

Bulletin of The Heather Society



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Vol. 7 No. 3

Spring 2008

DIARY OF EVENTS

2008

15 March Yorkshire Talk at Harlow Carr

10 May South West Visit to Exbury Gardens

15 June **CLOSING DATE FOR SUMMER BULLETIN**

31 July - 4 August INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE, CANADA

20 September Home Counties RHS Wisley

27 & 28 September AGM WEEKEND, HARROGATE



A Registered Charity No. 261407

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Cover illustration *Erica Carnea* by Brita Johannson

In the 24 years that we have been gardening at The Bannut, we have contended with lawn-digging badgers, mountain-making moles, tree-stripping squirrels, bulb-eating mice, and foxes, which use the Summer Heather garden as a repository for half-eaten chickens and the bones of other, unidentifiable, animals. But, until this year we had never seen a Muntjac deer (although their presence had been previously reported by some of our garden-visitors). This (not very clear picture) was taken through our sitting room window, one evening, just before Christmas, at dusk. So far we have seen no obvious damage to trees or shrubs.



**Conference 2008, 27th – 28th September and
3rd International Heather Conference 31st July -
4th August
Susie Kay**

This year's Conference will be a shorter version as we have the International one in Victoria, Vancouver Island. The main events will be held at R.H.S. Harlow Carr, which has undergone improvements and changes over the last few years.

For those wishing to stay, a small number of rooms have been booked at the Swallow St. George, Harrogate. Should you require accommodation, please let me know as soon as possible as places are limited for rooms.

Everybody is welcome to attend the dinner to be held at the hotel and we really want to see you at the A.G.M., which is a chance for everybody to partake in the affairs of the Society

Date: 27th – 28th September

Location: Harrogate, staying at the Swallow St. George hotel in the middle of the town.

Programme:

Saturday 27th September

- 2.00 p.m. - Talk by Jean Julian on –‘The History of Harlow Carr’.
- A.G.M.
- Slide Presentation of The International Conference.
- Dinner at Swallow St. George.

Sunday 28th September

- 10.00 a.m. - Leisurely walk around Harlow Carr Gardens, led by Dean Peckett, Garden Supervisor.

Accommodation at the Swallow St. George is very limited. Many people have already indicated that they will be coming, but if you are interested, I do need to know if you will be requiring a room at the hotel.

Prices at Swallow St. George are as follows:-

Double Room to include D.BB. is £120 per night

Single Room to include D.BB. is £60 per night

The fee for this gathering will be minimal and it may be possible that members will settle their own hotel bills. If you are attending as a day guest only, I shall need to know if you will be requiring dinner on Saturday evening, which is priced at £20.

Remember this is your chance to attend the A.G.M. of *The Heather Society* and have a voice in the running of the affairs pertinent to our Society. Enquiries to me or to Charles Nelson, addresses at the back of the *Bulletin*.

3rd International Heather Conference

Our American cousins have put together a really interesting programme of lectures, garden visits and events.

The Conference will be held from 31st July - 4th August 2008 in Victoria, Vancouver Island, Canada. The post conference tour runs from 5th August - 8th August. The venue is the Harbour Towers Hotel & Suites. A special nightly rate has been arranged, which ranges from \$149 -159 Canadian. This is per room, per night and it seems that all rooms can have double occupancy. If you want to read more, go to the North American Heather Society website and then click where it says "Conference details posted here". If you register before 30th April, the fee is \$400 and this can be American or Canadian. This fee includes all meals (except Sunday lunch), seminars, featured speakers, garden tours, admission fees and transportation.

If you are hoping to attend, this is a D.I.Y. job as you need to send a completed registration form, book your own flights and arrange the hotel accommodation. If you need help with registration or any more information, I am at the end of a telephone or on e-mail.

A post Conference tour has been arranged, which will take you through Washington State. This is well worth adding to your itinerary and gives you a chance to see some fabulous heather gardens.

I am looking forward to seeing some of you in this beautiful area of the world and taking part in the Conference that the North American Heather Society has arranged for the benefit of us all.

Tippitiwitchet Corner: The Administrator's Log Number 4

New Years' Heathers

As a trial run of a multi-member e-mail, I sent a message to about 100 members – that's all of the members for whom we have e-mail addresses – and asked them what heathers were in bloom in their gardens on 1 January 2008. I had perhaps ten replies (and a few later ones too, which I have not counted). Where did all the other e-mails go? It is surely one of the great mysteries of the twenty-first century – where is the e-mail 'black hole' that swallows all those undelivered and unanswered e-mails?

The first two answers both came from Canada – no heathers, just drifts of snow! In southern England, in Hampshire, Phil Joyner had *Erica multiflora* 'John Tucker' in bloom at Totton (as well as "... from memory (it's dark now), various *E. darleyensis*"). In our garden in the East Anglian Fens, *E. oldenburgensis* 'Ammerland' was in flower. Further east, in Geldern, Germany, Johannes van Leuven has his own cultivar *E. darleyensis* 'Winter Surprise'.

Not surprisingly, the gardens in the milder west had the most flowers (but I don't mean west of England as no one responded). Ella May Wulff rebuffed my 'Ammerland' by writing "My 'Ammerland' has been blooming for months." David Wilson's, at Chilliwack, British Columbia, Canada, only had a "light dusting of color": "the *Erica darleyensis* are providing the most bloom with at best about one third of the flowers showing color on the most comfortably situated plants and there appears to be no one cultivar ahead of the other."

Several members, including Eileen Petterssen and Per Ferkingstad in Norway, reported bud-flowering lings that still had colour – as one might expect. But the prize for New Year's Day heathers goes to Susie Kay in Connemara: ... lots of heathers in flower. 'Ammerland' has been out for ages along with others that have long lost their names. *Erica darleyensis* 'Phoebe', 'Lucie', 'Katya', 'Jenny Porter' and 'Aurélie Brégeon', *E. erigena* 'Brian Proudley' and 'Irish Salmon', and a few Capes but all looks good. ... just remembered some flowers on *E. erigena* 'W. T. Ratcliffe Variegated' and lots of others. There is a funny thing in flower which I think came from Allen Hall and could be a cross between *E. terminalis* and *E. cinerea* ... Will that do you for today? [The "funny thing" is *E. arendsiana* 'Charnwood Pink'.]

A day later Susie also reported: "Went and looked at the *Erica erigena* down on the Culfín, almost part of my garden and it is in fairly full flower, all the plants along the bank."

In New Zealand, the heather bloom to a different rhythm: there bell heather and Cornish heath were in full flower.

Thanks to all who responded.

Sweatshirts

The Society's sweat shirts are available from The Administrator. We have two colours – maroon and bottle-green. The sizes are Medium, Large and XL. While stocks last, you can order these very useful and distinctive garments for just £17.50 each (post & packing included to UK addresses) or £20 (post & packing included to all non-UK addresses). See the order form enclosed with this *Bulletin*.

Members Addresses

The last membership list was produced in 2004, so I propose to produce a new address list for circulation to *members only*. This will include the names of all current members, plus a postal address and, if available, an e-mail address. The list will be generated from the Society's membership database. The membership list is not distributed to non-members, nor is it disclosed or sold to any other organization. Any member who **does not wish** to be included in the 2008 membership list is asked to advise the Administrator accordingly before the end of April 2008.

To check that the Society had your correct address, please see the yellow "name-and-address" leaflet enclosed with this *Bulletin* and return all corrections and amendments to the Administrator promptly.

New Members in 2007

28 new members joined the Society in 2007; membership currently stands at 366 (of which 53 are dual/family memberships), with 37 affiliated societies, libraries and institutes also receiving the Society's publications. The new members are

Peter **Bennett**, Billericay, Essex.
 Miss Helen **Bowick**, Kirkcudbright, Scotland.
 Mrs Frances **Buckenham**, Truro, Cornwall.
 Mrs Enid **Burgon**, Stockport, Cheshire.
 Mrs R. F. **Davies**, Balcombe, West Sussex.
 Molly **Eggel**, Samoa, California, USA.
 Teresa **Farino**, Potes, Spain.
 Philip D. **Gard**, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire.
 John **Hall** jun., Bordon, Hampshire.
 Mrs Sharon **Hardy**, Klamath, California, USA.
 Stuart **Hedley**, Stocksfield, Northumberland.
 Philip **Holmes**, Handcross, West Sussex.
 Dr John. & Mrs Jo **Huntriss**, Taunton, Somerset.
 Mr & Mrs Graham **Jolly**, Sleaford, Lincolnshire.
 Ewan **Jones**, Kingsweston, Bristol.
Takayuki Kobayashi, Niigata, Japan.
 Paul **Levey**, Poole, Dorset.
 James **Macbean**, Basildon, Essex.
 Ms Stefani **McRae-Dickey**, Philomath, Oregon, USA.

J. W. C. **Mooney**, Reading, Berkshire.
 Raymond **Newman**, Girton, Cambridgeshire
 Ms Judith **Quoroll**, Naphill Common, Buckinghamshire.
 Aaron **Sipf**, Sassari, Italy.
 Brian **Smith**, Holmfirth, W. Yorkshire.
 Ms Emma **Tracey**, Beaminster, Dorset.
 Dave **Walker**, St Athan, Wales.
 ... and **FINALLY**

Thanks to all members who have renewed their subscriptions for 2008!
Charles Nelson, Administrator.

The Society's CD 2008

Members have benefited over the last two years from CD's covering pictures of heathers and Heather Society events.

The Society is proposing to issue another CD this year, subject to sufficient material being available. You are invited to send your contributions to David Small for inclusion. Remember anything with an ericaceous content, however tenuous will be welcome.

At time of writing, whilst we have sufficient material to warrant a CD most of this is from one source, we need to balance the content.

Arnold Stow

A Message to Members From Beryl and Dave Mayne

Beryl and Dave Mayne would like to thank fellow members of *The Heather Society* for their wonderful cards and uplifting messages while Dave was ill. Good progress is being made, although it is likely to be a long haul. Many, many thanks.

A Confusion Of Names Fr Stephen Maxfield With acknowledgments to NCCPG Shropshire Group Newsletter Autumn 2007

Having run my own nursery for many years and having met many, many other nursery men and women during that time, I would like to assure readers that we are definitely NOT all like the one in the article below. However, I enjoyed Fr. Stephen Maxfield's account so much, I thought it was worth sharing with you. Ed.

The scene is set in a cold nursery shed at 7 o'clock on a frosty March morning in 1968. I have arrived to commence a year's practical experience before going to horticultural college. The nursery is one specialising in ericaceous subjects and I am introduced to the team of five men by the foreman and then quickly handed a large bunch of different labels and told "Help Jack put labels on all these plants".

The plants in question were some 200 'two-to-two-and-a-half' hybrid rhododendrons, which filled most of the floor of the shed. It was clear, I thought, that this was no greatly stretching task, as the plants were all the same variety.

Closer acquaintance with the labels proved me wrong, there were no less than twenty varieties in front of me and I could not see the difference between any of them! Jack helped me out by sorting the varieties, while I found the correct labels. It was evident that I needed to learn the difference. "So how do you tell the difference?" I asked. "Oh its quite easy really, this is the best one to start with - Britannia. See, it has slightly yellow, long slightly down curved leaves and the bush has a spreading habit." So it did and gradually I came to realise that every plant was quite distinct but the difference between one and another might be minute - a very slight difference in the habit of the leaf, the bark, the colour of the flower buds, the colour of the petioles, indumentum under the leaf.

And so began my education in the nursery stock business with the astonishing knowledge that nursery plants are not labelled, yet a skilled nurseryman could tell them apart with, usually, no difficulty whatsoever. (In years to come I was to learn that tree nurseryman are much better at telling trees apart when they have no leaves and that several of my colleagues could tell rhododendrons apart when they were in leaf but show them a flower and they were quite nonplussed!)

In fact there were labels when the young plants were planted out, placed at the beginning of each new variety. In time these were replaced by grand wooden labels meticulously painted by the foreman. As these were not treated against rot they quickly perished and were thrown to the edge of the drift to be used for starting fires. By the time a drift was ready for drawing (plants were drawn rather than lifted on this nursery) there were no labels of any kind in the entire drift. This presented no problem for the regular staff but for a new boy it was extremely frustrating, for how was I to learn?

Individual plants are difficult to learn if you only have one or two to learn from. If you have a row of them in a drift it is quite a different matter because the differences are much more obvious when compared with different neighbours. In fact we planted the hybrids out so that those that looked closest to each other were separated by more distinct varieties.

So why the confusion? This happened later on in the drawing season. It is an inevitability of a tree and shrub nursery that the nursery will not always have enough stock of those required. This is because plants are propagated and grown- on two, three, four, even five years before they are going to be sold. In the meantime some will die and fashions will change. A 'Mrs G.W. Leake' will look particularly splendid on one Chelsea Show stand and there is then a run on that variety, a run that may not be able to be fulfilled. The nursery has a choice, either it must buy in from some other nursery or it must substitute. The nursery I worked on much preferred to substitute. This would be either, by saying what had happened on the advice note, or simply sending a different variety out with the wrong label. I hear an intake of breath a gasp of astonishment at the perfidy of nurserymen! But thus it was. And sometimes it was for other reasons.

It is a bitterly cold February afternoon. It is nearly dark and you have a bunch of labels of plants that you still need to draw to fulfil orders going out that very evening. You are at one end of the 50 acre nursery and the plants you have come to draw have gone or are not up to standard. The only other ones are half a mile away in a different part of the nursery. Do you trudge off in their pursuit? Well no, actually! You look around for a substitute, find what you are looking for and draw those. Inevitably therefore, by the end of the season, the confusion becomes more and more acute. Sometimes Arthur will ring up from the office, "Have you got any more fifteen to-eighteen "Pink Pearl"?"

"No, they all went a month ago."

"Oh! really? Well I'm sending over another dozen labels I'm sure you'll find something." Click, the 'phone goes dead.

I cannot say whether this practice went on in every nursery. Forty years ago I would think that it probably did. Today? Probably not, or not so often. We never sent substitutes to other nurseries but as far as I know absolutely no one complained. The plants were good and the flowers were pink or red or yellow as the customer seemed to remember them and all was well. Except of course if you happen to be a NCCPG collection holder and you are trying to find a plant, and over and over again what you are sent is very definitely not what you want.

Rhododendrons and azaleas are particularly prone to substitution as are any plants where there are large numbers of very similar varieties. There are quite a few popular plants which would fall into this category. I suspect that now most nurserymen would contact the customer and arrange a legitimate substitute. But what happened in the past was not so straight forward and we continue to live with the problems created then.

(The nursery featured in this article disappeared under bricks and mortar many years ago - so let it remain anonymous!)

Thirty One Years Ago - from the 1977 Year Book Observations on Lime Tolerance A. W. Jones, West Camel, Somerset

Bert Jones was a Council Member and former Yearbook Editor. For some years, he and his wife Diane ran a heather nursery specialising in lime tolerant heathers at West Camel, in Somerset. Ed.

An examination of the geological map of the British Isles and a glance at the geographical distribution of members of *The Heather Society* suggests that quite a number of people must face the problems of growing heathers in a more or less alkaline soil. My own interest in lime tolerance stems from the fact that my wife and I attempt to grow heathers in a very alkaline district. Our soil may be euphemistically described as 'stiff loam' liberally permeated with Blue Lias (Limestone) platelets.

In moments of optimism we look forward to drifts of *Calluna vulgaris* and *Erica cinerea* cultivars in our garden, but caution has dictated a policy of trial plantings until the conditions are right. I have set down here our experience

with calcifuge species, and those regarded as lime tolerant.

Bringing a large quantity of lime free soil from a considerable distance would have proved very expensive, so we decided to try alternative methods. All our heathers, including the lime tolerant species, are grown in beds which have been built up with a mixture of two parts sifted well rotted garden compost or rotted turf, one part sharp sand and one part peat. Originally we used sedge peat as it was readily available, but we have not found it ideal for building up soil and now use moss peat. This mixture gives a neutral or slightly acid reaction in simple soil tests and we considered that we should also take advantage of the help that chemicals could give us.

Calcifuge plants require iron. The presence of calcium carbonate (limestone or chalk) in the soil results in the conversion of iron salts, which may be present, into insoluble iron carbonates and in this form the iron is no longer available to the plants. It is possible to supply iron in a form in which it will remain available to the plants for a prolonged period even in the presence of calcium carbonate by using sequestrene. This material is expensive but we have used it on all species which we have suspected of being even slightly calcifuge. We have also used on all plants a solution of one oz. Epsom salts (magnesium sulphate) in one gallon of water. This converts calcium carbonate into the insoluble sulphate, in which form it does not interfere with solubility of iron salts. The addition of magnesium can also be beneficial since it is an essential element for healthy growth in all chlorophyll bearing plants. It is worth pointing out that if you find it necessary to water lime hating subjects with hard tap water, Epsom Salts will reduce the harmful effects of the calcium carbonate which is present.

I would now like to describe how various species of heather have reacted to being treated in this way:

We brought with us from our former garden a number of *Calluna vulgaris* cuttings, the main cultivars being 'County Wicklow', 'Elsie Purnell', 'Johnson's Variety', 'Peter Sparkes' and 'Robert Chapman'. The three double-flowered cultivars remained healthy for about a year but had to be discarded after two. 'Johnson's Variety' and 'Robert Chapman' lasted about three years. On lifting all these plants it was found that the roots had penetrated the built up soil and had stopped growing when they reached the underlying native soil.

Erica arborea and *E. australis* are normally said to tolerate some lime. With us *E. arborea* 'Alpina' has proved successful in less than ideal conditions, but *E. australis* 'Mr. Robert' and 'Riverslea' have limped miserably on, looking more dead than alive, despite being cossetted to the best of our ability. The difference in performance of these two species cannot be explained in terms of root penetration.

The lime tolerant species *E. carnea*, *E. x darleyensis*, *E. erigena*, *E. lusitanica* and *E. terminalis* have all done well for us, though only *E. erigena* produces any quantity of seedlings. We have grown *E. umbellata* for too short a time to make any worthwhile comments on its performance in our soil.

E. scoparia is yet another species which is described as being calcifuge and yet in our garden *E. scoparia* 'Lionel Woolner' has retained fine glossy dark green foliage and has bloomed well. *E. vagans* is usually recommended for neutral or

slightly acid soils, but Terry Underhill (*Heaths and Heathers* p. 88) states that this species grows naturally in neutral or slightly alkaline conditions and he mentions pH values of 7.0 to 7.5. We thought we should have been able to grow this species in our 'improved' soil, but this has not proved to be the case. The plants remain small, do not flower well and age quickly. This is almost certainly due to the fact that this species has long tough roots which quickly reach the underlying soil which is far too alkaline for the plants.

Daboecia cantabrica has provided us with our happiest surprise. This plant is said to be deep rooted and yet 'Alba Globosa', 'Atropurpurea' and 'Hookstone Purple' have produced quite acceptable garden plants. They are smaller than when grown in ideal conditions but were not obviously unhappy and bloomed well for five seasons until this year's prolonged drought. The little *D. azorica* x *cantabrica* 'William Buchanan' does not live for very long with us. However, when growing well it provides such a show, that we have thought it worthwhile to replace the plants after about three years.

In conclusion, it seems that the soil mixture we have produced will allow us to grow calcifuge species if we can provide it in sufficient depth. It seems that the minimum depth should be about eighteen inches. Moss peat may help considerably by preventing the built-up soil from packing down too much and reducing the effective depth. It may also be advisable to select only the smaller growing cultivars which possibly do not root quite so deeply. We must also try to ensure that we have an adequate supply of lime free water.

Most of what I have said is not surprising, but I am still left wondering why *Erica australis* should have failed while *Daboecia cantabrica* succeeded.

River Lodge - A public heather garden

Dee Daneri

**With acknowledgments to *Heather News Quarterly* -
Summer 2007**

(The Newsletter of the *North American Heather Society*)

Recollections and remembrances

When our editor, Joyce Prothero, asked me to write about the history of the public heather garden in Fortuna, California, I realized that I don't remember many of the details of that exciting time. With that caveat, I present to you only what my memory and imagination have been able to conjure up. Others are encouraged to write follow-up letters to the editor to either correct or dispute the story as it is now told. Dee

We should probably begin in November, 1998, when 7,000 heather plants appeared on the site of the well-intended garden. However, it seems necessary to digress to the beginning of the story. The story will reveal how 7,000 heather plants ultimately made their way to their final destiny and ultimate fame.

In September of 1992, a group of citizens were gathered by the City of Fortuna to be advisors to the future beautification of the city. As you well know, beautification is not an exact science and often creates a challenge to

the minds of visionaries, well-doers, and people finding themselves on that proverbial road paved with good intentions.

One of our formally educated members of the group suggested that we should try to grow heather in Fortuna. What a good idea! The remainder of the group smiled and all agreed that it's a pink thing that blooms about February; and that's where our total ignorance of this most noble plant first revealed itself.

It followed that we would now need a committee to find out where we could get the pink plants. Our first clue carried us to a grower in Fort Bragg who furnished the nurseries with these winter-blooming plants. They were called Med Pink and Med White, and his name was Bob Bodie. Always looking for an excuse to take a trip, my husband and I offered to call on Mr. Bodie and learn more about the plants. Two weeks later, in early October, we were given a grand tour of Descanso Garden in Fort Bragg [not to be confused with Descanso Gardens in La Canada, CA]. By the end of that baffling introduction, I was frantically writing down words such as *tetralix* and *Daboecia*, and *Calluna* and *cinerea*. Couldn't we just get on with the pink stuff and report back to headquarters? But, oh, no! Bob suggested that to get a better idea about heather we needed to visit a real heather garden. No problem. A few more hours and we're finished!

It was Sunday October 4 when we drove into the driveway of Colonel Jim Thompson in Manchester, California. His garden was extraordinary, but must be the wrong address. No pink things, but lots of hues of pinks and white, and foliage of all of the warm colors almost competing for the color spot. While we're here, let's have a look. At the end of the two-hour tour, my jaws, now locked into open position, finally came to a close. How had this alien collection of beauty managed to escape the garden palette of the majority of the population in my little corner of Northern California, and most of North America?

'Communication' had brought us from Deborah Giraud, local University of California Extension Coordinator who suggested the pink things in the first place, to Bob Bodie and to Colonel Thompson and his lovely wife, Bev. Now we were to take an even broader leap through a new door of no return. Jim mentioned the *North American Heather Society* for information, and a lady named Alice Knight for plants. Two weeks later, I was in the greenhouse examining 49 2" pots, fresh from Alice in Elma, Washington. While I was beginning to learn many new botanical plant names, I was somewhat disappointed that only three of my new little fellows exhibited any foliage color. Alice had warned that it was late in the season, and that the foliage plants are always the most popular and difficult to get.

Meanwhile, I became a member of the NAHS and, in turn, added yet another contact. In May, 1993, I was on my way to England to meet David and Anne Small. If you take only cuttings from a nursery which can issue phytosanitary certificates, it is perfectly legal to bring those cuttings into the United States. Before departing for England, I had prepared pots for the loot which was about to find its way from England to Fortuna, California. Suddenly my little plant collection was multiplying faster than a warren of rabbits.

Now an expert on heather - after all, I had read all of the books printed in the U.K. and Europe, and gleaned information from all of the experts I could

find - it was time to present my findings and suggestions to our beautification committee. We would plant a median strip right in the middle of a busy intersection, where the community could enjoy the progress. Warning: if you decide to plant an experimental garden based on experiments conducted far from your climate, soil conditions, etc., reconsider this location immediately. The 700 plants acquired from an accumulation of sources were properly planted on 12" and 18" centers. Of course, they were tiny, and our giant mounds of redwood bark looked like, well, giant mounds of redwood bark.

In retrospect, this may also be a good time to mention the importance of communicating with city garden employees when you are a volunteer just doing what you know is a wonderful thing. Not only did our bewildered head city gardener object to the experiment, but the nice man who owned the liquor store across from the new garden complained that his customers were upset that the nice green grass had been replaced with these brown mounds. The main problem was convincing the general population that in only five or six years they would be able to enjoy the plants. We also had a damage problem. The many broken and destroyed plants were a result of the fact that the median strip was also a great crossing point to get to the liquor store. It just didn't go too well.

By now, another visit had been paid to England, and the complete heather collection in Fortuna included about 650 species and cultivars of heath and heather. It was difficult to expand heather awareness without being able to introduce them through the local garden centers. It followed that a business needed to be started to introduce the plants - thus the birth of a very short-lived heather business, *Heather Heaven*. When picking up plants from Elma, Washington, we learned that 2000 2" pots would fit into a station wagon. It was now late 1993, and a few people were interested in starting heather gardens. I was in business, peddling heather north from Sonoma, California. By fall of 1994, I had a catalog and two helpers. The demand for the little babies outweighed the supply. The business was growing, and it was time to start a study group.

On August 20, 1994, the *Fortuna Garden Club* and the *California Northcoast Heather Society* (now the *Mendocino Coast Heather Society*) were invited to a garden party at my home for the purpose of deciding whether or not a study group was feasible. At the end of the day, we had twelve members.

The original idea of the group, short of learning more about these little beauties, was to work toward a heather garden in the future Humboldt Botanical Gardens. The HBG was now to be some years away, and some of the members of the newly formed group, *Heather Enthusiasts of the Redwood Empire (H.E.R.E.)*, began thinking about projects we could consider (well, some of us did).

I was not able to serve on the *H.E.R.E.* board of directors, because the *NAHS* had a policy at that time which stated that board members of *NAHS* could not simultaneously serve on chapter boards. Oh, yes, I was on the board - easy to move up quickly if you choose your pond wisely. And so, Norma Spencer, who had worked at *Heather Heaven* and proved to be a master of propagation, became the first president of *H.E.R.E.* in 1994, and in 1995 she purchased the business while we left half of the inventory to the club. *H.E.R.E.* also became an official chapter of *NAHS* in 1995. And now.....

A Public Garden in Fortuna

In 1995, the City of Fortuna announced its plan for a new community center, on the Eel River, with a magnificent setting. I asked the *H.E.R.E.* board if they would like to consider a proposal to the City of Fortuna, in which *H.E.R.E.* would design and implement a heather garden at the community center, working in harmony with the city on maintenance needs in the future. It was done.

Corrine Stanfield, Project Manager for River Lodge, and Dale Neimann, then City Manager, bought the idea, and I was soon before the City Council with our proposal. The club moved forward with promised plant propagation and would ultimately deliver 7000 plants to River Lodge on a rainy day in November, 1998.

A two-year plan was introduced to River Lodge, involving the extraordinary skills of Dian Keesee, who became our propagator persona. Three thousand of the plants grew on in gallon pots in my garden in Fortuna. Club members came frequently to weed, feed, and water the huge collection. The same was going on at the Keesee garden, many volunteers in action.

As a frustrated, self-proclaimed landscape designer, I presented a plan to the city, which they, amazingly, liked. It was a bit frightening to see the money invested when the 5' wide exposed aggregate pathways were installed in the main garden with its many beds. The club also asked me to do the planting plan for the garden. For me, this was the real challenge of the project. Seven thousand plants must be delivered to River Lodge, sorted into their designated areas, planted by amateurs, and all end up in their rightful places at the end of the day. Speaking of the amateurs, the Rotarians, Soroptomists, Kiwanis, High School, and other so-much-appreciated volunteers came out to find a plant by a little stake, and plant it according to directions given by the team instructor. At the end of the day (two actually), a garden was born.

But, how did we get 7,000 plants to the right place in the right bed, with a swarm of volunteers with more enthusiasm than knowledge? It's not rocket science, but a matter of sticky and smiley decals. There were about 20 beds in all. We had a butterfly bed, the ladybug bed, the penguin bed, the spider bed, etc. etc. etc. Once our many, many trucks and flatbeds arrived at the various gardens, they were told to unload the pots with butterfly decals here, the teddy bears there, and the scorpions there, etc. Then the planting team could look at the scorpions and find a number written next to the bug. That meant that all of the scorpions-1 went together, next to the little flags marked Scorpion 1. Impossible? A few non-believers thought so. Next time you're in Fortuna, check out River Lodge Heather Garden. Believe!

Rest of the Story

Over the years, many dedicated club organizers have maintained annual pruning and grooming work, working closely with the City of Fortuna. Without the cooperation of our special town and dedicated city employees, we could not have seen the garden flourish. Our volunteers live all over Humboldt County, and as far away as Klamath, where our current star contributors reside.

There remained one part of the original plan that lay dormant until our current president, Sharon Hardy, and her devoted husband, Tiny, from

Klamath, discovered that the original plan to include a gazebo in the garden had never come to pass. In the original plan was a weather-protected gazebo in the middle of the main garden, which would include information about the city and the garden. Sharon picked up the ball and ran to the goal line, working with our city government until the final day came when the gazebo was in place. *H.E.R.E.* members donated \$5,000 toward its completion, a sum matched by the local garden club.

Today Sharon, Tiny, and a group of enthusiasts work with the city, committing time to pruning and grooming, and generally keeping vigil over the garden at River Lodge.

Did I say vigil? A garden is not a Rembrandt but a dynamic process. Planning and implementation are just the beginning. The reason many gardens fail is often in place the day the garden is planted. Before a garden should ever be considered, it is *maintenance* that must be considered. If a realistic and logical plan for maintenance cannot be developed, the garden will fail. At our very first meeting with the City of Fortuna, it was agreed that *H.E.R.E.* members would help with annual pruning and offer volunteer assistance whenever possible, but the City took the responsibility of all future maintenance. Well-intended volunteers go off to other endeavors, and very few gardens which are maintained solely by volunteers ever survive. Today, volunteers who work at the River Lodge garden enjoy the support of our Parks Department, who are always there with heavy equipment, chips, and labor. Various *H.E.R.E.* members take responsibility to maintain specific places in the garden. Club work days are organized. The City appreciates the volunteers, too. The staff at River Lodge is always there with coffee and treats.

I don't know what you're doing this week-end, but Sharon and Bill Hardy will be at River Lodge, creating beauty for people they will probably never meet. I'll be on a plane to Montreal to enjoy a garden that others have created - others I will never meet, but nonetheless, others I so appreciate. They have names like Maria Krenek, Gayle Teter, Pat Moranda, Don Jewett, Chris and Lee House, Glendda Couch-Carlberg, and Dan and Donna Farris.

Jostein Liland - an Appreciation

Members attending the Annual Conference in 1992 in Dundee, and others who knew him, will be sad to hear of the death of Jostein Liland in December 2007.

He was born in 1922, educated as an engineer and worked with a car firm. He was a keen plantsman, with heathers as one of his favourites. Jostein Liland was a skilled propagator, invented fixtures for this purpose and was very generous with his plants. He travelled a lot and brought home cutting material to try out new things in his garden near Bergen.

Jostein Liland was very active in the *Friends of The Norwegian Arboretum* and it was his idea for the Friends to give a Heather Garden as a 25th Jubilee gift to The Arboretum. We will miss him at our working-Mondays, in later years mostly at times when there was important work in the heather garden.

Eileen B. Petterssen

**Queries through our website –
www.heathersociety.org
 answered by experts**

Q: I live in Aberdovey and wish to plant a bank, although south facing is shaded in the mornings and late afternoon by trees, with around two dozen heathers. I am looking for a recommendation of types that will be bushy (up 1m) rather than tall and flower at around the same time.

Roger Davies

A: As it appears to be shaded, but not under trees, I would suggest the winter-flowering hybrids, *Erica darleyensis* as they would meet the bushy requirements, but not the requirements of summer/autumn flowering. As we are in Wales with normally plenty of moisture might I mention *Daboecia*. These are normally trouble free whilst *Erica cinerea* cultivars tend to have a shorter life span and generally are not so bushy. As for cultivars it is purely a matter of personal choice. Hopefully Roger Davies has the Society's *Recommended heathers* booklet ...

Arnold Stow.

A: The only experience I have with steep banks are in Derbyshire and at Harlow Carr. I find *Erica carnea* and *E. darleyensis* the best. *E. carnea* will spread and fall down a bank just as they will tumble over a wall and *E. darleyensis* are about 1 m. high and are sufficiently strong to hold a bank together. They are tough enough to cope with shade from trees, etc. I have not had much experience of *Calluna* or *E. cinerea* but I should have thought that they would be more temperamental and need some support. Bryon Roberts grows *E. cinerea* in an old quarry but I think it is on the level parts.

Jean Julian

A: The site is sunny and very well drained. This would obviously suit *Erica cinerea*. I have a similar site in an old quarry where *E. cinerea* thrives but watering in dry spells is essential.

Bryon Roberts

A: Summer and autumn-flowering heathers growing around 1 metre in height restricts choice, but some of the newer *Erica griffithsii* clones would be worth trying – and they have the added attraction of good fragrance. One could be quite adventurous and try uncommon heathers that would add to the diversity of the garden.

Erica griffithsii suggestions –

'Heaven Scent': Scented lilac-pink (H11) flowers in long sprays, Jul-Dec, on dark greyish green foliage. Vigorous upright habit. Hardy. 100cm tall, 60cm spread.

'Jacqueline': Scented, cerise (H6) flowers in long sprays, Jul-Dec, on dark greyish green foliage. Vigorous upright habit.

The golden-foliage clones, 'Valerie Griffiths' and 'Ashlea Gold' are more compact.

That also suggests that Cornish heath, *Erica vagans*, might do well, although none is generally regarded as reaching 1 metre in height.

Among the less common species there are: *Erica manipuliflora* especially–

'Olivia Hall': Erect habit, up to 1m tall; foliage mid-green (RHS CC 137B); flowers in long racemes, white to pale lilac (H4 RHS CC 69D); August - October.

'Cascades': Lilac (H4) flowers, Sept-Nov, on long trailing stems; mid-green foliage and an open, prostrate habit. 30cm tall, 60cm spread, might be worth trying as it will perform like its name.

Erica multiflora* & *Erica terminalis

Spring-flowering heaths that reach 1 metre in height are more plentiful and probably more readily obtained: *Erica erigena* (especially 'W. T. Rackliff') and the hybrid *E. darleyensis* (such as 'Arthur Johnson'); *E. oldenburgensis*; *E. arborea* 'Alpina'.

Daboecia en masse planted randomly to give a mixture of colour could also work: mix f. *alba* with 'Bicolor', 'Atropurpurea' and 'Waley's Red'.

Remember the heights given in books are averages, and usually refer to 5-year old plants that are pruned.

E. Charles Nelson

Q: I live in a first floor flat about 50 metres from a very busy main road. I want to develop some wild flower window boxes but am worried about nitrogen overload from the traffic pollution. I am therefore thinking about planting Ling (*Calluna vulgaris*), Bell Heather (*Erica cinerea*) and Cross-leaved Heath (*Erica tetralix*) – along with Tormentil, Gorse and other heathland flowers – because they thrive in acid soils. Do you know of a web site or wildflower centre in the UK that might be able to supply plugs or seeds of these plants?

A: There are a number of companies which sell this type of plant – but do check with them as we cannot guarantee the product. The best way to get the information is via the Flora Locale website – www.floralocale.org * – which lists companies that meet certain guidelines for sourcing plants. Alternatively, by careful selection of cultivars you can actually obtain heathers that are of wild origin: for example, *Erica cinerea* 'Bucklebury Red' came from Bucklebury Common in Berkshire. A fair proportion of the named clones do have authentic wild credentials, and by judicious mixing-and-matching you could achieve a good result.

*Flora Locale's website has a "Knowledge Zone" – click on the "Online Library" to find down-loadable leaflets on such topics as *Equipment for harvesting wild grassland flora and heather seed* and *Harvesting and using heather (Calluna vulgaris) seed*. ... and a lot more – well worth exploring, and also well worth supporting!

E. Charles Nelson

Letter to the Editor

My name is Aaron Siph and I'm an American living in Italy. I've started a discussion group about heaths and heathers on Yahoo. Considering that I searched for such a group and couldn't find it, I thought it would be a good idea to start one.

Many people have experience and expertise in certain areas that others

may lack. For instance, I doubt many people can share their experiences of growing heaths and heathers in Sardinia, as I can. Other questions I would foresee are questions such as "what is your favourite heather?" or "which heaths grow well in your climate?" This discussion group is a place where you can post questions and comments, and perhaps more importantly, share photos of your gardens and cultivars.

The discussion group is **not** meant to replace a professional Society, nor is it meant to be an 'ask the experts' forum. Its purpose is to allow gardeners to discuss various issues and share their growing experiences.

The link to the group is as follows, as well as the group's email address.

Group home page: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/heathersandheaths>

Group email address: heathersandheaths@yahoogroups.com

Philomath Frolickings

Ella May Wulff

This is the first in a series of occasional reports from Ella May Wulff, who lives near Philomath, Oregon, USA. Philomath (so Ella May tells us) is the home of the 'Philomath Frolic' – a rodeo weekend that is the highlight of the year for this town of 4400 residents. And - for our information - it is pronounced Fill-O-myth, OR-eh-gun. Ed.

Gardening on a hillside has many advantages, so when my husband and I decided to move from Windham, Connecticut (an hour's drive from Long Island Sound in the north-eastern US) back to Corvallis, Oregon (an hour's drive from the Pacific Ocean in the north-western US), we looked for – and found – land partway up a hill outside of town. Five hundred feet above sea level, to be exact. Here we receive only a fraction of the strong evening winds off the ocean that buffet properties in both the flatlands below and on the exposed top of the hill after hot summer days in our Willamette Valley home. Here, also, frosts come later and depart earlier than they do on the valley floor: that cold air just rolls on by us down the hill. I used to say that my garden was on the border between United States Department of Agriculture Cold Hardiness Zone 7 (average winter minimum temperatures 0 to 10°F [-18 to -12°C]) and Zone 8 (10 to 20°F [-12 to -7°C]). With recent global warming, it appears to be firmly in Zone 8.

By comparing notes with my cousin in Kent, I learned nearly forty years ago that the climate of western Oregon is similar in many ways to that of south-eastern England. We can grow many of the same plants, and strongly seasonal flowers, such as daffodils, bloom at approximately the same time in both places, give or take a couple of weeks – depending upon the garden's elevation. One huge difference is in our rainfall patterns. Ours is a cool Mediterranean climate, with most rain occurring between November and May. The average yearly rainfall here (40 inches [1000 mm]) is considerably more than Kent receives, but our summers are very dry, with low relative humidity. Summer daytime temperatures are often above 80° F (27° C), with a few days reaching 100° F (38° C) during each of the last two summers. This makes selection and siting of heather cultivars interesting.

Through trial and error and the game of “musical plants”, I have been learning which heathers with golden foliage can take our hot, sunny summers without burning. (For my cousin in Kent, this would not be an issue, though she must contend with a problem I don't have – chalk in her soil.) One of my early goals for the heather garden was to plant tall cultivars along the berm [a berm is a constructed bank - a long mound of soil usually intended for planting with trees and shrubs, though sometimes only with grass] that was created to partially conceal from the house our gravelled entrance road and its bordering ditch. I also wanted to have a mixture of foliage colours – green, silver, gold, and spring-tipped. The golds turned out to be the main challenge.

The first of them to react to the heat was *Calluna vulgaris* 'Fire King'. This arrived from the nursery wearing its beautiful, fiery orange, winter foliage; but by the end of its first summer, the foliage was more brown than gold. I gave it another year to get established, but when the scorching was repeated in the second summer, it had to go. I moved my three plants of 'Fire King' to a newly created part of the garden that is shaded from the south and west by oak and cherry trees. There it no longer burns, but its foliage also doesn't have the gold and orange tints, either. It is light green for most of the year.

Other golden-foliaged callunas that burned from summer heat were 'Carole Chapman', which turned out not to be tall enough, anyway, for its position on top of the berm, and 'Lemon Gem', bought as a low ground cover through which deep purple *Iris* (*reticulata* Group) 'George' – an impulse purchase – could grow. The 'Lemon Gem'/'George' combination worked beautifully, but once summer arrived, 'Lemon Gem' looked awful. These burn-susceptible cultivars didn't get replanted when they didn't improve during their second summer. I simply composted them. Fortunately, many other golden *Calluna* selections turned out to be perfectly happy in the sunshine. Foremost among these is 'Marion Blum', which continues to delight with its upright growth habit, year-round golden foliage, and white flowers. The similar 'Christina' also can hold its own on the berm without burning.

I have not had burning problems with golden cultivars of *Erica cinerea*. *Erica cinerea* 'Fiddler's Gold', 'Golden Sport', and 'Celebration' all perform well, with only an occasional scorched tip – not enough to mar the effect of the foliage. 'Celebration' is bright yellow or chartreuse all year, a spot of sunshine during our many grey winter days. 'Fiddler's Gold' and 'Golden Sport' both take on orange tones in winter. I wish I could give high marks to 'Golden Drop', a favourite of many West Coast gardeners, but mine have been struggling since they were planted, so I can't really judge their resistance to burning. Their struggles are shared by adjacent green cultivars of *Calluna* and *E. carnea*, so I know that the cultivar is not in question, but the location. I guess I'm going to have to dig up that area to see what is going on. 'Mounding' a nearby *Calluna* didn't help it survive.

The performance of *Erica carnea* 'Golden Starlet' in my garden has been mixed. This cultivar is a favourite of nursery owner Karla Lortz, who gardens in Washington State near Puget Sound, where summer temperatures are more moderate than those of the Willamette Valley. I positioned seven young plants of 'Golden Starlet' to curve down a slope between taller heathers, in

imitation of a stream. During their first few seasons, the plants at the top and bottom of the slope were the only ones that performed reasonably well. Those in between scorched badly and barely grew at all. (The top plant is on level ground above the slope, where water can seep in and reach the roots. The bottom plant obviously benefitted from water that had run right past those above it on the slope.) This area was being watered by overhead sprinklers, and watering obviously made the difference in performance. Many heathers with golden foliage can succeed in hot sunny areas *if* they receive adequate water. Now that this slope receives water through buried soaker hoses that allow the water to soak into the ground instead of roll off it, all the 'Golden Starlet' plants are doing well.

At least one heather with golden foliage has no problems with heat and sunlight once established, even when watering practices are less than optimal. *Erica arborea* 'Estrella Gold' is a super performer in my garden, probably because it has far ranging roots that can find the least little bit of available moisture in the soil. Also, the golden new growth eventually turns to a light green as it matures, which indicates that it has developed considerably more chlorophyll than heathers that stay gold all summer. This additional pigment undoubtedly helps to prevent burning.

The golden heathers are treasures, despite being in need of a little more care in siting and watering than the stronger growing green foliaged cultivars. Those with white flowers stay a cheerful yellow all year; and those with coloured flowers, whose foliage changes to orange or red with the onset of cold weather, help to make winter in the heather garden as exciting as summer. These treasures are worth the extra effort.

Leslie Slinger's A Life Among Shrubs : Heathers

Part II: continued from the Autumn 2007 Bulletin.

Compiled by Dr Charles Nelson

Twelve Shrubs For The Smaller Garden

Leslie Slinger made these suggestions for a dozen shrubs for a small garden, for a border occupying " an area of 450 square feet it could, for example, be 15 yards (c. 5m) long and averaging 10 feet (c. 3m) in width". Among those dozen shrubs (he soon gave up sticking to just a dozen!) were

Forsythia intermedia 'Lynwood' **or** *Berberis darwinii* 'Firefly'

Syringa prestonae 'Bellicent'

Hamamelis mollis **or** *H. mollis* 'Pallida'

Magnolia 'Lennei'

Euonymus planipes

Mahonia japonica

Viburnum plicatum 'Rowallane'

Escallonia 'Apple Blossom'

Viburnum carlesii 'Charis'

Cotinus coggygria 'Royal Purple' **or** 'Notcutts Variety'

Deutzia elegantissima 'Rosealind'

Hypericum moserianum or 'Hidcote'

Potentilla 'Katherine Dykes'

Caryopteris clandonensis 'Ferndown' or 'Heavenly Blue' or *Daphne mezereum* ...

He continued ...

At this point I should draw attention to the fact that for my small garden I have suggested twelve shrubs yet by cheating and recommending a substitute for each, my selection has become twenty-four [sic]. I have also attempted to provide flower or fruit for most of the twelve months of the year.

If someone were to follow the recommendations I have made in planting a selection of shrubs in a border there are still further steps that could be taken to add colour and interest. I always find that it is very desirable indeed to find some low-growing plant to furnish the front of borders and in this instance there is nothing better than heathers.

Though I have said that my list of twelve recommended shrubs will provide fruit and flower for most of the twelve months of the year, a judicious selection of heathers will ensure that there is not a day of the year on which there is not something in flower or fruit.

To my mind the most valuable of the heathers are the cultivars of *Erica vagans* flowering during August and September, *Calluna vulgaris* during August, September and October and the cultivars and hybrids of *Erica carnea* which spread over from November until April. I always think it is remarkable that the best of the heathers are most attractive when there is little or nothing of other shrubs in flower. All these heathers love a good, friable soil, so where the natural soil is either very heavy or light and sandy it is wise to mix in plenty of peat. *Erica vagans* and *Calluna vulgaris* object to lime but *Erica carnea* will tolerate it.

I would like, therefore, to recommend about twelve heathers which if planted in groups along the front of a border will give a good show from late August until early April. Taking the plants in their season I would name 'St Keverne' (pink), 'Mrs D. F. Maxwell' (cerise), and 'Lyonesse' (white), as being three excellent cultivars of *Erica vagans* for late summer. Forms of *Calluna vulgaris* which will continue the season up to the end of October are 'H. E. Beale' which is perhaps the finest of all heathers with its long spikes of fully double pink flowers. 'County Wicklow' is similar to it on a smaller scale but is never the less a most valuable heath. Where space permits the purple-red flowers of 'Alportii', 'Goldsworth Crimson' and 'C. W. Nix' can be recommended and these plants will ultimately reach about two feet in height. Valuable dwarf cultivars are the white flowered 'Mair's Variety', 'Serlei' and 'Alba Plena' which are true white heathers. Two interesting varieties can come into this section are 'Hammondii Aureifolia' which has golden foliage from spring until winter with the usual white flowers in August and September, and 'Hammondii Rubrifolia' which has coppery-red foliage and attractive pale purple flowers in autumn.

The following cultivars of *Erica carnea* and *E. darleyensis* will flower from November until April in the order I give: 'Winter Beauty', 'King George', 'Praecox Rubra', 'Eileen Porter', 'Springwood White' and 'Springwood Pink', 'Ruby Glow' and 'Vivellii'. The last mentioned with its coppery foliage and red

flowers is perhaps the second most outstanding heather I could mention. The hybrids grow a trifle larger attaining about one foot in height as compared with about six to nine inches in the case of *carnea* varieties. They have a remarkable long season of flower and the pink 'Darleyensis', 'George Rendall' and 'Arthur Johnston' and the white 'Silberschmelze' and 'N. R. Webster' will provide colour for about four months up to April.

Pruning 'H. E. Beale'

I do not think I would like to conclude without a few remarks generally about the planting and care of shrubs. Deep planting kills more shrubs than any other cause, while care and attention repays over and over again, because, plants like all other living things must be looked after if they are to thrive. A little judicious pruning where necessary has a most beneficial effect.

I have departed somewhat from my topic, but then my pen does have the habit of going off at a tangent, which having regard for my desire to discuss plants and people is not a bad thing!

Calluna vulgaris 'H. E. Beale' was the choice of a few as their favourite shrub. I am sure that many, many people would include this superb heather in their six dwarf shrubs. In my heather bed I have a group of some 15 to 18 plants and for many weeks from early September the 12 to 15 inch stems of double pink flowers shine brightly in the shortening days of autumn. I never fail to have these long flower stems, yet so often one sees plants bearing only 2 or 3 inch stems. This is almost entirely due to lack of pruning (starvation might enter into it, but pruning is 99% of the trouble). Heathers which produce a substantial annual growth must be pruned every year, even when they are tiny new plants. Dwarf heathers can be pruned less frequently and medium types, say, every other year. If you leave 'H. E. Beale' unpruned, the side shoots on the previous years branches will obviously be short and your flower display limited. In the end, you are left with a short twigged sprawling plant unfurnished at the base and, in short, fit only for the rubbish dump. My wife prunes my 'H. E. Beale' each March before growth commences, the successful results indicate that this is not a skilled job! March is a good time to prune heathers; those which are in flower or flower bud at that time are obviously left until flower has faded.

[to be continued with Companion plants in Summer 2008 Bulletin]

Azanmig!

If yuo cna raed tihs, yuo hvae a sgtrane mnid too. Cna yuo raed tihs? Vrey few plepoe can. I cdnuolt blveiee taht I cluod aulacity uesdnatnrd waht I was rdanieg. The phaonmneal pweor of the hmuan mnid, aoccdrnig to a rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, is taht it dseno't mtaetr in waht oerdr the lttteres in a word are. The olny iproamtnt tihng is taht the frsit and Isat Itteer be in the rghit pclae. The rset can be a taoti mses and you can still raed it whotuit a pboerim. Tihs is bcuseae the human mind deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe. Azanmig eh? And I awlyas tghuhot sipeling was ipmorantt.

Group News

North East

Two 'Dates for your Diary.'

On Sunday, May 4th 2008, our Annual Outing will be by coach to Hutton-in-the-Forest, which is 6 miles North of Penrith. The coach will leave Ponteland at 9.00 a.m. with a Coffee Stop at Rheged, before having our picnic lunch at Hutton.

The House is owned and lived in by Lord and Lady Inglewood and has many fine pictures and furniture, as well as interesting architecture. There are extensive grounds with a lake, and there is also a Tea Room with home-made fare. Further details can be obtained from me on 01661-823299. The Annual Heather Show will be held on Saturday, September 13th, 2008, in the Memorial Hall, Ponteland, but fuller details will be given in the Summer Bulletin.

Dorothy M. Warner.

Yorkshire

There will be a talk at 2.30pm on **15th March 2008**, in the FIELD CLASSROOM at Harlow Carr, just behind the Harrogate Arms pub. Do come along and learn about growing heathers. We are here to help all new-comers to the Society. Normal charges apply for entrance to the garden

Then on Saturday, 31st May 2008 we shall again be at Harlow Carr with another simple heather topic for members to join in and discuss. Suggestions for the topic are welcome as no programme is yet fixed.

We shall be visiting either Skipwith Common, or a local garden, in July / August and our year will be completed by hosting this year's abbreviated Conference and Annual General Meeting of the Society, on Saturday 27th & Sunday 28th September 2008. (See programme on page one of the Bulletin).

Jean Julian

East Midlands

There is no programme for 2008 planned at the moment, as Allen's wife Joan has been ill and has needed his attention. I am sure you will all join me in sending Joan our very best wishes. Ed.

Home Counties

The next meeting of the Home Counties Group will be held at RHS Garden, Wisley, on **Saturday 20th September**. We will meet outside the shop at 11.00 for our customary tour of the Heather Garden; the afternoon meeting, with speaker and tea, will be in the Garden Meeting Room of the Hillside Events Centre (this room is at the rear of the Garden Hall in which we have previously met i.e. alongside the old large greenhouse) at 14.00. There will of course be the usual table show - the categories are:-

1. Best flower arrangement in which heathers predominate (The Turpin Trophy).
2. Best vase of hardy heather in flower, single variety.
3. Best vase of heather chosen for foliage.

Derek Millis

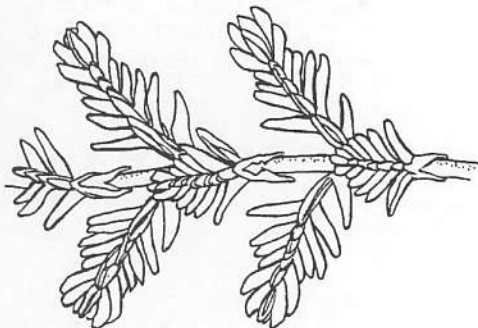
South West

On the Saturday, 29th September a handful of Heather Society members gathered together at Heale Gardens in the Woodford valley just above Salisbury. The day had started wet but we were fortunate to be blessed with a break in the weather and enjoyed some welcome sunshine. Although this tranquil garden has no heathers there was plenty to see and enjoy for those who have a general interest in plants. The garden consists of a number of smaller gardens, from a walled garden with vegetables and fruit, to a broad expanse of lawn with herbaceous borders which surround Heale House, and which, at that time, appeared to be under renovation. I was particularly attracted to the carpets of *Cyclamen hederifolium* under the trees in several areas of the garden. The river Avon flows right through the garden and within its clear waters fish were noticeable. The garden has an adjacent plant centre with a craft and souvenir shop and a refreshment area so at the end of the afternoon we were able to sit and chat over a welcome cup of tea and wander amongst a modest selection of plants for sale.

For those members who wish to join Lin and me on a spring garden walk then we will be visiting Exbury Gardens, in the New Forest, on **Saturday May 10th**. We will be in the vicinity of the entrance from 1.45pm and will be entering the gardens at about 2.00pm. Given a "normal spring" then the azaleas should be at their best at that time and will be well worth the visit. There is a heather garden in the grounds and there may still be a little colour from the spring flowering *Ericas*. Refreshments are available from the restaurant adjacent to the main car park and afternoon tea is available from the tea garden within the grounds. There is also a well stocked garden centre, a gift shop and a narrow gauge steam railway which serves part of the garden. At the time of writing the entrance fee is £7.50 (£7.00 concessions). The garden is adequately signposted from major routes and is easily found on maps of the area.

Once again I will remind members that the date and time of any get-together in the South West area will only be announced via the *Bulletin*. However if you wish to send a SAE then I will return a map and directions to help you locate any proposed venue. Visits to gardens will not be pre-arranged and will take the form of an informal stroll. Any advertised group rates for garden entry will not apply and no guided tours will be arranged. The gardens will not necessarily be heather gardens as the purpose of the any get together is to exchange information on topics of heather culture and to meet old friends and make new ones. There is no need to let me know you are coming beforehand, just turn up on the day.

Phil Joyner





The Heather Society

Your Council are in dire need of a "Minutes Secretary"

This involves attending the three Council meetings per year, 1.00 pm to 4.30 pm in February, Junee and November in Central London.

You will be required to take down the minutes of these meetings (long hand works well), word process and email them to Councillors.

Lunch, travelling expenses and stationery costs etc. are paid

For further details please contact:-

Chairman, Arnold Stow
Tel: 01494 449397
stow.limmer@btinternet.com

Secretary, Jean Julian
Tel: 01904 707316
jean.julian@btinternet.com



USEFUL ADDRESSES

Society's Website: www.heathersociety.org.uk

- Chairman & Steering Committee** *Policy matters, major events etc.*
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