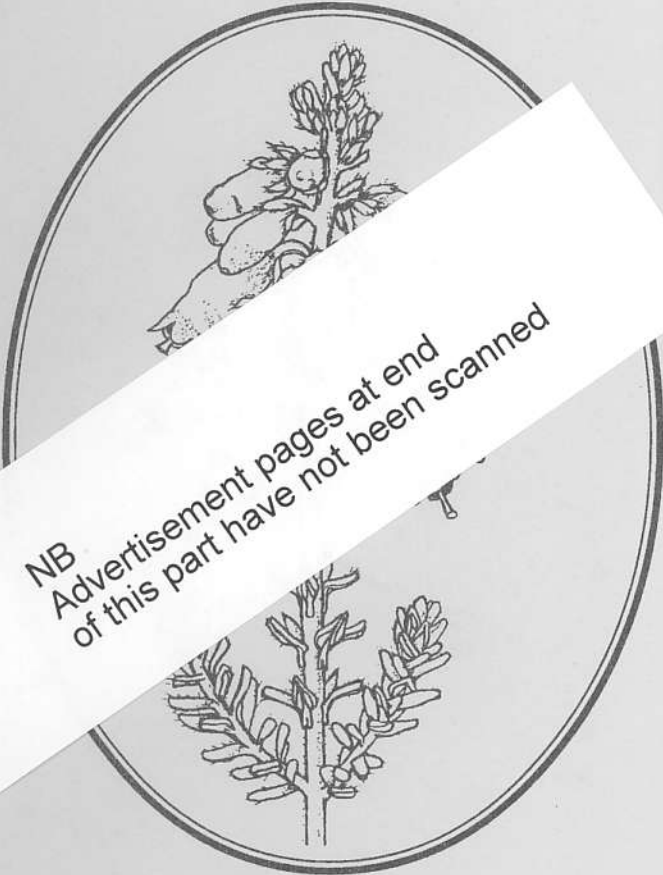


Bulletin of The Heather Society



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Vol. 5 No. 20

Summer 2000

DIARY OF EVENTS

2000

- 19 July North East Group Car Outing to Raby Castle
- 29 July South West Group Visit to Forest Edge Nursery, Verwood
- 12 August East Midland Group Talk by Arnold Stow in Loughborough
- 25 - 28 Aug. International Conference, Elmhorn, Germany
- 9 Sept. North East Group Annual Show - Ponteland

15 Sept. CLOSING DATE FOR BULLETIN

30 Sept. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & TALKS - BUXTON

- 7 Oct. Home Counties Group Inaugural meeting at RHS Wisley

2001

- 24 March South West Group Indoor Meeting, Lytchett Matravers



A Registered Charity No. 261407

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Cover illustration *Erica ciliaris* by Brita Johannson

The year 2000 is one of important changes for The Heather Society. However, our Secretary has covered them all so well in his 'Secretary's Snippets' that I will say no more, except to add my good wishes to all those involved.

At a recent Council Meeting I agreed (for my sins) to take on the post of Press Officer, in the hope that we can raise the profile of The Heather Society and thereby attract new members. However, I can't do much on my own, and shall be relying heavily on you, our Members, to keep me informed of anything you think is interesting or unusual.

Please note

**The Society has a new website address
www.heathersociety.org.uk**

Notice of 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. A Programme of illustrated talks on a South African theme has been put together for our enjoyment that day, giving those of us who were unable to join the South Africa tour last year, the chance to see something of that country and its beautiful plants.

The Programme begins at 2 pm, when our Chairman, David Small, will give us an illustrated talk, entitled 'An Introduction to the Fynbos' in which he will explain the meaning of the name and the main constituents of the South African Fynbos.

This will be followed by Barry Sellers, who will talk about the tour in more detail and will enthral us with slides of some of the plants seen and places visited.

After a break for tea, the afternoon will continue with David Small talking about the propagation and cultivation of Cape Heaths.

The final event of the afternoon will be our AGM.

For those staying over, there will be an Open Forum after dinner.

On the Sunday morning, there will be a Council meeting and, hopefully, a visit to a local garden for non-Councillors.

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) including morning coffee, buffet lunch, afternoon tea and biscuits plus 3 course Table d' Hôte dinner and breakfast.

The hotel only has 22 bedrooms (all en suite) so, if you have not booked already, please get in touch with David Small as soon as possible on 01449 711220.

Secretary's Snippets Ron Cleevely

Maintaining the idea of keeping members informed of Society news and Council meetings, with the *Bulletin* Editor's approval, I shall add my piece. The events of a few months certainly change the situation. Last time I complained that there was very little to report. Just how wrong can you get! The next AGM should result in a few major changes in the administration of our Society. Of course, that is provided those members who will be attending that meeting at the end of September in Buxton approve!

In recent years our President, David McClintock had intimated that he would be resigning from that honorary position sometime in the immediate future. Well, David has decided that after the International Conference to be held in Germany this August, he would step down at our next AGM, thus allowing a new President to be elected on that occasion. Most members will be aware that David has served as President of the Society for the past decade (1990-2000); a few will know that he held the office of Registrar from the start of the International Register until the 1990s; not all will know that he was a Vice-President from 1978-83, but only the membership records reveal that he has belonged to this Society longer than anyone else! In fact, since he became one of the Founder members (joining in 1963 and the nineteenth on the list), he has contributed to every aspect of its activities, especially in his authoritative articles and lists in the *Yearbook* and has always worked and spoken effectively on our behalf. No doubt a note of appreciation recording all that he has contributed to the Society will appear in a future issue of this journal, or the *Yearbook*. But you only have to look at the index to the latter to gain some idea of its significance. Undoubtedly, Council will express their appreciation for David's work for the Society throughout its existence. Perhaps one token acknowledgement might be by making him once again one of our Vice-Presidents.

Consequently, Council had to consider who could, or might be asked, to replace him?

Ideally in my view a President needs to:

- i) have a good knowledge of heathers either horticulturally, or botanically;
- ii) carry sufficient prestige (or with contacts) from which the Society may gain some benefit;
- iii) be of a suitable age;
- iv) be prepared to attend our functions, especially the AGM & Conference.

Various people were considered, but after our deliberations councillors had to conclude that only one person fulfilled all these categories - our current Chairman - David Small. In the end they had to accept this and overcome their great reluctance at losing his capable hands conducting the Societies affairs. The unanimous view influencing that decision was that he thoroughly deserved this honorific recognition for his dedicated service to The Heather Society over the years and for the past decade as Deputy Chairman & Chairman. Denbeigh Heathers, the Handy Guide, our web-site, the International Register, the National Collections, conferences, trips, tours, cuttings, &c. &c. - just where would we be without them all?

So it became a game of 'musical chairs'! Having lost and chosen a President, we had now lost a Chairman! Who could be persuaded (or lent on) to succeed David Small? Unfortunately, several Councillors were absent at that important meeting, but those present had numerous other commitments that prevented their undertaking the role. Perhaps unfairly, but needing to find a solution, one of the absentees was nominated for the office. Yet, there were good reasons for the choice of Arnold Stow. Arnold was certainly one of the longest serving and thus experienced members of Council and knew how matters were conducted.

He had also effectively and efficiently served the Society in many other positions. In fact, stepping in to the breach long ago when an Editor for the *Yearbook* was required. What is equally important these days - he is 'computer-literate' and can communicate by e-mail. Luckily for us when faced with the question - on return from a holiday - he agreed to his nomination as Chairman.

Sadly, our very efficient Treasurer, Allen Hall, will be implementing his long-intentioned and forewarned resignation at the AGM, so a new Treasurer is also being sought.

All these changes have to be voted upon at the AGM and it is open to members to submit alternative nominations for any of these, or other offices. Council would also like to have nominations of other members, who might be willing to serve on Council. Nominations for the Offices, or Council, or Resolutions to be considered at the AGM should be sent to me **at least 21 days before the meeting.**

Finally, some 'Good and Bad news'. The Good news is that Derek Millis and Arnold Stow are endeavouring to establish a Home Counties Group. This will involve members living in groups 10 & 11, in fact a wide circle around S.E. England. The Society has also been offered the opportunity of meeting at the premises of the Royal National Rose Society at Chiswell Green, St. Albans

(which will be useful to this new group) and also a site in the grounds on which to establish a collection of heather cultivars.

Phil Joyner has informed Council of the recent loss of Phyllis Kennedy. We will certainly miss her friendly presence and keen interest in all things, especially botanical and horticultural, at Conference. The other sad news is that I have been told that the new find of a plant of *Erica x williamsii* on the Lizard Downs last September was destroyed in a fire that swept through the National Trust site at Kynance Cove in March. However, David Small tells me that the cuttings he took at that time appear to be growing and we might be able to replace it.

Earlier this month, I enjoyed the S.W. Group's meeting at Norton Bavant, visiting a garden in which our hosts had arranged a series of raised beds and troughs to grow plants requiring various soil conditions, that enabled them to overcome the alkaline nature of the neighbourhood. It was an interesting and practical solution that enabled them to have alpine (*Gentians*, *Saxifrages*, *Primulas*), many species of *Daphne*, and several species of *Irises*, *Fritillaries*, *Azalea* and *Rhododendron*. The garden also had several woodland *Trilliums* and *Hellebores*. Our members are not solely devoted to heathers, but can enjoy and appreciate all gardens.

Profile of Council Member & Yearbook Editor - Charles Nelson

For someone interested in history and the lives and activities of bygone botanists, extinct nurseries and vanished gardens, I have to confess that I do not relish the idea of writing my own "history", but Daphne insists (and she probably wants a photograph too!) So, if this biography is to have any merits, it must include heathers, and since I have never had a heather garden of my own, you must be content, dear reader, with a recitation of journeys to remote hillsides and bogs in search of the wild things, in their pristine glory.

We can skip my earliest years, noting only one relevant fact, that I grew up in County Fermanagh, "Ulster's Lakeland", and there became enthralled by heathers. I was always, since a small boy as far as I can remember, interested in plants and wanted to be a botanist, and that's what I achieved, by leaving Northern Ireland to study at the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth. When it came to choosing a topic for my thesis, there was no difficulty - *Erica vagans*.

On most days in the summer of 1970 I would drive about 30 miles from Enniskillen to a remote hillside at Carrickbawn, and there, at random, put out quadrats along randomly placed transects. I identified all the plants in each quadrat, noted these and moved to another. 250 quadrats carefully mapped provided a detailed portrait of this unique colony of the Cornish heath. In short I spent that summer up to my knees in *Erica vagans*, and I retain an affection for the species to this day.

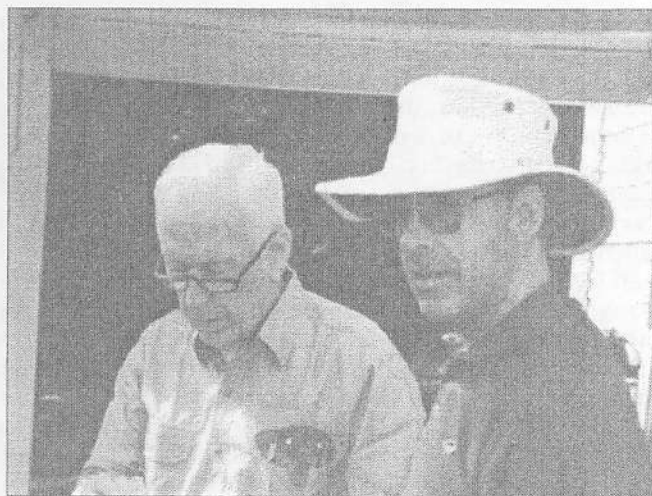
My degree finished successfully, I went to the Australian National University in Canberra. Of course there are few Ericaceae, and no *Erica*, in Australia, and I changed tack, spending my 4+ years pursuing *Adenanthos*, a distant relative of *Protea*. I returned to Northern Ireland in 1975, and in the following year was

appointed horticultural taxonomist in the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin.

Glasnevin provided new opportunities to return to heathers, especially their history (but the dusty work on that topic is too tedious to recall). Wind-swept, wet Connemara (County Galway) became my regular haunt and I soon was well-acquainted with *Erica mackaiana* and its perplexing hybrid with *E. tetralix*, then still called *E. x praegeri* (now *E. x stuartii*). I collected specimens and mapped the distribution of these plants during a couple of summers. Mapping *E. mackaiana* across the labyrinthine Roundstone Bog was time-consuming, but I was happy walking for hours among the heathers. Persuaded by the late Major Walter Magor of Lamellan, Cornwall, that Robert Lloyd Praeger was always right (and we never proved him wrong!) I searched for the sites Praeger reported and found them.

It was during one such foray – to find the Carna populations known since the 1860s – that I spied a strange-looking *Daboecia cantabrica*. Closer examination revealed it was “double-flowered”... well, you all know the rest of the story and the clone seems to be doing well in gardens. (By the bye, I visited it in July this year; the original is still alive although engulfed by bracken.) *Erica mackaiana* ‘Errigal Dusk’ was another result, this time of a trip to Lough Nacung, County Donegal, to see the second main Irish colony of Mackay’s heath.

I should say that I am not a single-plant botanist. My other interests include sea-beans (tropical – and some not-so-tropical – seeds washed ashore on European coasts having been brought there by the currents of the North Atlantic from America). Beach-combing for sea-beans and hunting for heathers can often be combined. *Calluna vulgaris* ‘Clare Carpet’ and ‘Caleb Threlkeld’ were found during a sea-bean hunt along the coast of County Clare, while *Erica tetralix* ‘Curled Roundstone’ was curled around stones within splashing



*Dr Charles Nelson,
on the right, with
American member
Art Dome.*

*Photograph by
courtesy of
Dr. Hans Sauter,
1997*

Sadly, Art Dome, pictured above, passed away in early June.

distance of the ocean at Dog's Bay, about a mile from Roundstone (!) in Connemara.

While at Glasnevin, especially in the 1980s, I was often contacted by heather-hunters, seeking advice and help. The BBC came asking for guidance when Geoffrey Smith was filming his series "Geoffrey Smith's World of Flowers"; I went off to find good patches of heathers and fuchsia for him. Walter Magor (already mentioned), David McClintock and David Small also "banged on my door". Walter was keen to see *Erica erigena* on Errisbeg – one of the Praeger sites – growing alongside *E. mackaiana*. After a lot of searching we did find them growing close together. David Small was keen to find some good *E. erigena* too. With my younger brother, Brian, David and I went to County Mayo to see if we could find any new clones, but while we saw interesting variation, we found nothing of merit as far as I can recall.

News reached us about this time of an entirely new species of heather growing in the south-west of Spain. David McClintock was keen to see it, and also to check on records of other species in central and northern Spain. An expedition was arranged. Driven by David Small, with a mobile mist-propagator in the back of the car, we set off and reached the Rio Odiel and easily found this amazing new species. Cuttings were taken, white-flowered plants sought, and soil samples acquired – all for future research. *Erica andevalensis* has "not set the heather world on fire", to put it mildly; it is a species "of botanical interest only", unless you garden on a slag-heap in which case it should thrive. The other highlight of this Spanish trek was seeing *E. mackaiana* in Galicia, and finding the white form of it growing wild. From Galician mountains and forest glades we gathered more cuttings: 2 clones of *E. mackaiana* have been named, 'Shining Light' and 'Galicia'. A very sticky grey-foliage clone of *E. tetralix* was registered last year ('Arriba') and now a pair of *Erica umbellata* have joined the throng.

The cuttings (some rooted en route) were grown at Denbeigh Heather Nurseries, and some also went to Glasnevin where they had a bed beside Irish *E. mackaiana*. I watched those plants for a dozen years; the Spanish "macks" were more bushy and floriferous than their Irish "cousins".

Back home, *Erica erigena* began to occupy my attention. Again, it seemed worthwhile trying to map the distribution of the species in Mayo and Galway. I spent several springs and also some summer weeks tracing it along streams and across bogs. Peter Foss later took over this work, and we were eventually able to produce detailed maps of its Irish populations.

So much for research in the field. I have also taken the chance while on holiday to seek as many of the European species as I can. And, I have been to South Africa 3 times. Of course, there it is impossible *not* to see *Erica*. On the high slopes of the Drakensberg, at Naudes Nek, heathers bloom in February with red-hot pokers and a galaxy of orchids. On the Hottentots Holland and Kokelberg there are heathers so unlike the European ones that it is hard to believe they belong to the same genus. Sue and I have driven through cyclamen-carpeted cedar forests in Turkey to find *Erica bocquetii* and then *Erica sicula* (which I also saw without any problem at Buffovento in northern Cyprus). *Erica manipuliflora* has enlivened our autumn holidays in

Crete and Cephalonia. I have seen... *Erica multiflora*... *Daboecia azorica*... *Erica maderensis*... and a few more!

Let me bring this rambling reminiscence to an end. Why did (do) heathers interest me? I don't know. They are, simply, intriguing plants. One answer may lie in my boyhood days. With my parents, brothers and sisters, on Saturday afternoons in summer, we would go on trips arranged by the Fermanagh Field Club. On these I learned that one of my home county's few claims to botanical fame was the Cornish heath at Carrickbawn. But why did it not grow anywhere between Fermanagh and The Lizard, I asked? This led me to take an interest in plants with disjunct (discontinuous) distribution patterns - the European *Erica* and *Daboecia* species provide excellent examples. Usually there is no possibility of explaining these discontinuities - the best that can be achieved is to provide the least improbable of improbable answers. Why *does* Cornish heath grow in Fermanagh? Did somebody plant it there? We just will never know.

Thus *Erica vagans* is to blame for my being editor of the *Yearbook*, and for the name 'Kerry Cherry' (which I still believe was inspired!) and for *Daboecia cantabrica* 'Charles Nelson' which is doing quite well in an old ceramic sink in a rather ordinary garden on the Norfolk-Cambridgeshire border. As those biographies in front of paperbacks would have it... "He now works as a freelance botanist, editor and author, and lives with his wife, Sue, and step-daughters Lucy and Emily, in Norfolk. They have no dog and no cat, and only half a dozen heathers (*Erica umbellata*, *Daboecia* ("you know who") and a white *Calluna vulgaris* that Sue found at Lough Dan (Co. Wicklow), grow in that old sink. The others have to do with the gravel that was once the drive!)

[Based on a lecture given at the Annual Conference, Norwich, 1998.]

Obituary

Phyllis Kennedy 1910 - 2000

Phyllis Kennedy, a stalwart member of The Heather Society since 1976, died suddenly on Sunday, April 2nd. A well-attended thanksgiving service was held on May 3rd with members of The Heather Society in attendance.

Phyllis lived in the village of Sway in the New Forest and she was well known and indeed loved by many of the residents of the village. Phyllis was involved with her local church and with her helpers managed the floral arrangements that adorned the church for services and weddings. Phyllis was for many years the Chairman of the Bashley Club for the disabled, a charity which took up a lot of her time and in recent years was the President of that club and there was rarely a Monday afternoon meeting that she would miss with her disabled friends. Such was the respect and admiration for Phyllis that friends rallied around and joined her in her various ventures with the church and the disabled charity. If you were a stranger then you soon became a friend, Phyllis loved people and would immediately make conversation with whoever she met and after that first encounter you couldn't help admiring that wonderful, modest person.

Phyllis rarely talked of the past but she had lived a full life and had spent many years in Sarawak where she met Lewis who became her husband. During World War II she narrowly escaped capture by the Japanese when they invaded Singapore but regretfully Lewis was made a prisoner of war. After the war she was reunited with Lewis and they moved back to Sarawak where Phyllis became the first president of the Sarawak branch of the Red Cross Society and subsequently set up groups throughout the country. In recognition of this work she was made an M.B.E. After living in Sarawak for many years the couple moved to England and to Shirley Holms near Sway and when Lewis died in 1973 Phyllis moved into the village of Sway.

Phyllis was a plantswoman, her extensive botanical knowledge and her love of plants made her a match for many a person who knew their plants, but she was always modest. Phyllis made many trips to South Africa to see relatives and loved that country and its extensive flora. She was well-travelled and no journey was too much, not even in the later years when many a person would have thought they were beyond such excitement. Phyllis was a good and supportive member of The Heather Society avidly supporting the South West Group and very rarely missing a meeting. On several occasions Phyllis opened her small garden welcoming members to her "jungle" and despite the size welcomed all the delegates of the 1990 annual Conference to afternoon tea. Phyllis attended many of the annual Conferences and made sure that she took part in all the field events never faltering on heathland or moorland and of course she was intending to be with the Society in Germany this year. Phyllis will be sadly missed both in her community and in The Heather Society but she won't be forgotten.

Phil Joyner

And who is Robert Chapman? G P Vickers - Sheffield

A Member of the Yorkshire Group showed interest in the origins of some of the heathers we know so well. Geoffrey Yates and I have associated with one another in several ways for the Society since the 1960s, so we agreed to pool our experiences and, armed with the articles Daphne Everett wrote for the 1982, 1983 and 1986 *Yearbooks*, Geoff and I spoke to the Yorkshire Group on the subject of famous heathers. The talk went down so well that the Editor asked me to turn it into an article for the *Bulletin*.

Interest in heather growing started about 1750. However, the interest at that time, was in the very colourful Cape Heaths which had to be grown in conservatories and glasshouses. It is recorded that some nurseries were listing up to 140 cultivars in their catalogues by 1850.

But, 1750! That's before longitude by horology; sailing ships were hugging the coast of Africa on their way to the Cape. It's before Penny Post - how did they send catalogues? The Head Gardener from the big house could go to the nursery by horse-power, but what of the others? Or did the nurseryman have a stall in the Market Square, with root-balled plants standing against the Church wall and a sign up?

James Smith of Darley Dale, purveyor of hardy plants to the Gentry - Est. 1827

The Smith nursery was situated at a height of 1,000 ft. and the family boasted that if a plant thrived with them it would thrive anywhere.

As early as 1852 they introduced *Erica cinerea* 'Atrosanguinea' and *E. cinerea* 'Coccinea', both strikingly beautiful heathers because of their intense red colouring. (Since 1959, Latinised names such as these would not be accepted for the International Register.) Their greatest claim to fame must be that they introduced the first known *Erica x darleyensis* hybrid (a cross between *Erica carnea* and *Erica erigena*). This first hybrid was later given the cultivar name 'Darley Dale'. The heather firm of James Smith closed in 1979.

Backhouse of York

In 1816, James Backhouse and his brother Thomas, bought Telford's Nursery in York, which had been established in 1660. An incredible alpine garden was created by James' son, which was a great tourist attraction. However, the nursery and the alpine garden were demolished in 1955 by York Corporation to make way for a public park.

Heathers were but a small part of Backhouse's business. They grew a huge range of plants. However, for the Coronation of King George V and Queen Mary, they published a colour catalogue containing 12 *Erica carnea* cultivars, which their Mr. Richard Potter had collected from the alpine areas of Europe. The plants listed were: 'King George', 'Queen Mary', 'Prince of Wales', 'Queen of Spain', 'Mrs. Samuel Doncaster', 'C. J. Backhouse', 'Thomas Kingscote', 'Winter Beauty', 'Praecox Rubra', 'Pink Pearl', 'James Backhouse', and 'Gracilis'. Most of these names can be found in heather catalogues today.

Waterers of Bagshot - established 1790

Like so many of these early nurseries, the Waterers were best known for their rhododendrons and azaleas, but, in 1920, Gertrude Waterer, who lived in Cornwall, began to send them cutting material of the *Erica cinerea* she found near her home. Her first was the lilac and white bicolor, 'Eden Valley', followed by the soft pink 'Janet' and the *Erica x williamsii* 'Gwavas'. Donald Waterer continued the tradition by raising *E. cinerea* 'Rozanne Waterer', 'Tom Waterer', 'Duncan Fraser', 'Knaphill Pink', 'Fred Corston' and 'Pentreath'.

The nursery still continues but without any Waterers (except those who operate the valves!)

Maxwell & Beale 1917

Fyfe Maxwell and H. E. Beale met as students at Wisley and they started their heather nursery in 1917. They were enthusiastic collectors of new heathers from the wild and they inspired their staff to do similarly.

The best known of their introductions was a double-flowered pink *Calluna* found by a family picnicking in the New forest in 1925 and they sent some cutting material to the nursery. Of the three cuttings taken, two rooted and were named after H. E. Beale. From these two cuttings have come the

thousands and thousands of 'H. E. Beale' plants and the many sports which have come from 'H. E. Beale'. Just think of them - 'Peter Sparkes', 'Heike', 'Elsie Purnell', 'My Dream', 'Schurig's Sensation' and the rest. It's like a fairy tale!

When Esther and Fyfe Maxwell were honeymooning in Cornwall in 1923, Esther found an *Erica vagans* at the side of the road, of an exceptionally deep colour. The newlyweds, full of themselves and full of their find, did a dance around the plant to the consternation of a farm labourer who was walking by. Two days later they found a white *E. vagans*, which they named 'Lyonesse' after the legendary land which may have existed between Cornwall and the Scilly Isles. A land which was fertile and prosperous and had 140 churches - so they say. The deep pink *Erica vagans* they found first just had to be named 'Mrs. D. F. Maxwell'.

They found *Calluna vulgaris* 'Kynance', 'Mullion' and 'Penhale' on the same honeymoon. I think we should give these two stories an Oscar for the impact they have had on heather lore. No - not an Oscar, that is poaching from the entertainment world, let us have something of our own. I know - we should have a 'CONSTANCE' - after Constance McCleod, a founder member and the Society's first Secretary, a truly great lady who moulded an infant Heather Society.

P. S. Patrick, one time Vice-President of the Society and Editor of the *Yearbook*, was Maxwell & Beale's manager and during his stay with them he gave his name to the purple *Erica cinerea* 'P. S. Patrick'. The pretty pink-tipped *Calluna vulgaris* 'Mrs. Pat' was named after his first wife.

Charlie Eason was an Australian who came over with the ANZACS, stayed on and became Maxwell & Beale's propagator. He gave his name to a red *Erica cinerea* 'C. D. Eason'. *E. cinerea* 'John Eason' and *Calluna vulgaris* 'David Eason' were named after his sons and he named *E. cinerea* 'Golden Drop', after the Golden Drop plum he had loved back in Australia. C. G. Best, Victoria and Joyce Burfitt were all employees who gave their names to notable *Erica cinerea* and the double white *Calluna* 'Alba Plena', which had been found in Germany, was introduced here by Maxwell & Beale. Other introductions include, *Erica erigena* 'W. T. Rackliff', *E. carnea* 'Eileen Porter', *E. cinerea* 'Frances', 'G. Osmond' and 'Velvet Night' and *E. x darleyensis* 'Furzey'.

F. J. Stevens bought the nursery in 1959 on the death of H. E. Beale - Fyfe Maxwell having moved out of the firm in the early 1930s.

J. W. Sparkes - Beechwood Nurseries

J. W. Sparkes was very much involved with Birmingham Wholesale Market. He started an alpine nursery in 1929 and delivered the plants he grew to the market on a bicycle with a carrier on the front. Heathers as cut blooms were suggested to him by Charlie Chapman, one of his customers.

The first *Calluna* of his own raising was a sport from 'Alba Plena' which he called 'Joan Sparkes' after his daughter, followed by the yellow-foliaged 'Ruth Sparkes', named after his mother. *Erica carnea* 'Lesley Sparkes' was named after a granddaughter, 'Ann Sparkes', a sport from 'Vivellii', was for a sister-in-law. And then came a sport on 'H. E. Beale' - a *Calluna* with deeper pink double flowers, which he called 'Peter Sparkes' after his son.

I am sure he developed a system of growing the double pink *Calluna* with just the right feed and just the right amount of water to give 10" -12" long racemes for boxing for the market; they would make long-lasting cut flowers.

Charlie Chapman was a director of J. V. White, a firm of market traders and his family is remembered by *Calluna vulgaris* 'Carole Chapman', 'Janice Chapman' and 'Robert Chapman'.

J. W. introduced a striking new foliage *Calluna* with crimson flowers. It was named 'Sir John Charrington' after the Society's then Chairman and was ceremonially presented to Sir John on his 80th birthday.

A 'CONSTANCE' must surely go to J. W. Sparkes for the many outstanding cultivars he introduced, not only immortalising people but many others which showed his keen eye for a good sport or seedling.

J. W. Sparkes died 8th April 1981, aged 86.

Jack Drake - 1938

Jack Drake was an alpine nurseryman in the Scottish Cairngorms, but he had a yen to introduce a truly Scottish white heather. He found *Calluna vulgaris* 'Drum-ra' 300 yards from the nursery and the RHS found it worthy of an Award of Merit. Other introductions were *C.v.* 'White Mite', 'Inshriach Bronze', 'Torogay' and the dwarf 'Mullardoch'.

A friend of Jack Drake, William Buchanan, had plants of *Daboecia cantabrica* and *Daboecia azorica* growing together in the same bed and he eventually found three seedlings which he suspected were hybrids. The three were first given the names *Daboecia x polifolia*, nos 1, 2 & 3. However, this name was later changed, with seedling 1. becoming *Daboecia x scotica* 'William Buchanan' and 3. being named after Jack Drake. No. 2 was discarded.

After this section of the talk, Geoff and I went on to show slides of the propagation houses on Kurt Kramer's nursery in Germany. They are big - they are automatically controlled - they are, in fact, heather plant factories.

During the 1970s Kurt introduced a number of new *Calluna* including the following: 'Annemarie', a sport on 'Peter Sparkes', 'Red Star', a sport on 'Annemarie' and 'Anna', which Kurt named after his mother.

In the 1980s, having looked at the market for heathers, he started an extensive hybridization programme and set about producing plants to exploit that market. He noted that there was no red *Erica x darleyensis*, so he made one! He crossed *Erica carnea* 'Myretoun Ruby' with *Erica erigena* 'Brightness' and eventually produced the crimson *Erica x darleyensis* 'Kramer's Rote'.

Erica carnea 'Springwood White' is full of flower but its wayward habit creates problems in the nursery. When produced in quantity, the young plants have to be trimmed and trimmed again to make a bushy plant. Kurt crossed the neat *E. carnea* 'Snow Queen' with the floriferous 'Springwood White' hoping he could breed out its waywardness. Thousands of seedlings were produced and from the numbered short-list we now have 'Ice Princess'

- long racemes of white flowers, held erect on bright green foliage (more erect than any other white *carnea*), 'Winter Snow' - masses of flowers on bright green foliage, and the two described as having white flowers and neat compact habit - 'Schneekuppe' and 'Schneesturm'. Young plants of these cultivars will pass through Kurt's automatic trimmer without difficulty. Also worthy of note is the bright pink *E. carnea* with bronze/green foliage, 'Rosalie' and 'Rotes Jewel', more red than any other *carnea*. A cross between 'Snow Queen' and 'Foxhollow' produced 'Golden Starlet', a *carnea* with yellow foliage and a white flower.

All Saints Day is 1st November, All Souls Day is 2nd November and most people on the Continent put plants on their family graves early in November, to remember their loved ones. This adds up to a lot of plants! But what is in full flower in November? Kurt experimented and produced one - a bright crimson bud blooming *Calluna*, that he called 'Alexandra'. Bud blooming *Calluna* have flowers that never open past the bud stage and they remain at this bud stage, producing colour over several months. Other selected bud bloomers for which he has Plant Breeder's Rights are: 'Amethyst', 'Babette', 'Marlies', 'Romina' and the white 'Melanie' - and he hasn't finished yet!

Kurt has worked hard, invested heavily, and has won a court case against an unscrupulous competitor. He has selected plants wisely and will reap his rewards handsomely.

I think he deserves a 'CONSTANCE'!

Early Flowering Heathers

Mrs. K. Maynard of Sevenoaks, Kent wrote to me regarding the unusually early flowering of some of last season's winter/spring heathers (see Editorial in the Spring Bulletin).

Mrs. Maynard says that, in her Kentish garden, *Erica x darleyensis* 'Kramer's Rote' and 'White Perfection' come into flower as early as mid October and *Erica erigena* 'Brian Proudley' begins flowering in September, continuing until the following April.

We find, here in Herefordshire, that 'Brian Proudley' seems to have a mind of its own. One year it will be in full flower in October and in the next it won't open its buds until February.
Ed.

What pollinates Heather? Donald Mackay

With acknowledgements to Heather News - The Newsletter of the North American Heather Society (Autumn 1992)

Heather produces seedlings so something must pollinate the heather flower. But what? Is there just one mechanism? Are there several? Is it different for different heathers?

Dr. N. R Webb, in an informative article in the 1990 *Yearbook (Insects Associated the Heather)* says that pollination is usually by wind and that the thrip is the major insect vector. Citing a 1950 Danish Journal he says that up to six thrips are found in each flower. Mature females leaving one flower for

another crawl over the flower parts and thus transfer the pollen.

Such a two-tier pollination mechanism seems right for a flower that grows in environments that are often too cold, too wet or too windy for flying insect visits, but fails to involve the very specialised flower structure in Ericaceae, extending throughout Ericales, that makes it almost certain that ericaceous plants, like many plants, developed in concert with flying insects that were rewarded with pollen for their part in the pollination process.

Our thinking about pollination is often distorted by what we think we know about the honeybee, which admittedly in some areas and for some crops is the prime pollinator. It seems so obvious and logical that bees, as they move about the flower, must dislodge pollen, which falls onto the stigma, or carry it from flower to flower where, accidentally dislodged, it finds a home on another stigma. Ericaceous flowers, unlike most flowers, usually hang down, so gravity will not help will not help dislodged pollen find a home. In any case, heaths of interest to us have flowers too small for the honeybee to enter, especially when their bell-shaped corollas are additionally constricted at the neck.

A key botanical feature of Ericaceae, however, offers more than an indication that this family rewards only a very specialised insect visitor, where reward is defined in terms of pollen. Reward is often couched in terms of nectar, but yielding nectar alone does the plant little or no good in evolutionary terms unless it has a back-up system. Plants like *Kalmia* take no chances and dust pollen on a visitor heavy enough to spring the stamens from their pouches, whatever the purpose of the visit.

Many insects visit heather for nectar but these visits may not reward the heather so much as the visitor. Mutualism requires that both flower and visitor get rewarded, which means the reward for the flower must be in terms of transfer of pollen, not nectar.

The visitors we see may actually have little to do with pollination of the small, constricted flowers of our heathers. If their tongues are long enough they can lick the surface of the nectaries at the base of the corolla. If not, the flower is robbed of nectar through slits cut in the base of the corolla, so that even accidental pollen transfer is precluded. Carpenter and bumblebees have the facility to slit the corolla of *Ericas* and make a direct grab for the prize. Even honeybees seem to favour the direct route through slits already made, and are not above making their own slits in blueberry flowers.

Our knowledge of insect-plant interactions is pitifully small except in those cases where commercial interests have put a premium on knowledge of beneficial or harmful insects. The blueberry is an enormously important commercial crop, of the order of \$100 million annually, so, while much is known about blueberry pollination, caution is required when applying knowledge of this process to our very closely related heathers.

I know next to nothing about thrips, except that it is 'one thrips, two thrips' etc. I don't even know if the thrips that live inside the heather flower are the same that infest commercial blueberries in California, but I do know that insecticides are used there to kill thrips. The bees suffer too (at least they are no longer seen), but their pollination efficiency is so high they can get the job done within a few days of the flower opening.

The narrow corolla of *Vaccinium* and *Erica* makes it easy to visualise a unique insect relationship. But with *Calluna* one has to consider a range of flower shapes. Although the corolla is normally tightly clasped within the calyx, the flower does open and at the end of the season, wild heathers (and some cultivars) are found with the corolla wide open - so wide as to be almost flat - and the anthers fully exposed looking like a tiny spider in the middle of the flower. Is this an arrangement to encourage wind pollination when insects have gone, or just happenstance with no evolutionary purpose in mind? Who can get inside the mind of a bee?

A thrips must have an easy time living inside a *Calluna* corolla, held tightly in the embrace of a clasping calyx. But what of *Erica cinerea* and *E. tetralix* with their appreciably different flower structure? They also live on the moor side-by-side with *Calluna*. Do their prominent and accessible corollas ensure a flying insect pollinator? Or do they, too, use the tiny thrips.

And what of bud-bloomers? Though the flowers fail to open, do thrips get inside when bees can't? Though bud-bloomers may have lost some mechanical functional flower parts, they may retain sexual functionality. If so, thrips should have the plant to themselves and we should have a regular supply of seed from bud-bloomers, and seedlings nearby. But do we? Does anyone know?

Group News

Yorkshire

The spring meeting of the Yorkshire group took place on Saturday, 25th March when David Plumridge gave a repetition of his talk to The North American Heather Society Conference, "*Heather in the United Kingdom*" using slides and describing the northern heather moors, the life and upbringing of grouse, the use of moorland heather as thatch and its current export to Holland for sewage beds as well as heather cultivars. The meeting was completed with tea and biscuits and a demonstration of Cape Heaths by David Mayne.

The new *Calluna* collection continues to struggle with the excessive winter/spring rainfall at Harlow Carr. An application of Peter's Excel, acid fertiliser, has been applied, the plants have been trimmed and the beds are weed-free. Grateful thanks are expressed to the team of helpers, John & Valerie Griffiths, David & Beryl Mayne and Martin Boyd.

The winter collection has once again looked superb though this remains under threat as the garden planners intend to turn this area into a herbaceous border. The plants propagated for the new winter collection are coming along well. It is hoped that manpower will be available to prepare new beds during the summer.

Jean Julian

North East

Our Annual Outing to Harewood House on May 6th was a great success and enjoyed by 38 members and friends - mostly friends! The morning started dull but as we got further south it brightened considerably and by the time we arrived the sun was shining from a cloudless sky. The House itself is really magnificent and set in beautiful parkland overlooking the river. The parterre garden at the front of the House was set with deep purple tulips and lavender and pale blue

violas, which were enhanced by the light green box hedging. Over 200 species of birds were in aviaries set in natural woodland, and a small launch took visitors on trips round the lake. Altogether a splendid day out.

Our next outing is to Bill Crow's Nursery at Scots Gap on Wednesday, July 19th where we meet at 7.30 p.m. This will be followed by a car outing to Raby Castle on Saturday, August 5th, meeting in the Car Park at 11.30 a.m. with a picnic. The afternoon is free to visit both House and Gardens. Please bring other members or friends with you in your car.

September 9th is our Annual Show in Ponteland Memorial Hall with staging between 9.00 and 11.00 a.m. Schedules will be sent nearer the time.

Dorothy M. Warner.

East Midlands

A meeting of the East Midlands Group is planned for August 12th 2000 at our home - 10 Upper Green, Nanpantan, Loughborough LE11 3SG telephone 01509 238 923. We propose a 2 pm start. Our garden is small and is still developing but we have a few less-usual heathers which may be of interest. Mr. Arnold Stow, a senior Heather Society Councillor for many years, has kindly agreed to contribute an illustrated talk on "Heather, Plants and People".

Joan and I cordially invite participants to have tea with us afterwards and obviously it would help catering if you could let us know beforehand if you propose to attend.

Upper Green is relatively easy to find. If you are approaching Loughborough from the M1 motorway leave at junction 23 and take the A512 towards Loughborough. Take the first turning on the right into Snells Nook Lane. This is about half a mile from the junction. Follow this lane to a cross road by the Priory Inn and turn left into Nanpantan Road. A mile down this road, turn right into Brook Lane. Upper Green is the second on the left.

From other directions, find the Loughborough ring road, Epinal Way, and follow it until you come to Forest Road. The sign posts point to Nanpantan. Follow Forest Road for a mile to the point where it becomes Nanpantan Road. Here you will find Brook Lane on the left and hence Upper Green. If you would like a sketch map of the location of the venue please send me a stamped addressed envelope or contact me by e-mail. Our e-mail address is on the inside-back page.

Allen Hall

NEW HOME COUNTIES GROUP

Incorporating the former **Southern Group** and including zone 10, **North of Thames Group**.

Our first meeting has been arranged for Saturday October 7th and will be held at the RHS Gardens at Wisley. Our speaker in the afternoon will be David Small who will be talking about the visit to South Africa last Autumn to see the Cape Heaths, which we understand was an unforgettable experience. There will be a heather competition, one an arrangement of heathers, and two, a spray of one heather. Refreshments will be available.

For those members who do not belong to the RHS please meet outside the entrance at 11.00 am. The Society's affiliation will ensure that admittance will be free, surely an opportunity not to be missed!

An invitation is naturally extended to all members to join us in this, our inaugural meeting.

Derek Millis

Tel no: 01442 254880

South West

It is with regret that I have to report the passing away of two South West Group members, Phyllis Kennedy (see obituary) and Ray Parker of Badgers Holt Heather Nursery in Cornwall. Phyllis was a stalwart member of the group and Ray and his wife Eva joined us at meetings in recent years. Ray and Eva extensively travelled Southern England with their display of heathers, appearing at both the New Forest Show and the Southampton Balloon and Flower Festival. Our sincere sympathy goes to Eva.

I now move on to the report of the first two meetings of the year.

On Saturday 25th March, South West Group members met at the Lytchett Matravers Village Hall in Dorset for a lecture with Table Show. The weather was sunshine and showers but with the crisp atmosphere that allowed a breathtaking view across Poole Harbour and the Isle of Purbeck. I was pleased to have many of our regular members present and also three potential members, who, I am pleased to say, joined the Society on that day. The speaker for the afternoon was Barry Sellers who very kindly stepped in at the last moment to give a similar talk to the one Diane Jones was intending to give. The subject of the talk was the visit to South Africa by members of the Society last Autumn. Barry showed us a breathtaking collection of South African *Erica* which he told us were just a selection from the many slides he took on the trip. Several of the slides also showed the scenery they were taken through by Ted Oliver who planned and led the expedition. After Barry's talk and several questions the members enjoyed the social part of the afternoon taking refreshment and chatting on our favourite topic.

The Table Show was then judged and the results were as follows:

Class 1 - A vase or bowl of Heathers in bloom

1st Anne Pringle 2nd Maureen Clark 3rd Jennifer Turrell

Class 2 - A vase or bowl of Heathers shown for foliage effect

1st Maureen Clark 2nd Jennifer Turrell 3rd Anne Pringle

Maureen Clark was the winner of the Burfitt Bowl for the most points overall but prizes were presented to the members placed in the competition. My thanks goes to my wife Lin and several of the members for their work in the kitchen but sadly this was the last meeting attended by Phyllis Kennedy who, as always, helped in the kitchen. Thanks are also due to Lorna Farrow for judging the Table Show and once again to Barry for his excellent talk.

The second meeting of the year was held in the garden of 7, Norton Bavant near Warminster and what an exciting little garden it was. The garden belonged to Mr. and Mrs. Royds who are AGS members and who open the garden under the National Gardens Scheme once a year. Their passion was Alpines and what a wonderful collection they had. We were fortunate to have a good turnout of members once again this year and they revelled in the content of this delightful garden. The garden was a collection of scree beds, sinks and containers created from half round log edging and bulging with a superb collection of plants. There were also some small herbaceous beds with hardy geraniums and many other attractive plants. We were very fortunate with having a warm and dry afternoon after a rather wet and thundery journey up from Totton. The afternoon was rounded off with tea and biscuits and the opportunity to buy plants. My thanks goes to Mr. and Mrs. Royds for their hospitality and indeed to the National Gardens Scheme for publishing the "Yellow Book" which is a rich source of gardens to visit.

Meetings for the Remainder of the Year

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 and the last occasion was in July 1990. The nursery is wholesale and supplies many of the local horticultural sales outlets with their heathers 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 1/4 mile take the gravel track on the left and the nursery is along this track. Refreshment will be provided during the afternoon.

Dates for your Diary

I will not be arranging a meeting in September this year due to other commitments, but the newly formed Home Counties Group will be holding a meeting at Wisley on October 7th and the members of the South West Group are very welcome to attend. The details of this event will be found elsewhere in this *Bulletin*.

24th March 2001 - Annual indoor meeting at 2.00 p.m. at the Lytchett Matravers Village Hall. A talk will be arranged, more details in the Autumn *Bulletin*.

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 should 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

Nurseryman members

W = wholesale nursery only. Retail customers are reminded that wholesale nurseries are strictly that and will not welcome retail enquiries.

R = retail nursery

MO = nursery will supply by mail order

Zone 1 - Scotland

W R MO

- | | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|--|
| Yes | No | No | Mr. & Mrs. G Gow, Perthshire Heathers, The Farl, Forgandenny, PERTH, PH2 9DB. |
| Yes | Yes | Yes | Mr. D.A. Lambie, Speyside Heather Centre, West End, Skye of Curr, DULNAIN BRIDGE, INVERNESS-SHIRE, PH26 3PA. |
| Yes | Yes | Yes | Mr. & Mrs. J Davidson, Highland Heathers, Muirend, COMRIE, PERTHSHIRE, PH6 2JA. |
| Yes | Yes | No | Mr. D. Sturrock, Angus Plants & Crafts, Crosston Farm, by Letham, FORFAR, ANGUS, DD8 2NZ. |

Zone 2 - Ireland

W R MO

- | | | | |
|-----|-----|----|--|
| No | Yes | No | Mr. G. Willis, Kilternan Nurseries, Old Post Office, KILTERNAN, CO. DUBLIN, REPUBLIC OF IRELAND. |
| Yes | Yes | No | Mr. & Mrs. D. Kerins, Fernhurst Garden Nurseries, Killowen, KENMARE, CO. KERRY, REPUBLIC OF IRELAND. |
| Yes | No | No | Mr. W. Crawford, Brownlow Heathers, 148 Avenue Road, Lurgan, CRAIGAVON, NORTHERN IRELAND, BT66 7BJ. |

Zone 3 - England: Northeast

W R MO

- | | | | |
|-----|-----|----|--|
| Yes | Yes | No | Mr. & Mrs. W. Crow, Starraig Nead, Scots Gap, MORPETH, |
|-----|-----|----|--|

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- Technical Committee** *Any queries regarding culture of heathers*
Mr. D.J. Small - see Chairman above.
- Steering Committee** *Suggestions for improving the Society, publications, etc.*
Mr. D.J. Small - see Chairman above.
- Group Organisers** *(Remember, you will be very welcome at any local meeting or visit!)*
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Tel: 01509 238923
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