegantissima' was being used, an illegitimate synonym for 'Beoley Elegance', a white flowered plant which J W Sparkes had long grown as a cut flower. In some southern Dutch nurseries a distinctive white was being grown as the true 'Elegantissima'. In 1970, Harry van de Laar scotched this by publishing 'Elegant Pearl' for it, which you can still get.

Now for 'Elegantissima Lilac', another strictly illegitimate name. I first heard of that when Geoff Yates found it in a large consignment he had received from the Netherlands in 1969. But this name was unknown to Harry van de Laar. It is, however, still in the trade in Britain.

Jurgen Schroeder told me that Heino Wordtmann had delivered to the Botanic Garden at Bremen, 50 'Elegantissima' which had slightly pale lilac flowers instead of pure white. Heino tells me that these plants came from other nurseries, one was Zwijnenburg. Rinus tells me that all they had then was white. There may have been some mislabeling.

After all this, what chance of finding the true f. *elegantissima* once again? "The most beautiful and certainly the most graceful heather", as Fred Chapple put it. The time to go is late autumn, the area Spain, Portugal or Morocco. Brian and Valerie Proudley had seen specimens similar to it growing shoulder high in Spain. So.....

The Heather Beetle & Heather Damage

Martin Vallance, a Society member from North Yorkshire, was interested in the item on the infestation by the heather beetle in the Autumn 99 Bulletin and has sent an article which he thought Members might find interesting. With acknowledgements to English Nature Magazine, the article is reproduced below.

"On September 5th we examined an area of Bowes Moor, County Durham, to examine damage caused by an outbreak of heather beetles. This followed an earlier visit on August 22nd to examine the extent of the affected areas. Heather beetles occur just about anywhere there is heather and, whilst generally common, rarely cause damage. However, the sporadic outbreaks, when they occur, can cause heather death in large patches.

The heather beetle is a fairly undistinguished beast. It is about 6-7 mm (+ in) long and uniformly brown, generally pale, but sometimes almost black. Adult beetles emerge from winter hibernation in May or June and, after mating, the eggs are laid in damp moss or plant litter underneath heather bushes. When the eggs hatch the larvae (also called grubs or caterpillars) climb up the heather plant to feed, usually at night. The larvae are yellow, with the head and lumps (tubercles) on the body, dark. They feed on the leaves and bark, the latter causing the most serious damage. During the day the larvae hide in the moss/litter layer. Larvae are present from June to the end of August.

The heather beetle has several natural predators. Insect-feeding moorland birds such as meadow pipits presumably take some adults and larvae. The heather ladybird is another beetle (Latin name *Chilocorus bipustulatus* (L.)) and it hunts the heather beetle specifically. It is generally uncommon and, although it increases in numbers during the heather beetle outbreaks, it is never common enough to control the population. More important in this regard is a small parasitic wasp of the genus *Ascodes* (it has no common name). The female of this wasp lays its eggs inside the heather beetle larva, literally eating it from the inside..... Because each parasitized larva can produce many wasps, the wasp population can respond much more quickly to a beetles' outbreak than can the heather ladybird.

The main questions raised are, how does a heather beetle outbreak arise and how can it be controlled? Outbreaks are infrequent, but the conditions leading up to them are unclear. One suggestion is that they are more likely to occur if a warm dry summer follows a cold, extended spring. This was certainly the case in 1991. Warm dry conditions when the larvae are feeding not only encourage rapid growth of the beetles, but can also put the heather plants under an additional stress which may make them less able to tolerate the damage.....

When an outbreak occurs, what can be done to control it? In many cases, by the time the damage has been observed, it is too late to act against the beetle..... Instead, these damaged areas should be left until the following winter. By that time all the parasites will have emerged. Burning off the dead heather will then allow new plants to generate from seed. Since the beetles tend to move only a short distance from the area of damage, it is important not to burn areas next to those currently affected. Heather beetles attack heather plants at all stages and will be perfectly happy eating off all the new plants regenerated from the seed bank.

It is likely that the outbreak will be ended by natural means. Firstly, the conditions in subsequent years may not be as suitable for the beetles. Secondly, the build-up of parasites will greatly restrict the numbers of adult beetles produced, and certainly on Bowes Moor the density of parasitized larvae was very high. The visit on August 22nd located very few parasitized larvae, but just two weeks later the majority of larvae found were parasitized, hopefully suggesting that far fewer beetles will be present next year. It may go against the grain to leave the outbreak to run its course, but it may be that by trying to control it the situation could become worse. Monitoring the proportion of parasitized larvae is obviously an important aspect of determining the likely impact of heather beetle and we would strongly recommend that this is done before resorting to other means of control.

News of Wild Heather Restoration around Britain

'A Sheep's worst Enemy is another Sheep'

*An article about Mr. Vallance's efforts to revitalise a North Yorkshire Moorland, has been adapted below. It gives an outlook on heather cultivation from a different perspective than we are used to, but the aims are the same. Ed. (With acknowledgements to **The Shooting Gazette** - September 1999.)*

In 1987, Martin Vallance sold the successful electrical company which he ran with his brother Julian and, on retirement, against the advice of almost everyone he consulted, he bought the shooting right over 2000 acres of moorland on the south side of Coverdale comprising Arkleside, Hindlethwaite and West Scafton moors. This included the freehold of the latter, which is a common moor giving gait holders rights to graze 900 ewes and followers. The moors had been seriously overgrazed for many years but, as Martin himself admitted, a perfect Arkleside would have been beyond his pocket.

Entry into the Countryside Stewardship Schemes enabled compensation to be paid to the various farmers who used the moors for grazing and, with its help, 1,000 sheep had been removed from the area by the end of 1999. Most of the farmers realised the wisdom of reducing the numbers of grazing sheep but could not afford to do so without the financial assistance afforded by the CS Schemes. "In fact", says Martin, "they taught me that a sheep's worst enemy is another sheep, hence the Shoot's motto 'Pessimus inimicus ovis, alius ovis est'.

More recently Mr. Vallance bought a further 160 acres of freehold moorland at High Pasture, which extends almost to the summit of Little Whernside, and he immediately fenced the area and excluded all sheep. The new area has been so seriously overgrazed for so long that hope of natural regeneration of the heather in a

reasonable time is negligible and in Autumn 1999 Mr. Vallance started a re-seeding programme. First, islands (in total approximately 60 acres) of existing vegetation were killed with herbicide, then the dead foliage was burned to create as bare as possible seed-beds. These were then sown with heather seed-pods supplied by leading heather moorland seed expert, Geoff Eyre, from Derbyshire. Finally, in summer 2000, vernalised refined seed will be sown, probably by helicopter. It is hoped that the differing rates of germination will take account of all weather conditions and that a good heather moorland habitat can be established by autumn 2002. If this goes well then, finance permitting, the technique could possibly be extended to other such areas of the moors where reduced grazing alone will not suffice to restore the heather.

The owner of Arkleside had already drastically reduced grazing on his part of the moor some years ago and Hindlethwaite's owner intends to construct a sheep house for 200 ewes which will be used to keep the sheep off the heather between November and April for 10 years – so the future for these three areas looks quite bright.

At the West Scafton however, where four graziers have sheep grazing rights, and all need to make a living, the position is not so clear-cut. Some of the graziers still have some doubts about the overgrazing argument. The area has been described as "a large area of moor.... horribly overgrazed and useless for grouse..... Dominant white grassland surrounds a line of dilapidated stone butts". However, when the Countryside Stewardship Scheme goes ahead at West Scafton (in December 1999), the numbers of sheep there will be reduced by a half during the winter and those remaining will be shepherded off the high ground. When these improvements have taken effect, there are high hopes that the heather on the upper part of West Scafton moor will regenerate naturally.

Grouse are not Martin Vallance's only interest - he has plans to plant areas of woodland to encourage other wildlife, including the now rare Black Grouse, which was only recently lost to Coverdale and hopes that the improved heather habitat will also encourage snipe, curlews, ring ousels, skylarks, plovers and merlins. He is a keen walker and is taking steps to improve the waymarking on the several rights of way running across the moor. He is of the opinion that, if all the routes are properly marked there will be no need for an indiscriminate 'right to roam' policy.

What started as an interest has since become an obsession for Martin Vallance. "If the moor has 1,000 acres of first class heather habitat by 2010, then I will be delighted" he says.

And so say all of us!

Hampstead Heath Restoration **Evening Standard, November 4th 1999.**

A volunteer group has taken the first steps to restore Hampstead Heath to the way it used to look more than a century ago. Then, it was renowned for its acres of purple heather, but these have vanished after decades of wear from walkers and cosmetic changes by the heath's gardeners. Yesterday saw the first stage in a project to bring back the traditional views of the heath, with the planting of the first of more than 2,000 heather plants. The newly formed 'Heath Hands', who claim to be the first organised band in the heath's 130 year-old history, were planting the heathers on the western slope of the Vale of Health.

Local MP Glenda Jackson, television personality Michael Palin and TV ornithologist Bill Oddie are supporting the scheme, which will be overseen by the authority

responsible for the heath, the Corporation of London.

Bobby de Joia, founder of the 80-strong volunteer group, said: "If our transplant works, and it will take at least two years to be sure the heather is growing effectively, then the field will look spectacular"

Council Member, Barry Sellers, who sent the information above, writes that this project has been financed by the Corporation of London and that to date (December 1999) around 30,000 plugs of Calluna vulgaris have been planted on Hampstead Heath by 'Heath Hands'. The plugs were supplied by Dave Adams of 'British Trees & shrubs'.

Luftwaffe helps to save Welsh Heathland

Sunday Telegraph

Hundreds of aerial photographs of Anglesey, North Wales, taken by the German air-crews during the second World War, are being used by scientists to restore the island's natural heathland. Compared with recent pictures they show that 1,000 hectares of heathland - virtually half the total area have been lost on Anglesey since the war. The scientists are keen to reinstate heathland in those areas where it existed 60 years ago. Their target is to bring back 100 hectares of restored heathland by 2006. The habitat is a mixture of heather, gorse, mire and acidic grassland, which creates a striking purple and yellow carpet along Anglesey's north-west coast during autumn.

German aircrews photographed Anglesey and the surrounding area in 1940 and 1941 as part of reconnaissance operations over Holyhead, RAF Valley, Ty Croes Army camp and the two bridges across the Menai Strait. Negatives of the photographs were held inside Hamburg Cathedral after Nazi officials decided it was a safe storage place. However, these were lost during the bombing raids, but prints were saved and moved to the United States.

Ecologists with the Country Council for Wales heard of the pictures and approached the National Archive and Records Administration in Maryland, which has 117 pictures of the Anglesey area taken by the Luftwaffe. Negatives had to be made of the prints before a new set was sent from America to the Council's offices at Bangor, Gwynedd. Other photographs, taken by the RAF, were also available at the Central Register of Air Photography in Cardiff. The extent to which the heathland has been lost was revealed after the Luftwaffe and RAF pictures were compared with those the CCW itself commissioned in 1993 across Wales.

Sally Ellis, CCW's Assistant Anglesey District Officer said "the Luftwaffe pictures are of excellent quality when you consider the circumstances under which they were taken. We're hoping to use these pictures to pick out those areas which used to be heathland and target our efforts towards them".

Heathland is valuable because it can support a range of threatened species, including the marsh fritillary and silver-studded blue butterflies. Rare birds in the habitat include the chough, while plants like the spotted rock-rose and the unique South Stack fleawort (named after an area near Holyhead) also relish the terrain.

Anglesey still boasts some excellent heathland areas, including Holyhead Mountain, Mynydd Bodafon and Fedw Fawr, near the village of Llangoed. Reasons for heathland loss include the rapid spread of agriculture (with farmers improving grassland), forestation and intensive grazing - and housing. Restoring soil for the reinstatement of heathland will be easier where the habitat was lost relatively recently - as opposed to that put under agriculture hundreds of years ago. Heathland lost to development will be inappropriate for restoration, but other areas to be targeted include woods and grassland. "The easiest

areas to reverse to heathland are those which haven't had large amounts of fertiliser pumped in and have only been ploughed once or twice". Said Miss Ellis.

Scientists could reduce nutrient levels in the soil through stripping off turf. Once nutrients are reduced, the existing vegetation is killed off and seeds from heathland elsewhere introduced on the site. "Mowing areas of heathland can bring in other species. It would be marvellous if some came back to restored heathland" she said. "But we can't achieve anything unless we work closely with landowners".

It is hoped that grants will be available to encourage farmers to take land out of production. The CCW is now working in partnership with the National Trust and the RSPB as well as landowners. "There's nothing better than heathland in full bloom in August" said Miss Ellis. "Its one of the most spectacular landscapes and people should have the chance to enjoy more of it - with the help of the Luftwaffe".

To calculate heathland loss on Anglesey even more accurately, the CCW is now trying to find aerial pictures taken by an airship based at the Mona Airfield around 1917. John Ratcliffe, the Council's Anglesey District Officer said: "We are asking people who had any connection with this base to search their attics for aerial photographs which were taken in that period. "We've seen major changes to the landscape of Wales in the 20th century and we'd be grateful for the loan of these pictures so a record could be kept for future generations.

Council Member, Bob Rope, who sent in the news item above, wrote that the article brought back happy memories of a Heather Society Conference, which was held in that area many years ago.

Heather Thatch

Sunday Telegraph 1999

A shortage of straw has revived the use of heather for thatching roofs on cottages throughout Britain. The plant was once commonplace on roofs in Wales, Scotland, and the Pennines, the North York Moors, Dartmoor and Exmoor, according to thatchers, who often find traces of heather when working on historic buildings. It was superseded at the turn of the century by long straw and reed because straw in particular was easier to harvest. Now, long straw is in short supply, because of poor harvests and because farmers find it labour-intensive and expensive to produce. The available supply is usually snapped up at the start of each season. Thatchers say a return to the use of heather - which is much more widely available - has many benefits. It can last for up to 60 years, longer than some straw-thatched roofs, is more water-resistant and has an attractive rust-red tinge when wet, or lit up in the evening sun.

William Tegmeteier, a York-based thatcher who promotes the use of heather, has now used it on several houses and barns, and the roof of a children's nursery his wife runs in the garden of their home. He has used it to roof summerhouses and even to surface a bridge over a ravine in a garden in the Yorkshire Dales. The National Trust is now considering using heather on a Georgian ice-house at Scotney Castle in Kent, where historians discovered it had been the original material.

"I recommend heather because it is more durable and cheaper than straw" Mr. Tegmeteier said. "It also makes a beautiful roof cover". Mr. Tegmeteier gets his heather from Kirkbymoorside, in the North York Moors, (it is also exported to Holland and Germany for use in water filtration).

At the turn of the century many farmers replaced heather with heavy roof slabs,

but some owners are now reinstating it. Jeremy Cox, one of six thatchers working in Scotland, gathers it himself after first asking permission from the landowner or Forestry Commission. "Some landowners give it free because heather can encroach on young trees. In removing it you can actually be helping the woodland" he said. Mr. Cox, based at Castle Douglas, has used heather to thatch many private houses, and favours the plant over long grass. "A large amount of heather is needed for thatching because it shrinks heavily after drying, with the bundle reduced to half its size", he said. "But abundant supplies are available and using it in those areas where it has been the traditional material could be the way ahead."



Durable: William Tegetmeier uses heather to thatch the roof of a cabin in York city centre. The master thatcher says the plant is in plentiful supply.

Book Review

An Irish Garden Revisited by Dr. Charles Nelson

In 1984 Charles Nelson wrote the excellent *An Irish Flower Garden*, with the histories of some of their garden plants and many wild ones. Thirteen years later he has enlarged this with the apt title *An Irish Garden Replanted*, with more of Wendy Walsh's fine paintings. It is published by Edmund Burke. Fifteen pages of chapter seven are devoted to heathers, the previous account amplified by, for example, Geoffrey Yates story of *Erica cinerea* 'Joseph Murphy' - but some good heathers of Irish origin are not mentioned. All the same, it makes fascinating reading.

David McClintock

Scrap Bowl

Snippets of information from members

News from South Africa

Below is part of an e-mail sent just before Christmas to Yearbook Editor, Charles Nelson, from Dr. E.H.G. (Ted) Oliver, of the National Botanical Institute, Kirstenbosch. Ted led the recent Heather Society Field Trip to South Africa and the Erica he mentions below will be described and illustrated in the Yearbook 2000.

"We are as hot as Hades these last two weeks with Cape Town's forecast for today being 38 degrees. Some people in Stellenbosch had 41 in the shade in their gardens. This has brought on bad fires with the Kolenberg Reserve and the whole of the Riviersonderend range burnt out this last week. Pilaarkop went up in smoke, so bye-bye *Erica ignita* for quite a few years. Inge [his wife] and I were due to go up this week to collect flowering material of another new species from there, which we found in fruit in February. Heaven knows whether we will be in a fit state in 6-8 years time to climb that peak.

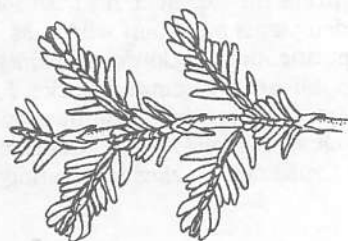
Schneeheide in the Wild - Sent in by our Secretary, Ron Cleevely

Members might be interested to know the result of an enquiry by Eileen Petterssen as to where and when she might be able to see *Erica cornea* growing naturally. During the year, after contacting various officers of the Society, Eileen pursued the quest herself and, after searching the Internet, wrote to various addresses in Europe. She very kindly sent me a copy of the following Fax she had received from the Tourist office at the Austrian National Park of Kalkalpen in case other members might be interested

The Fax read: "The Schneeheide is easy to find in our region and the National Park. On the sunny slopes of the mountains and hills, the Schneeheide starts blooming about the end of February until the end of May. You can find this wild flower in higher located areas of the mountains; mostly in connection with pine-tree forests. It is especially easy to find this plant in the surroundings of Windischgarsten, Hinterstoder and in the National park of Kalkalpen. A good way of seeing and learning about the Flora is to participate in a guided walking tour with one of our National Park Rangers".

For further information contact : Tannwalder Zázilia, Nationalpark O.ö. Kalkalpen Infostelle Windischgarsten, Hauptstrasse 56, A-4580 WINDISCHGARSTEN, Austria. Tel. No. 07562 6137

Windischgarsten is in the North of Austria just East of Salzburg & South of Linz.



Shopmobility

In January, our administrator, Anne Small, received an e-mail from Katrina Erskine in Aberdeen. Katrina is involved with 'Shopmobility Aberdeen', a scheme which lends wheelchairs and other equipment to disabled people, free of charge.

Katrina asks if *The Heather Society* would consider naming a heather after the founder of the scheme, Christine Sutherland Brebner, who died last September - "as a suitable and permanent way to remind the people of Aberdeen of the work and commitment she showed towards them."

If anyone has an interesting un-named heather, which they would like to put forward for such a good cause, please get in touch with Anne or David Small on 01449 711220.

Success from Newton Rigg Dorothy and Geoff Warner

Not having seen any mention in the Bulletin (other than the interesting report from Pamela Lee some time ago) of the success rate or otherwise of the heather cuttings we took at the Newton Rigg Conference, I venture to give a brief report on those that Geoff and I took.

After potting on the rooted cuttings we received from David and Anne Small, these were left in trays behind the summerhouse to 'fatten up'. A year previously Geoff had double-dug an old rose bed in preparation for the heathers and now he added four large bales of peat. Last October we spent a very pleasant sunny morning planting out and we were quite proud of the end result.

Altogether there are seventy plants in this bed, with another sixty or seventy to go into another new bed. So far they look very happy and healthy, even though the bed does resemble a cemetery with all the plant labels! Our sincere thanks to David for all the TLC they received in the initial stages.

A Heather Stop in Cheshire Walter Wornick - New Hampshire, USA

While the area around Crewe, off Exit 16 of the M6 may be primarily known for the large Railway Age Museum, there are some 'heather stops' in the area that are worth a look. Reaseheath College is about 1+ miles north of Nantwich, on the A51, Chester road - look for the entrance sign on the right-hand side as you drive north. There is plenty of parking and perhaps it is better to follow signs to the Garden Centre and/or Farm area. There is a large lake, well-kept lawns, woodland walks and six island beds with heathers. Some of the beds have older trees, such as *Acer davidii* with heathers growing right up to the trunks and seem to be doing well. Two heathers were available for sale at the Garden Centre at £1.00 and no doubt others are available, propagated by the students.

A bit further along on the left is Snugbury's Jersey Ice Cream Farm. A beautiful tree-lined drive in and wonderful, many flavoured, naturally produced cones. No ericaceous flavours, but there are goats! Continue north and the road follows a canal, with many longboats. Soon, on the left you will see a sign to Bunbury 'staircase locks', a three-level affair which is of great interest, as is the tea house

at the lock. Continuing north, on the left side of Duddon Heath, is Okell's Nurseries. It is a Garden Centre, but also propagates 1.5 million heathers annually for the wholesale trade. There are said to be some 200 varieties. The propagating area can be seen to the left of the Garden Centre and staff graciously allow one to wander around at will. There are a goodly number of heathers offered for sale at the nursery for £1.10p and they have some bud-bloomers in small sizes.

On the left hand side, seven miles south of Nantwich, on the same A51, is Bridgemere Garden World, said to be the largest Garden Centre in Britain. Huge! There is a demonstration garden, the Garden Kingdom, that contains about 20 different gardens. There is a small fee of £1 to enter, but there are many free coupons available in tourist publications. There is a well-displayed 'heather bank' and heather can be found in other areas of these gardens. It has always been very well kept when I have visited. There is a large selection of heathers available in the Garden Centre at £1.25p and a few are fairly obscure varieties.

If you are ready to spend the night, a good farm B & B is Snape Farm, Mrs. Jean Wilkinson, Western Crewe - 01270 820208. They also do dinner or there is a nearby pub. Nice duck-pond and 'pick your own sweet corn' in season. Just down the road is the original church of the Primitive Methodist faith, now a museum, and visitors are usually served tea and biscuits.

Now refreshed, a short drive over the border, through Stoke in Staffordshire, towards Leek on the A53, will take you to Barnroft Nurseries. Look for the sign 'Dunwood Lane' on the left of the road. It is a short distance up the lane, on the right. Wonderful display garden with conifers and heathers, many interesting plants for sale and they usually have upwards of 400 varieties available from the 800 they grow. Lovely people - so why not make a 'heather stop'?

Walter is a regular visitor to Britain and spends his time in this country visiting gardens and other places of interest (as well as being a regular attendee at the Annual Conferences). The list of gardens he has visited over the years is awe inspiring. His account of a visit to Reaseheath brought back happy memories for me, as that was where I did my training back in the 1960s and where I was first encouraged to take up heather growing commercially.

It is a long time since we last had so many 'Scrap Bowl' items - more snippets please! Ed.

Gold Veitch Memorial Medal

Congratulations to one of the Society's Italian members, Dr. Lupo Osti who has recently been awarded a Gold Veitch Memorial Medal by the RHS for his contribution to horticulture - in particular, in connection with 'La Mortola'.

Obituaries

David Coombe

David Coombe, a good friend of heathers, died in 1999. His family came from Bath, where he was born, grandson of a horticulturist and son of a motor-cycle engineer. From him he inherited his passion!

I remember him riding, fully kitted up; an unusual garb for an academic. He won a scholarship to King Edward's School in Bath, going on from there as a scholar in 1951 to Christ's College, Cambridge. There he became, until 1989, a lecturer in botany and was, from 1980 to 1984, Vice Master of his college.

He spent some time in Nigeria, but it was in England that he made his mark. With the late Lew Frost he beavered away, from 1953, on the vegetation of the Lizard. He wrote on the enigmatic prostrate junipers of Gew Graze and, in 1961, published his skilful discrimination of Lizard Western Clover, *Trifolium occidentale*, as a good species, distinct from the various forms of Dutch or white clover, *T. repens*.

He knew the heather well, generously sharing his knowledge. Despite the chalky soil in the Cambridge Botanic Garden he kept the full range of forms of *Erica x williamsii*, eventually passing them to David Small. Two, he discovered himself, in 1977 and 1990, the latter was named after him: both survive there.

For some years he had been increasingly unwell. He rang me a month or so before he died to say that he would not be able to join us at the Lizard, a sad loss and now a final one - but the good he did lives on.

David McClintock

David Radley (1939-1999)

David Radley was born at Eltham in London and spent his early years in Kent. At the beginning of the 1940's, together with his mother and brother, he was evacuated to a farm in Devon and this is where his love of agriculture (and thence horticulture) began. In 1949 he moved with his family to Birmingham and, on leaving school, attended the Pershore College of Horticulture where his interest in heathers was first kindled.

Much of David's working life was spent at nurseries in the Midlands, including Hatfields of Droitwich and Blakedown Nurseries of Kidderminster (where he became Sales Manager) and, for eight years, he was Curator at the University of Birmingham Botanic Garden. His last appointment was as a Lecturer in Horticulture at Hall Green College in Birmingham (now South Birmingham College).

David joined *The Heather Society* in 1965 and, for many years, he and his wife Rosemary, were stalwart supporters of the Society's Midlands Group and attended several Conferences.

After taking early retirement from Hall Green in 1995, he and Rosemary moved back to their beloved Sidmouth, where, at the time of David's death in November 1999, he was creating a heather garden.

Daphne Everett (with the helpful assistance of Rosemary Radley)

H J van de Laar

Those who knew Harry will never forget him for his charm and abilities, not only with heathers.

When he was awarded by the RHS a Veitch Memorial Medal, the President spoke of him as, a distinguished public servant whose contribution to horticulture covered many facets of the industry, and of the admiration in which he was held. Rather earlier he had received the Dutch Clusius Key - a singular honour. He was a leading member of the Dutch Horticultural Research Station at Boskoop. He also edited, and contributed to, that admirable annual publication *Dendroflora*.

But we are concerned with his 'notable contribution' to the study of heathers. His pioneering *Het heidetuinboek*, reprinted six times from 1974-79 was translated into German by no less an expert than Dr. Krussman, and into English as *The Heather Garden* in 1978. Among his writings was a discerning article on the results of taking cuttings from different parts of *Daboecia cantabrica* 'Bicolor'.

He had a good collection of heathers in his herbarium and wrote, in his impeccable English, helpful letters about them. I had been receiving them, and keeping them, since 1969 - 30 years ago. Harry van de Laar died in August 1999 - not only I will miss his warm friendship.

David McClintock

Dorothy Metheny

Dorothy Metheny, a Vice President of The *Heather Society* since 1969, has recently died at her home in Seattle, USA. She was one of the original organisers of the North American Heather Society.

Fifty five years ago Dorothy was given her first heather, *Erica x darleyensis* 'Darley Dale', for her new garden. She gradually acquired more and, in the 1950's, began studying them with an Ericaceae study group. After becoming editor of the North American Heather Society's *Heather News*, she began writing about and drawing the various species in order to help other members understand their plants. In 1991, the articles were updated and put together into a most useful book, entitled *Hardy Heather Species*.

Group News

Yorkshire

The joint talk, "Famous Heathers, Famous Nurseries" on heather nurserymen and their introductions, was given by Peter Vickers and Geoffrey Yates at the Yorkshire group meeting on Saturday, 18th September and was enjoyed by the 22 members present. Peter's contribution dealt with the old respected nurseries that were responsible for many old and still popular varieties. Two of the best known are Maxwell & Beale and J.W. Sparkes ("Beechwood"). Maxwell and Beale gave us, *Calluna vulgaris* 'H.E. Beale', C.v. 'Mrs. Pat', C.v. 'J.H. Hamilton' and *E. vagans* 'Mrs. D.F. Maxwell'. J.W. Sparkes introduced many equally well known cultivars: among the most popular are *E. carnea* 'Ann Sparkes', C.v. 'Peter Sparkes', C.v. 'Robert Chapman', C.v. 'Beoley Gold', C.v. 'Silver Knight' and *E. vagans* 'Birch Glow'. All of these can still be found among the heather varieties on offer at garden centres.

Geoffrey gave a most interesting account of the continental raisers who have introduced many excellent cultivars in recent years. The most prominent being Kurt Kramer of Edewecht-Süddorf, Germany who has been responsible for many of the recent important introductions. The popular varieties *E.x darleyensis* 'Kramer's Rote', *E.carnea* 'Nathalie', *E.car.* 'Schneekuppe', *E.car.* 'Golden Starlet', *C.v.* 'Alexandra' and *C.v.* 'Marie' are just a few of the Kramer varieties available today.

It was a pleasant nostalgic afternoon for not only were we reminded of so many heather "oldies" but both Peter and Geoffrey were the main instigators of the very successful heather trials held in the Society's nursery at Harlow Carr in the 1970's. Peter produced the 1971- 1975 trials report publication which had a relatively wide circulation and Geoff was responsible for his indispensable "*Pocket Guides to Heather Gardening*" which were the only complete heather references readily available until the current "Handy Guide to Heathers" by David and Anne Small appeared.

Prof. John Griffiths, our chairman, informed the meeting that the committee had decided to recognise, in a tangible way, the wonderful help and encouragement that *The Heather Society*, Chairman, David Small had given to our efforts in creating the reference collection projects at Harlow Carr. On behalf of the Heather Group he had presented David with a bread-making machine at the *Heather Society's* Conference in Falmouth in September. Not only have we had the benefit of David's sound advice but he has donated most of the many hundreds of plants to the *Calluna* collection and had propagated the *E. carneae* and *E.x darleyensis* plants for the projected new winter-flowering heather collection.

The next meeting of the Heather Group will take place at 2.30 p.m. on Saturday, 25th March (two weeks later than provisionally notified), in the Study Centre, Harlow Carr, when David Plumridge has kindly offered to entertain us with the talk he gave to the North American Heather Society Conference last September on "Heathers in the United Kingdom".

Our meeting on Saturday, 10th June, also at 2.30 p.m. in the Study Centre, will be a nostalgic look at the period of the 1970/74 heather trials at Harlow Carr. Geoffrey Smith who was very involved with the organisation of the trials has kindly agreed to join us and talk about these times. Dorothy Boyd and Peter Vickers who were leading workers for the whole period of the trials will support him with their recollections. All Northern Horticultural Society members are welcome but I should appreciate a few days notice of their intention to attend.

We hope to have a visit to a local nursery and social afternoon tea in July (arrangements yet to be made) and then round off the season with a talk from David Mayne on "The Making of a Heather Garden", at the usual place and time on Saturday, 16th September.

Jean Julian

North East

The morning we were due to go to Craggside at Rothbury on Saturday, October 23rd was decidedly murky, but, forever the optimists, we sallied forth and arrived at the car park at the appointed hour. Vera Scott was with us and, a few minutes later, Roy and Florence Nichols joined us.

Spurred on by a tiny patch of 'brightness' we headed for the formal garden. This is a National Trust property and the gardens are immaculate but, sadly, the very long borders of dahlias had been blackened by early frosts. However, the newly planted 'carpet' garden for the Millennium was looking good and

should be quite spectacular when matured. Sadly the rain came and after lunch at The Stable we did the six-mile drive through the grounds, observing beautiful autumn colours in dismal conditions. Ah well - we tried!

Our AGM had its usual attendance and, as ever, the Officers and Committee were re-elected. We all feel a bit like Tennyson's 'Brook', we go on forever! We had our usual excellent Faith Supper, for which many thanks to all, and we finished off the evening with slides. Dorothy Wild showed us some very unusual flowers of South Africa, David Plumridge had slides from French gardens and I showed some taken on the Yorkshire Group's outing to Sleightholmdale Garden, last July.

At our last committee meeting the following dates were decided for 2000 and are as follows:

6th	May	Annual outing to Harewood House
19th	July	Evening outing to Bill Crow's nursery
?	August	Possible outing by coach to Raby Castle
9th	September	Annual Show
27th	October	AGM

Fuller details will be sent to all Group members nearer the time but do please make a note of these dates in your diary NOW.

Dorothy Warner

East Midlands

A meeting of the East Midlands Group is planned for 12th August 2000 at our home in Loughborough. Members are invited to arrive from 2 pm onwards. Details will be published in the Summer *Bulletin* but I can supply sketch maps and advance information to anyone who enquires.

Allen Hall

South West

Another year is upon us and I look forward to meeting with old friends again and this year. I hope we will see some new faces at the meetings and make new friends. I shall start off this report with the description of our last meeting of 1999, which, now that Christmas has passed and a new year has begun, seems a long way off.

On Saturday, 25th September, members met at Furzey Gardens close to Minstead in the New Forest. The weather threatened some rain and there had been recent rain but the afternoon remained dry and we were able to enjoy a leisurely walk around the garden. The garden occupies an 8 acre undulating site intersected by many grass paths and boasts a variety of Azaleas and Rhododendrons but also has winter and summer flowering heathers as well as a variety of other shrubs, some of which flower in the summer and autumn. The Heather Garden was the main interest and consisted of a mixture of very old plants and some new plantings on a sloping site in front of a building, which is reputed to have the largest thatched roof in the Forest. *Daboecias* feature well in this garden and were impressive even at the latter end of the season. In the garden is a crafts gallery, which shares a building with a tea room, so we were able to end the afternoon with an enjoyable cup of tea and a look around at the various crafts.

Now follows a brief description of each of the three meetings arranged for this year.

Saturday 25th 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 p.m., where Diane Jones will give an illustrated talk on her trip to South Africa with the Heather Society last October. I am told that the trip was enjoyed by all that attended and that they saw some marvellous examples of the South African Heaths in their natural habitat. Definitely a talk not to be missed.

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.

Saturday 6th May - This will be a private afternoon visit to a garden, normally open under the National Gardens Scheme, near Warminster in Wiltshire. The garden is 7, Norton Bavant and is a garden of alpiners, spring bulbs and dwarf conifers. I am told by the owners, Mr. and Mrs. Royds, that the garden is not large but is full of interest and that there will be plants for sale. Members should meet outside the garden for a 2.00 p.m. start. If approaching Warminster from the south-east then leave the A36 at the Cotley Hill roundabout at Heytesbury and head west on the B3095 for Sutton Veny. After leaving the roundabout take the first right turning for Norton Bavant. When the village is reached take the first turning right and the garden is on the right hand side after the conifer hedge. Parking is available in the road only. A cup of tea will be provided during the afternoon and a charge will be made for entry into the garden and for the refreshment.

Saturday 29th July - On this afternoon at 2.00 p.m. we will be visiting the Forest Edge Nursery at Woodlands near Verwood in Dorset. This nursery, belonging to David Edge, has been visited by members on two previous occasions, the last being in July 1990. The nursery is wholesale and supplies heathers to many of the local horticultural sales outlets, and indeed outlets further afield. On our previous visit we were shown the techniques that David uses to produce his excellent plants and once again we have been kindly invited to an insight into the running of a nursery geared to heather production. Verwood is reached by leaving the A31 just west of Ringwood and travelling north-west along the B3081. After leaving Verwood continue along the B3081 for about 1.5 miles and take the signposted left turn for Woodlands.

After about a further + mile, take the gravel track on the left and the nursery is along this track. Refreshment will be provided during the afternoon.

Further Dates for your Diary

At the moment of writing the intention is to arrange a meeting for a Saturday in September and a date and venue will be announced in the Summer Bulletin.

Further information on the meetings for 2000 can be obtained by sending me two SAEs 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 before the meeting (tel. 023 80864336). I would like to emphasise that the meetings are open not only to local group members but to all Heather Society members and their friends. Once again I am grateful to those people who make the visits possible and I look forward to seeing you at those meetings.

Phil Joyner

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