

## Chairman's Opening Statement for the 2020 Annual General Meeting –

It is customary to end a Chairman's AGM statement with the declaration of thanks, however with the passing of our Hon Secretary Mr Phil Joyner he deserves a more prominent and important position in this statement. Having known Phil for many years within the Society and prior to his position as Secretary I have admired his dedication to the position with the diplomacy of a revered politician and as a friend. Phil was ( and it pains me to use the past tense) a rare breed of person who has given so much time to the position, encompassing all the proverbial trials and tribulations with enviable recorded detail and organisation of the Societies activities. I and the Society membership salute Phil and his contribution and legacy, being the smooth and efficient running of the Society to this time.

As this is the final AGM of the Heather Society in its form as a charitable institution it is regrettable that Council and membership are unable to congregate together at this occasion due the Covid virus epidemic.

The new society, rising from the ashes, will depend on its existence to the input and management from current members of Council, however I remind members that as 'part' of the Society then a 'part' is needed as an input from members for its management and its continuation.

The current Society will cease its existence at the end of this year and looking back there are many notable members who have contributed to the knowledge of heathers and the running of the Society. It would be impossible for me to name everyone and doubtless my memory would fail me and omit a notable person causing great personal offence. What will remain with me are the memories and friendship built up over all the years that I have been involved with and subsequently in my position as Chairman. Society visits to Canada, USA, Germany, South Africa, Ireland, Wales and Scotland ( I missed Spain ) remain in my memory as unforgettable highlights of my years as a member. Meeting other heather enthusiasts in these and other countries has continued my interest in our chosen plant and enabled myself and others to increase our joint knowledge in a worldwide heather community.

I especially thank our Council members, Susie Kay, Barry Sellers, Dave Brown and Alison Fitz-Earle for their valued work with the running of the Society and the many others present and past, who have played such a part, large or small, during the lifetime of the Heather Society. With such contributions it has existed to play an important part in all of our lives and brought knowledge and enjoyment to many, what greater epitaph!

David Edge