

Musings of the Membership Secretary

Throughout this last summer I have been pleased to see the hebe in my front garden in flower from early spring until now. I believe it to be *Hebe* 'Rosie' which was bred by the late John Tooby, the founder of Bransford Nurseries, in 1985, and named after his granddaughter, Rosie. As stated on their website, it flowers from summer to late autumn. The bright pink of the flower will fade a little as it comes to the end of flowering, but that could be as late as December here. A possible parent could be *Hebe* 'Great Orme'.

The Hebe Society visited Bransford's nursery in 2017. One of the benefits of membership of the society is to visit many nurseries and gardens of interest. To be in company of fellow members as we explore these gardens is a treat, with their knowledge of plants much greater than mine. I have learned such a lot. I had joined the society in the mid-90s, but in 1998 knowing that the AGM was to be held at Harlow Carr Garden in Harrogate, a garden that John and I loved, we decided to attend. We loved the event and the warm welcome from the long-standing members including founder members. I have not missed an AGM since then, one of the most memorable in 2008 was to Wakehurst Place, Kew's 'Garden in the Country', and home to the Millennium Seed Bank. I am very much looking forward to our visit next year to the Edinburgh Botanic Garden in August.

Another plant in my garden still looking good even now in autumn is one that I bought on a visit to Yorkshire last year, calling at Vertigrow a nursery on the outskirts of York. *Parahebe catarractae* 'Pink Avalanche'.

In September during our AGM weekend, we visited Seiont Nurseries in North Wales, thanks to the owner, Neil Alcock. It is a nursery trialling many new plants including hebes. We enjoyed an extremely informative tour of the nursery, admiring the many plants ready for despatch and those being grown on to see how they perform. Gardeners' desire for 'new' plants is ever ongoing. Many thanks to Gwen Scoble for organising our weekend and finding the



Hebes at Seiont Nurseries

lovely community centre, Caffi Caban near to Llanberis, for our afternoon meeting. They had a community allotment garden too.

October saw me over in Ireland again with my friend to visit his family, who live just south of Dublin. Again, we visited Mount Usher Garden, which is worth visiting at any time of year. Full of many trees and plants from all over the world. This time the plants that took my eye were phormiums; large plants, nearly black, they stood out by the river that flows through this garden. There were also some striking green and yellow forms.

Since moving to Stoke-on-Trent, I have joined several walking groups to keep up with one of my hobbies. It isn't always possible to join the walks in the country with groups such as The Ramblers due to time, but the 'Closer to Home Walks' organisation encourages people to enjoy walks in the towns. We walk often in parks, along the canal or the River Trent, but this day we took a route through the old Stoke City Football club site, which has been transformed into a

housing estate. It has been well-built and designed with some green space and trees and the small front gardens have been planted



Hebe 'Purple'

with a variety of plants. Hebes have been used in good number. *Hebe pinguifolia* 'Sutherlandii' makes a lovely little hedge which will be enjoyed by occupants for a good few years. Plenty of other hebe plants were spotted during our walk through the estate, many in flower. I pointed them out to my companions and I was asked if they were scented. My reply was that they were not usually scented, but a nice purple one, the name of which I didn't know, did have a good perfume.

Sue Bosson