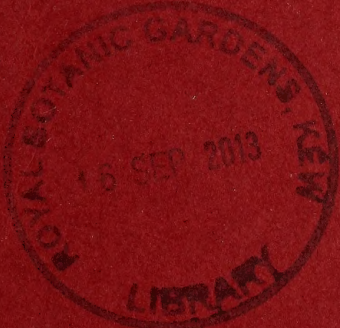


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YEAR BOOK
OF THE
HEATHER
SOCIETY



1964

THE HEATHER SOCIETY



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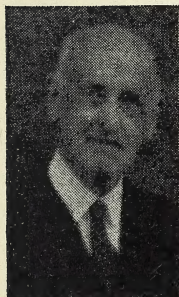
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IN MEMORIAM

Lt.-Colonel Donald MacLeod, D.S.O., M.C.

Hon. Treasurer of The Heather Society



The Chairman of the Society, Sir John Charrington, writes:—

Lt.-Colonel Donald MacLeod, who was the first Treasurer of the Heather Society, died after a long illness in July, 1964.

Colonel MacLeod had a distinguished career in the Army. After leaving Haileybury in 1903, he entered the R.M.C. Sandhurst, and was gazetted to the Prince of Wales (North Staffordshire) Regiment in 1904. In the First World War he served in the Mediterranean and Egyptian Expeditionary Forces. Promoted to Brevet rank, he earned the D.S.O. and M.C., as well as being four times Mentioned in Despatches. He also received the Serbian Order of the White Eagle.

In the Second World War he served in the Adjutant General's Department at the War Office.

When the Heather Society was in process of formation I asked Colonel MacLeod if he would take on the task of the Hon. Secretary. This he declined, on the grounds of indifferent health, but he did me a great service in suggesting that Mrs. MacLeod be appointed Secretary, in his place.

We have been prevented from seeing much of him in the past 12 months, but he was able to join the party that visited Wisley in 1963. His wise, kindly nature endeared him to all who knew him; those of us who were fortunate to have served with him, even for so short a time, have experienced a real sense of loss in his passing.

REPORT BY THE SECRETARY & TREASURER

It is gratifying to be able to report that the Membership of the Society remains steady, 45 new members having joined since the date of the Annual General Meeting as against twenty-seven who have been lost through death, resignation or subscription lapse. With this Year Book we are sending out Bankers' Orders to facilitate your future payments. If you are not already covered by a Banker's Order, and would like to avail yourself of one, please fill it in and return it to me (my address is on the front page) so that I may note it before I forward it to your bank.

The Audited Accounts were passed at the Annual General Meeting but as they were not circulated they are published in this Year Book.

The Annual General Meeting was held as before in the Royal Horticultural Society's Lecture Room on March 25th, 1964. This was perhaps an unfortunate date, being too near Easter, which resulted in a poor attendance, but those who came had the pleasure of seeing the collection of colour-slides that members have donated and of hearing Mr. P. S. Patrick's most interesting anecdotes of the origin of many of our best-known heathers.

As we promised, members have been arranged in their Zones, and a few we are glad to know have taken advantage of "knowing their neighbours" and have established contact on their own. This contact is far easier to establish in Zone 7, the London and South East, as has been exemplified in the two garden-parties to which these members were invited, by Dr. Gray of Hindhead, Surrey on August 25th and Sir John Charrington of Crockham Hill, Kent on September 4th. How glad we should be to know that other public-spirited members with large and lovely heather gardens in other areas would organise such gatherings! It cannot all be done by the Society's Secretary in the South East, but the hopes we had of obtaining local Branch Secretaries who would undertake to organise social activities in their own zones have so far not materialised. This I am afraid means that the Year Book and occasional circulars are all that the majority of our members can receive. However, we were pleased with the reception given to the duplicated "Enquiry Letters" that we sent out early in the year. Most of the enquiries were dealt with by Mr. Patrick and a selection of the most interesting of them appears elsewhere in this Year Book. To ease the burden on Mr. Patrick and in order to cope with some of the really abstruse questions that we may from time to time be asked, we

approached a number of people whom we have described as our "Scientific Panel" who will be honorary members of the Society and who will give us help on the occasions that may arise.

A small number of members went to Windsor Great Park on August 19th and the natural setting of the heathers in a former gravel pit, giving undulations and enchanting vistas makes us urge those of you who did not accompany us to make the pilgrimage there on your own. After a somewhat long walk from the Obelisk to beyond the Polo Grounds what you will find will amply reward you and we feel that the work done by the enthusiastic young gardener in charge of the heather garden should be better known.

Now to the high-light of this report: the staging of a Heather Display by members of the Committee at the R.H.S. Fortnightly Show on September 15th-16th. This was really quite delightful as we hope the accompanying photograph will show and it won us the award of a Lindley medal. We were pleased to find that many of our members, some of whom we had not seen before, made the effort to come to this display and made themselves known to those of us who were manning the stand. Only one member wrote for an Affiliation entrance ticket; we had Chelsea Flower Show tickets to spare and none were asked for for the Great Autumn Show. We realise that many of our members are Fellows of the R.H.S., but to those who are not, we say, do make use of these tickets. You could easily recover the cost of your annual subscription to the Heather Society if you *did*. And the R.H.S. Journal is yours on loan for the asking. We should of course appreciate a stamped addressed envelope for forwarding the tickets.

Before I come to the end of my report, I have yet to refer to the accompanying notice of an invitation for next year. It just shows what a good example can do! One of our members who accepted Sir John Charrington's invitation so enjoyed it that he thought out what he in turn could do, for his fellow-members.

This invitation which will entail the giving away of cuttings is most generous. It could well be extended, for our U.S.A. members are very anxious to acquire a greater range of heathers than at present exists in that country. I have been sent a list of some of the desired varieties and permits can be arranged. If any of our British members feel that this is a contribution they could make, would they please contact me for further information.

C. I. MACLEOD,

Secretary and Treasurer.

Notes on British Heaths

1. Species of Heather in Britain

by David McClintock, Platt, Kent

THERE are no less than nine species of heaths and heather to be found wild in Britain, all represented in our gardens, two of which have arrived and settled down in recent years only. In this article I shall deal only with the species, leaving the hybrids and other variations to be discussed subsequently. There is, of course, some doubt what constitutes "heathers", but here I am also excluding such similar and welcome plants as *Daboecia*, *Andromeda* and *Phyllodoce*, which will be covered separately.

Three species are far and away more abundant than all the remainder put together. Perhaps supremely the plant known as heather has been *Calluna vulgaris* (L.) Hull in Latin since 1808, the only species of its very distinct genus. It may still be found, however, referred to under its older names of *Erica vulgaris* (which dates back, not of course as a valid binomial, to 1552) or *Calluna Erica*. Ling, a word of Scandinavian origin, is also widely used in Britain. It is one of the great gregarious plants, growing mostly in drier places, but managing in bogs, too, spread over most of Europe, except the Balkans, from the North Cape and actually reaching Tangier. It is considered introduced and naturalised, usually in small patches, in the East of the U.S.A. and Canada. There is a tradition that early emigrants from Scotland to Nova Scotia brought heather beds with them which eventually were discarded and the seeds grew. Another story is that this plant reached there in packing around imported trees. But there is nothing to stop both stories being true.

Next commonest is the earlier-flowering Bell heather, *Erica cinerea* (L.), a plant of even drier places, which may also clothe entire hillsides and cliffs most colourfully. It is to be found in certain places where Ling is rare or absent, for example on Herm in the Channel Islands. Its general distribution is over Western Europe just reaching Norway and Madeira; it is a real rarity for example in North-West Germany. It is said to have been naturalised on Nantucket Island, Massachusetts, for some time.

The softer Cross-leaved heath *E. Tetralix* (L.) prefers wetter places, being the typical heath of bogs. Bogs being for ever shrinking in our islands, there are wide areas where it is not now to be seen, but it is still common in the wilder parts. It has a rather more extensive distribution in Europe than Bell heather, more to the north and east, from North Norway to North Spain and it is similarly, but less restrictedly, in America.

Dorset heath, *E. ciliaris* (L.), was in fact first definitely recorded from Cornwall in 1828 and only 5 years later from Dorset, where it is actually much more plentiful. There is also a small quantity in Devon, which was found in 1911. The early history of this shrub in Britain is a bit of a puzzle, and is set out in my book, due out in 1965. It, too, prefers moist soil, but can certainly grow in very dry places. It is a plant of the western seaboard of Europe from Holland down to Tangier.

Mackay's heath, *E. Mackaiana* Bab. (the correct name, as opposed to *E. Mackayii*, which was proposed earlier but published later), has been known from a small area of better drained parts of boggy ground in S.W. Connemara for over 130 years. Reports of it from places such as Co. Cork or Achill Sound are erroneous. It was found by a local schoolmaster and his friend and forwarded to J. T. Mackay (1775-1862), the Scot, then Curator of the

Botanic Garden at Ballsbridge, Dublin. He sent specimens on in February, 1836, to Robert Brown at the British Museum, asking if Brown considered it a "genuine species" or a variety of *Erica cinerea*. One hundred years later examination of the anatomy of its leaf and certain other detailed characters suggested it did indeed deserve to be regarded as distinct. It has, however, often been considered a subspecies or variety of *E. Tetralix* and is still to be found listed as *E. Tetralix Mackaiana*: in fact, it looks quite like a crowded Cross-leaved heath.

Yet another interpretation has been to call it a hybrid between this and Dorset heath. The plant is sterile: it sets no seed in Ireland, but probably does so in Spain. In fact 30% of its pollen is good and a further 40% to 50% degenerate, but still swelled out. This is enough to create hybrids, but not to produce seed—it could be the plant is self-incompatible and certainly there is evidence that all there is of it in its two localities is connected and has spread vegetatively. Hence its marked gregariousness and lack of variation. But Darwin wrote: "Pure species have, of course, their organs of reproduction in a perfect condition"; and this particular hybrid is well known as *E. Watsoni* and looks quite different. Furthermore, if Mackay's heath were this hybrid there is the difficulty that the existence of Dorset heath in Ireland has never been satisfactorily proved—which does not mean it never did grow there, leaving this heath as evidence. There are actually specimens of it, from where Mackay's heath grows, collected on Monday, September 14th, 1846, and again in August, 1852, the latter from J. H. Balfour (1808-84), then Professor of Botany at Edinburgh, who described it as plentiful. There are also other records of it, for example from Co. Clare. But none of these has ever been proved or refound, even by Professor Balfour when he searched again, and they are

nowadays generally discredited, except by the R.H.S. Dictionary of Gardening. But the plant is not unlikely to occur and it would not be at all the first time that discredited records have proved after all to be correct.

By coincidence this heath was discovered in the North of Spain in the same summer, 1834, as in Ireland. Here it is *Tetralix* that hardly grows anywhere near it. It is a member of that most interesting Lusitanian group of plants to be found only in Ireland and the Iberian peninsula. For over a century Connemara and the Asturian Mountains were the only parts of the world where it was known. However, in 1910 a heath had been collected in Donegal, which remained unrecognised for 40 years. It then inspired a visit to its locality, which showed that *E. Mackaiana* was locally abundant round most of a lake.

Ireland has another heath specially its own. It is called Mediterranean heath, although it is not known near the Mediterranean. True, there is a specimen from near Valencia, but no-one has refound it anywhere near there. It is actually a very rare plant indeed in France, rare in North Spain, and very scarce even in Portugal. Although it is not plentiful in Ireland, it flourishes well enough in its scattered localities in Connemara and Co. Mayo; and there is much more of it in Ireland than on the Continent.

It has recently been shown that *E. mediterranea* is not the right name for this plant and this belongs to *E. carnea*: for one thing Linnaean *mediterranea* specifically came from Austria. It was suggested, therefore, that the right name was *E. purpurascens*. However, this too proved to belong to *carnea*. The old question was then re-raised how distinct the two species are—the differences are slight and inconstant, and Bentham and Hooker lumped them. In gardens we can be pretty sure; *carnea* being the low plant from high places and *mediterranea* the high plant from low places. This

difficulty over the name was discovered directly as a result of this article and I have to go to press before it has been settled what the valid name and status of these well-known garden plants are. *Mediterranea* may well be reckoned no more than a sub-species of *carnea*, and actually even the name *carnea* is a bit uncertain. This is where *E. hibernica*, a name created by Syme in 1866, may come in. It was actually meant to distinguish the Irish from the Continental plant, but none of the distinctions really held good, although the name has passed widely into nurserymen's catalogues.

Cornish heath, *E. vagans* L. (which the French florists absurdly translate literally as Bruyère vagabonde), is to be found on the Goonhilly Downs, north of the Lizard Point in Cornwall, where it is abundant and often dominant, and has been known since the visit of John Ray in 1667. There is also a small amount of it, about 50 yards square, all white flowered, on a remote hillside in Co. Fermanagh, where it was found in 1937. I think I am not the only person who has been daunted by the unattractive tramp across the vast still unexplored moors actually to see it *in situ*. It is, however, anybody's guess how long this patch has been there and what its status is. Earlier there had been unsubstantiated records of it from Ireland, for example from Waterford in 1836. It is yet another Lusitanian plant; and is naturalised very rarely in North America.

Both this and the previous plant are in fact to be seen elsewhere in Britain quite readily seeding themselves, and their seedlings, sometimes from intentional plantings, have prospered—for example, I have seen Mediterranean heath on a Cornish roadside and Cornish heath on a bleak moor above Matlock.

Two other heaths have been planted and spread, or spread from gardens. One of these, Spanish heath, *E. lusitanica*

Rudolphi (once *E. codonodes*), from Portugal and Spain indeed, was known since the last century to grow in some quantity on Lytchett Heath in Dorset, but I am told it was all but eradicated by fire not long ago. It had seeded itself out of a garden. It is also to be seen on railway banks in Cornwall. It must have been planted in clumps along certain stretches, but these clumps have clearly been there a considerable time and are well established and have progeny of all ages around them. It was recorded as established on railway banks in Finistère, across the Channel, 80 years ago. On the other hand, there is a note in the Herbarium at the Natural History Museum which says it is cultivated in nurseries in Cornwall for supplying to Scotland as the famous White Heather and it is also exported to America, etc., for Burns' Night. This somehow does not ring quite true, and any way the plant is hardly in white flower on January 25th.

The other recently established heath is Corsican heath, *E. terminalis*, Salisb., which has also been called *E. stricta*, from the south-western Mediterranean. It has been known on the Magilligan Dunes in North Ireland for over 40 years. When I saw it there in 1956, there was a wide area thickly covered with fine plants, fully naturalised. There have been ephemeral records of this heath elsewhere and a definite one from Glengariff, but I do not think even this has been rediscovered.

I am most grateful for help readily given me in this and subsequent articles, which together form a whole, by Dr. R. Good, Dr. Ronald Gray, Mr. Will Ingwersen, Mr. J. F. Letts, Mr. C. R. Lancaster of Hillier & Sons, Mr. J. E. Lousley, Mr. F. J. Stevens of Maxwell and Beale, and Dr. D. A. Webb; and by Mr. R. Ross of the Natural History Museum, who wrestled with the nomenclature of the Mediterranean heath.

On making a Heather Garden 1.

Sir John Charrington, Crockham Hill, Kent.

HAVING had to leave our home at Charlwood because of the development of Gatwick Airport, we moved to Crockham Hill in 1957. The garden at High Quarry had had three gardeners looking after it before the last war and was therefore much more than we could cope with, with the help of only one gardener.

One day when we were wondering what to do with some of the superfluous flower beds, my wife said she thought heathers might be the answer as, before they were very old they covered the ground and prevented weeds growing.

About that time we noticed an advertisement of a well-known nurseryman offering to advise on the lay-out of a Heather Garden, so we engaged his services, and after a visit he declared our soil and situation admirable for the purpose. We received a plan for the garden in due course, and in October, 1960, 23 dozen heathers arrived. I well remember that day, for it was raining hard all the afternoon, but by about 5.30 my wife and I, though wet through, had planted the lot.

I still have the invoice, and as it may interest some to know what varieties I was sent, here is the list:

3 dozen each of: *Calluna* "H. E. Beale"; *Serlei aurea*; "County Wicklow"; "Ruth Sparkes".

2 dozen each of: *E. cinerea* "Golden Drop". *E. carnea Vivellii*; "Springwood White".

1 dozen each of: *E. Tetralix alba mollis*; "Con Underwood". *hybrida* "Silberschmelze". *E. vagans* "Lyonesse"; "Mrs. D. F. Maxwell".

At that time the names and varieties meant nothing whatever to me, but during the following Spring when the

carneas started blooming, I became fascinated and my enthusiasm has increased ever since. I then started ordering a dozen of this and a dozen of that variety, mainly because the catalogue descriptions appealed to me. By degrees, more and more of the garden was turned over to heathers and now I must have about 3,000.

Of the original lot which were sent me I think I have come to like "County Wicklow", *Vivellii* and "Silberschmelze" the best. "Springwood" is, of course, a wonderful plant with charming blooms, but I am not fond of the way it grows along the ground, collecting fallen leaves in the autumn, and making clipping difficult later in the Spring. I have come to have a particular liking for the upstanding and shapely plants such as *C.v.Alportii* and *cupraea*.

I am fortunate in having suitable soil (Rhododendrons grow wild near the house) but I add peat when planting anything that likes it. Apart from any other reason, I like to feel that a good surround of peat helps to keep the roots cool and damp in a hot, dry season. We have a large, sharply sloping Rock Garden, and by degrees this also is being planted with heathers.

I find on the edges of the rocks large numbers of seedling heather plants, and I am proposing in the autumn to collect as many of these little plants as I can (and there will be hundreds of them) and bed them out in a spare part of the Kitchen Garden. My hope is, of course, that I may one day find I have something new; there is no harm in being optimistic! I do realise the temptation to imagine that a new variety of one's own raising is good; in fact, one has to make sure, first of all, that it is really better than any other similar one, already in commerce.

Finally, I have never regretted anything less than my nurseryman friend's first visit to this garden, for heathers provide me with so much interest and delight all through

the year. I confess that I get tired of clipping large numbers of plants, in awkward positions, after they have flowered. I am confused, too, by the conflicting evidence of the experts, for whilst our President, in his admirable book, "The Heather Garden", stresses the importance of trimming, Mr. A. T. Johnson in "Hardy Heaths" assures us that it is quite unnecessary! I have an uneasy feeling that Mr. Chapple is right.



On making a Heather Garden 2.

Dr. Ronald Gray, Hindhead, Surrey

I HAVE been asked by the Editor of our Heather Society's "Year Book" to write an article "On Making a Heather Garden". As he implies, it is rather a hackneyed subject, as so many articles of this nature have appeared in the Horticultural Press, in garden articles of the weekly and daily papers and the Nurserymen's catalogues.

Writing to members with their established heather gardens and with more knowledge than I possess, I can imagine what an undergraduate would feel lecturing to a class of professors, or, like the proverbial young man, who insisted on teaching his grandmother how to deal with eggs.

As a request has been made to me to write on this subject, I can only presume that our Editor knows of members who have joined the Society because they have heard of the charm of heather gardens and, wishing to start one of their own, but, having no experience, hope to gain some knowledge from the Heather Society.

Let me begin by putting them in the right mood with the following quotation, vicariously patting them on their backs:

“The heaths do not intoxicate the floral voluptuary and they have no wild extravagance of colour, few have perfume and their form is of the simplest; it is to the cool critical vision of the well ordered mind that they appeal.” (R. H. Compton, “Journal of S. African Botany”.)

I have never made a Heather Garden! About 50 years ago I bought a house situated in some four acres of heathland. The flora of the property consisted largely of a dense growth of *Calluna vulgaris* (ling, heath, heather), *Erica cinerea* (Bell heather), *E. Tetralix* (Cross-leaved heath) and a small quantity of *E. vagans* (Cornish heath), the last, obviously, introduced by a previous owner. The family *Ericaceae* was represented by a dense growth of *Vaccinium myrtillus* (Bilberry, Whortleberry) and the usual concomitant flora from other families one meets with in wild heatherlands, Bracken, Birches, Hollies, Furze, Brooms, etc. The problem arose, what could be done with this land. Could it be spoilt? Yes, very easily, by the introduction of flowers not in keeping with this beautiful tract of wild nature. Could it be improved? I thought so, but only by planting flora in keeping with the site and mostly, therefore, members of the family *Ericaceae*, and especially the genera *Erica* and *Calluna*, the true heaths or heathers (the English words seem to be used indiscriminately). The species in these genera in the Western Hemisphere are limited to some dozen members and in the latter to only one. S. Africa is the home of the genus *Erica* with some 500 species. I have tried growing one or two of these in the open, but they have not survived the winters with me. There are, however, among the hardy heaths numerous varieties, time of flowering, colour of flowers, varieties of foliage, copper, gold, light green, deep green, grey green, silver, and height of growth from an inch to a tree heath 10 feet, or so.

I repeat I have not made a heather garden: that was

provided for me ready made by nature in the land I bought. I have boldly tried to add to the beauty, possibly with some success. My soil is ideal for this purpose. I have very occasionally added some peat where sand seemed to predominate. No chemical manures have been used. Fifteen years ago I sold my house and moved to a site some three-quarters of a mile distant. In this ground I found exactly the same flora with the exception of *Erica Tetralix*. I moved at least one representative of each species and variety to this new property. The majority of the *Ericaceae* being hermaphrodite, all that was required was to move them one by one, instead of two by two as on a previous historic occasion. From these specimens I had the choice of three methods of propagation: by seed, by layering and by cuttings. With seed the true species should be certain, but not the colour as cross fertilization may occur with a paler variety of the same species. Secondly, by layering, a slower process and adopted by only a few Nurserymen. Thirdly, by cuttings, the one most usually adopted, and the one I have employed in trying to improve the natural beauty of the new property in which I have lived for the past 14 years.

In that time a few new varieties have been discovered which I have obtained by the fourth method, viz., purchase.

Before planning a Heather Garden remember that, with few exceptions, *Erica carnea* being one, the family *Ericaceae* demand an acid soil. If in doubt test the pH.

The ideal Heather Garden should be a wild garden *under control*. It should, therefore, if space allows, be separated from the cultivated garden, so that, as far as possible, the latter should be out of sight when visiting the former. If "a weed is any plant growing where somebody intends it shan't" then to me a rose near a heather garden is a weed!

The ideal position for a heather garden is a gentle slope facing South. The best view, in toto, is obtained from a position at the bottom of the slope.

Apart from one or two main paths, some 2 to 2½ feet wide, the walks through the heather garden should be narrow, 18 inches, or so, in width. These should be in irregular curves, such as sheep make on a hill side.

When possible the heather slope should be bounded on the North and East by evergreen trees, coniferous for choice.

Dig spaces for the cultivated heaths and enlarge them as stocks increase and make them irregular in shape, letting patches of winter flowering plants be interspersed with summer flowering species and varieties. Preserve some patches of the original wild flora of *Ericaceae*.

The charm of a heather garden consists not only in the plants when in flower. There is beauty all the year round from the many varieties of colour in the foliage. A few so-called tree heaths interspersed among those of lower growth improve the effect.

Erica arborea alpina is hardy, but *E. arborea*, *E. Veitchii*, *E. lusitanica* can only survive a '63 winter if in a very sheltered position. *E. australis* and its variety "Mr. Robert" may be cut back to ground level, but often shoot again in the spring.

I grow, mostly from seed, nearly all the members of the family *Ericaceae* listed in the British flora, especially the beautiful *Daboeciae*, and some exotic species. As there are no hardy heaths with yellow flowers I allow a limited amount of the late flowering *Ulex minor* (dwarf gorse) to grow in my heather garden, and I encourage the brooms.

I am asked if I keep the plants going by top dressings at frequent renewals. Some *Callunas* and *Ericas* make rapid growth and unless clipped as soon as convenient after

flowering are apt to get leggy. Some renewals and the planting of bare patches will be required in my garden on a small scale this winter, and top dressed.

(illustration facing page 24)



Heathers for Foliage Effect

In the issue of "Amateur Gardening" of December 21st, 1963, appeared a letter from Mr. F. J. Chapple with the above heading. Part of it is reproduced here with the kind permission of Mr. Chapple, and the Editor of "Amateur Gardening".

AFTER adopting my suggestion the Royal Horticultural Society is now judging heathers for foliage effect as distinct from the bloom, so it is gratifying to see that some awards have been made. Recently I have been advised by the Society that "*Calluna Gold Haze*" (A.M. 1961 . . . bloom) has this year received a First Class Certificate on the merit of its foliage which the plant undoubtedly deserves.

This is a great triumph as "Gold Haze" is the only heather ever to have the double recognition, an A.M. for its flowers and a F.C.C. for its leaves.



Lord Horder had a lovely garden on chalk some three miles from Petersfield, Surrey. He had on his estate a quantity of leaf-mould; this was spread to some depth on the surface of the chalk and planted with Rhododendrons, which flourished in this soil. During a severe drought the plants were watered with the local hard water and this killed the lot!

(DR. RONALD GRAY, *Hindhead*)

The Heaths do not intoxicate the floral voluptuary, they have no wild extravagance of colour, few of them have perfume and their form is of the simplest; it is to the cool critical vision of the well-ordered mind that they appeal.

(PROFESSOR R. H. COMPTON, *Professor of Botany,
Cape Town University*)

Heathers will grow on chalk.

B. G. London, High Wycombe, Bucks.

MY HOME is on the Chilterns, and is built on the side of a chalk hill; the back garden faces roughly South and slopes from East to West, thus obtaining maximum sun. I shifted chalk and soil to form a level lawn which provided a sloping cliff some 30 yards long, varying in height from 4 to 8 feet, divided into two parts by steps. I embedded rough slabs of concrete to two-thirds of their width into the cliffs which formed a reasonable rock bank.

The bank was planted with shrubs and rock plants, including two *Erica stricta* and two *E. hybrida* "Silberschmelze", which like everything else were planted with a little peat round their roots; they bloomed in 1958. About this time I borrowed "The Heather Garden" from the local library, and this, and the beauty of my *carneas* decided me to make a heather garden on half of the rock bank. I increased my stock by buying more *carneas*, "Mrs. Doncaster", "King George", "Ruby Glow", the two "Springwoods" and *Vivellii*. The heather bug had now really bitten me!

While in Dorset in June I dug out clumps of wild *Tetralix*, *cinerea* and *vulgaris* with foot-square cubes of peaty leafmould enclosing their roots, as advised in "The Heather Garden", and replanted them in the rock bank when we got home. And from the heather country near Bagshot I fetched sacks of peaty sand. Using pockets of this, in 1959 I planted *E. arborea alpina*, *hybrida* "Dawn", and *williamsiana*, *vagans grandiflora* and "D. F. Maxwell", and *Calluna* v. "H. E. Beale".

Now the rock plants have almost all been replaced by heathers, and the original *hybrida* "Silberschmelze" are

now large rounded clumps 3 feet across, and obviously are very happy in the chalk, and root freely when layered. I now have 31 varieties, which include four Tree Heathers, and *carnea*, *Tetralix*, *cinerea*, *hybrida*, *mediterranea*, *vagans* and *vulgaris* varieties, all flourishing. As the bank is visible from the road when the *carneas* are in bloom people often stop to look, and occasionally will ask if they may come in for a closer view. I usually layer a few shoots with bent match sticks so they often go away delighted with a potted specimen.

Of the tree heathers, *Veitchii* is the only one that did not suffer in the 1963 winter, but although 2 feet high at the time of writing (April, 1964) has not yet bloomed. *E. australis* "Riverslea", in my opinion the loveliest of them all, suffered most, being splintered to the ground. However, it grew in an amazing fashion last summer, and now is a mass of buds.

Although most of the *carneas* obviously like the chalk, *E. darleyensis* suffers from chlorosis and improves beyond recognition in peaty sand. Some of the plants, e.g. *E. carnea* "Ruby Glow" and the *vagans* varieties, though a bit sickly at first, seemed to become acclimatised after a time and are now healthy plants.

So you see with a bit of care, heathers *will* grow on chalk.

*

Just let us peep for a moment at a bright patch in relief to the background of our moorland country. Here we see the lively green shades of the hybrid, *E. williamsiana* whose foliage from October to March is as fresh as watercress in a clear running stream. As a winter study in contrast to the sombre upland, a bed of *williamsiana* plants seems to have dropped from some distant Eden, reflecting the light and shade of beautiful colours, as though sunshine was always breaking into every little plant, and summertime, instead of being far away, seems to be very near.

F. J. CHAPPLE (*The Heather Garden*)

Growing Heather in the Eastern United States.

Mrs. Esther Deutsch, Long Island, U.S.A.

THOUGH the American continent is fortunate in possessing a wealth of Ericaceous plants, no heathers are indigenous to this vast country, approximately 30 times as large as the British Isles. In climate, the range is from sub-tropical to almost sub-arctic, though, naturally, I cannot speak for all these areas. The Pacific Northwest comes closest to the English climate, cool and moist: there all the British flora thrive and grow luxuriantly.

Although *Calluna vulgaris*, *Erica cinerea* and *Erica Tetralix* have naturalized themselves on parts of sandy dunes along the Atlantic seaboard, they seem to prefer the milder areas such as Cape Cod and Martha's Vineyard.

Heathers, on the whole, are little grown and little known, though they have long been treasured by fine gardeners, to the general public they are known only as a legend, and to some extent as a cut flower, available only at florists. The cut heather usually sold here is a form of tender Cape heath, and occasionally, *Erica mediterranea*.

As a garden plant, only *Erica carnea* has proven able to adapt itself over a large area: this is the only heath grown to any extent commercially, though *Erica darleyensis* is also well known. These two seem to acclimatise themselves readily and grow with ease in many soils and climates. In our Eastern United States, where winters may see temperatures as low as -15 degrees F. and no snow cover, the winter winds seem to do a great deal of damage to most heathers. Here only *Erica carnea*, *Tetralix*, *Calluna vulgaris*, and to some extent *Erica vagans* are considered hardy,

though without some light covering in the winter even these will burn. However, outside of this problem, heathers thrive and grow beautifully, flowering for many months, and are in every way a wonderful garden ornament. Strangely enough, it is very difficult to purchase plants of named varieties, except from a mere handful of nurserymen, as the average nursery carries none: on rare occasions one can see plants of *Erica carnea*, and nowhere are the large selection of varieties carried by English specialists available here. Despite all this, heather is becoming increasingly popular and people have been asking for the plant, so I feel sure that many more nurserymen will grow heathers in the near future.

Since our list of varieties is so much more limited, it might be of interest to note which varieties are the most popular here. I would say that *Calluna* v. "Tib" heads the list; it is one of the hardiest and blooms heavily from June to frost, and though it is a full double, the very attractive pinkish white faded flowers are retained until cut off, almost a full year. I have no doubt that climate, especially temperature, plays some role in flower colour. For instance, in cool weather, some of the pinks are much deeper in tone. Here "Tib" is a rich deep purple, although British texts call it crimson. *Searlei aurea* is a very vigorous, colourful heather which is deservedly popular, since it presents a beautiful picture the year round. "H. E. Beale" in full flower, is a most magnificent sight, unrivalled in the length of its bloom stalks and in the prodigious profusion of flower. However, after the first flush of bloom, the faded brown blooms are in sharp contrast to the frosty pink of the part of the stalk still in bloom, and since the faded flowers drop off the stem, it presents a somewhat ragged appearance until new growth starts. In "Tib", this contrast is much less marked, thus making it more

effective over a considerably longer period of time. "J. H. Hamilton" is another exquisite variety, the lovely, clear rose flowers have no trace of lavender, and the plant is as tough and hardy as any. My only complaint might be that it does not flower over as long a period as some. "Mrs. Ronald Gray" is the most popular of the dwarf varieties. It is a brilliant green, flowers lavishly, and makes a stunning plant. One of the problems we encounter with all the very dense, low, and mound forming heathers is that they seem subject to browning if watered excessively. I have been unsuccessful in trying to determine the cause of this. I can only assume that it is a fungus of some sort, which is activated by high heat and humidity. Since the British climate is considerably cooler than ours, and since this problem does not arise in cool weather, I can only presume that it does not occur in English gardens; *Foxii nana*, "Sister Anne", and "Molecule" seem to suffer equally. Experiments with spraying with a wettable sulphur this past summer seem to have arrested the condition, but once a plant has browned, it rarely recovers completely. To continue with the list of varieties, "County Wicklow" is a top notch heather; it has the largest flower of any of the doubles. *Flora plena* is a very pretty plant, the colour a deeper pink than "H.E. Beale", but not nearly as generous of bloom. *Alba plena* here is almost strictly a foliage plant, the blossoms being very few in number; I suppose our hot, dry summers are the reason for this. I have seen pictures of this covered with bloom, but after growing it for many years, I can only say I wish we could flower it here. The relatively little grown *Hammondii* grows beautifully, with long sprays of pure white flowers, and the foliage a distinctive ferny green. *Alba, pyramidalis*, and "Mair's Variety" are fine white heathers that perform very well here. Only four varieties of *Erica vagans* are grown here: "Mrs. D. F.

Maxwell", "St. Keverne", "Lyonesse", and *nana*, the first is the only one grown to any great extent. They are all magnificent, but unfortunately, the stems are prone to split with our winter extremes. However, I have found that this is one which will come back with much profuse growth from ground level. This *Calluna* will not do, unless severely pruned.

We do not grow nearly as many kinds of *Erica carnea* as you do. The most popular are "Springwood White" and "Pink", "King George", and *Vivelli*. *Erica Tetralix* is the hardiest and most reliable of all heathers. The white form makes a very attractive plant.

Though we grow far fewer varieties, there do seem to be some that have originated here, though most came originally from England. However, it seems, that over the years, there has been much duplication, and at the present time, there is some confusion in nomenclature. I do hope that The Heather Society will assume the burden of straightening out this confusion before it becomes much greater. For instance, it seems to many, that *aurea* and *cuprea* are indistinguishable. Are they? I have acquired several plants from different sources called *cuprea* and the only one that fits the description is identical to *aurea*. We heather lovers on this side of the Atlantic are looking forward to much help that only The Heather Society could give. I shall also look forward, and hope, in the near future, to be able to report much increased interest in heather growing, so much so, that we will be able to form a "daughter chapter" here to The Heather Society of Great Britain.



Where have they come from?

P. S. Patrick, Hassocks, Sussex

I HAVE been asked many times where the heather varieties we have in our gardens came from; are they natural hybrids, or garden hybrids, or are they "sports", where the shoot of a plant, in the wild or in a garden, suddenly threw flowers of an entirely different shade to the parent? The answer is that all three reasons apply, though the majority have come from chance seedlings or wild "sports". The bell-shaped flowers of *Ericas* with their narrow apertures rely mostly on bees (and to a lesser extent on moths and other insects) for pollination, whereas the open florets of *Calluna* are to a great extent air pollinated. So it must be a very long chance that anything out of the ordinary should be born, still less that it should ever be found. But that is really another story, which I do not wish to go into here.

These notes give the origin of a few of the varieties of our native heathers. I should be most grateful if readers who know where others began their garden life would let me know, as the Society is anxious to have such a record. I have cribbed some of my information from our President's book "The Heather Garden", and Mr. A. T. Johnson's book "Hardy Heathers", to both of whom I acknowledge my debt.

I begin with the species that has the greatest number of varieties.

CALLUNA

I wonder, for instance, if anyone now knows who Mr. Alport was; it would be most interesting to know how, when and where he got the variety named after him. The early flowering variety that we know as *C.v. Alportii praecox* was raised in Germany in 1938, and introduced

by Messrs. Arends, the well-known nurserymen of Wuppertal. The late Mr. C. W. Nix, who lived in Sussex and was an authority on fruit, whilst walking over moors, noticed a shoot on a plant of the same colour as *Alportii* but closer and more upright in growth. He gave the cuttings to Douglas Maxwell who raised a stock and named it after the finder. David Eason and Edward Hoare also found sports, on the Broadstone moors, rather like *Alportii* but distinct enough to name them after the finders and put them in Maxwell & Beale's catalogue, for whom they worked.

"J. H. Hamilton" too was connected with this firm, and for some years was a partner. The lovely double pink variety named after him was found on Mount Maughan (I hope the spelling is correct) in Yorkshire; D. F. Maxwell records he saw and fell in love with it some years before the firm managed to persuade the finder to part with his stock. Another one connected with the firm, through her husband, was the lady popularly known as "Mrs. Pat". On the moors one day to give her dog a walk she noticed a dwarf plant on which all the tips of the shoots were coral pink. She dug it up with the point of her walking stick and it was planted in the nursery trial bed. The next year the plant showed no sign of the coral tips, but for some reason it was not put on the bonfire as it should have been. But every year since then (nearly 40 years ago) the shoot tips have been coral-pink, though on some soils it shows very little colour.

Another one that came from the same nursery is, of course, C.v. "H. E. Beale". This came to us as a dried up cutting in the morning post, with a covering letter from a lady who said the previous day when picnicking in the New Forest she had found a double-pink heather, and would we please tell her if it was anything out of the ordinary. We saw it was indeed "out of the ordinary", and carefully took off



Photo: Dr. Violet Gray

Through the heathers into the wood, in Dr. Ronald Gray's garden at Hindhead, Surrey, visited by the Society, August, 1964



*The Society's
Exhibit at the
R.H.S. Show,
Sept. 15th - 16th
1964*

*The Hon.
Keith Mason's
Heather Garden
at Brattles' Grange,
Brenchley, Kent*



*Photo: J. E. Downward
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Horticultural Society
and The Hon. Keith
Mason.*

Mr. B. G. London's
Heather Bank,
High Wycombe
March, 1964
Photo: B. G. London



E. hyb. Silberschmelze.
E. car. Vivellii.

E. arborea alpinna.
E. carnea King George.
E. car. Mrs. Doncaster.

E. carnea Springwood White.

E. terminalis.
E. Terralix.

the three side shoots, each of about half-an-inch long, and put them in a propagating frame. Two out of the three rooted and from them the whole stock of this lovely variety has sprung.

Another *Calluna* that originated from Germany is the lovely double-white *C.v.alba plena*. Mr. B. Ruys of the huge Royal Moerheim Nurseries, Dedemsvaart, Holland, told Douglas Maxwell "it was found by a Mr. Lamken in a marsh in 1934, the finder gave it to Messrs. Brum, Nurserymen of Westerstede, who introduced it." This does not tally with Mr. Chapple's version, recorded in "The Heather Garden" that it was found, in Germany, by an English climber, but in any event Mr. Ruys sold the stock to Maxwell & Beale who introduced it into this country. It could be that both versions are correct, and that two people found the same plant and had cuttings from it, which may have occurred with the varieties "Camla" and "County Wicklow", which are now thought to be one and the same.

Once when Maxwell & Beale were exhibiting in the Flower Section of the Dublin Horse Show a lady visitor to the show promised cuttings of a double *Calluna* she had found on the Wicklow Mountains; the lady agreed with Maxwell the variety should be named "County Wicklow". In due time a stock was raised and put on the market. About the same time the late Mr. Millard, of "Camla", East Grinstead, introduced a similar variety that he named after his house. Mr. Millard had connections with Ireland, and spent some time there, but before Maxwell could verify his supposition Mr. Millard died, but Maxwell always thought the original stock for both varieties came from the same plant.

C.v.hirsuta compacta was originally known as "Sister Anne", which was later changed to the botanical name it now holds. It was collected, about 1929, on The Lizard, Cornwall, by the late Miss A. Mosely, and introduced by

Messrs. W. E. Th. Ingwersen Ltd. "It looked more like an Alpine 'cushion plant'" was how Miss Moseley described "Sister Anne" when she found it. Other varieties that came from the same district are "Kynance" and "Mullion", both found on the edge of the cliffs at the coves of the same names; on the edge of cliffs in Devon Dr. Gray found the variety he named after his wife, "Mrs. Ronald Gray"; describing the finding of this plant Dr. Gray says: "wisely it decided some thousands of years ago that a recumbent position gave it the best chance of survival". Over a course of years plants on cliff tops have been dwarfed by the severity of the winds and salt spray, and many have remained so prostrate that it was difficult not to mistake them for prostrate Thyme when approaching them. We quite expected rooted cuttings of "Kynance" and "Mullion" would grow to the normal height of a *Calluna* when given nursery conditions, as so many plants do but it was not so; the prostrate characteristic has remained constant.

The late Mr. Thomas Smith of Newry, Northern Ireland, gave an interesting account of how he found what is now known as *C.v.minima* "Smith's Variety." Walking on a mountain near Newry he noticed a plant of *C.vulgaris* that had a queer branched growth halfway up the plant; it suggested to him the Witches Broom that is often found on birch trees, the swollen stem from which springs short twiggy growths giving a "besom-like" appearance, so he took the branch back with him and struck cuttings from the "Witches Broom" sprigs. It would be interesting to know if this lovely mossy little heath is the result of a gall attack on the parent plant.

The first double *Calluna* to be recorded was *C.v.flore plena*, found in Cornwall in the 19th century by the gardener to Sir Charles Lemon, and grown for many years in the famous gardens at Carclew, but it was not until 1929 that

it was recognised by the Royal Horticultural Society with an Award of Merit. At the time it was introduced it was said of it "Sweeter resemblance of wreaths of roses cannot be conceived."

ERICA VAGANS . . . The wandering heath

There are two places in Cornwall where this heath grows wild, and up to the middle 1920s, apart from one man, little seems to have been done to find out about the species, though the type and two or three varieties, like *rosea* and *grandiflora*, and *alba* which had small flower heads of a rather dingy white were grown. The one man who had found something worth having was the late Mr. P. D. Williams who lived on the moor behind The Lizard at St. Keverne, and as far back as 1914 he received an Award of Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society for *E. vagans* "St. Keverne", a plant of which he had found growing outside his garden; the name has since been changed to *E.v.kevernensis*. Mr. Williams also found *E.v.kevernensis alba* on the same moor though the name is misleading as it is in no way a counterpart of the lovely pink variety.

Another of Mr. Williams' finds was the *vagans* x *Tetralix* cross which he named *E.hybrida williamsiana*; he told me he actually found the plant nestling against his garden wall, and it was many years before another of this particular cross was found. Like nearly all the owners of the lovely Cornish gardens of those days, Mr. Williams was interested in taller shrubs than heathers, and it was not till 1925 that a thorough search of the Goonhilly Downs was made. Then Mr. and Mrs. Maxwell went there on their honeymoon; it was heather time, and one of their first finds, of any consequence, was *E.v.* "Mrs. D. F. Maxwell".

Maxwell has written about it; "The finding of this heather we considered a reward of diligence, for after searching the

downs for days, without finding any heather of sufficient distinction to be worth while collecting, we had, at the time, turned our attention towards the absorbing if somewhat material occupation of gathering mushrooms, when my wife spotted a patch of heather of an unusual colour on a bank not far from where she was standing". Two days after that they found "Lyonesse" on the same moor, and on the same holiday the two prostrate *Callunas*, "Kynance" and "Mullion." In the material sense, a holiday that was well worth while; in the human sense, the beginning of a wonderful partnership that lasted for nearly 40 years.

ERICA CILIARIS . . . The Dorset Heath

The main station of the Dorset Heath was within easy reach of Broadstone, and in my time with Maxwell and Beale we spent very many days on the Great Heath where it grows. There are less varieties of this species than of any other, and the first one Maxwell found he regretted naming *E.cil.hybrida* as it is undoubtedly one of the many *ciliaris* x *Tetralix* hybrids that we later found on the same moor. Douglas Maxwell and I both claim to be the first to find the best white variety "Stoborough." The plant I found, about six-feet from the main road, was a poor straggly specimen but it had a few cuttings on it and that was enough to establish the stock.

The best variety, *maweana*, did not come from Dorset at all but was found in Portugal as far back as 1882 by a Mr. George Maw. It has the largest flowers of any hardy heath, and appears to be even hardier than the type.

SOME HYBRID HEATHS

The majority of the summer flowering varieties are of *ciliaris* x *Tetralix* origin, and used to be found in large numbers on the Great Heath in Dorset. They are very

proliferous in their blooming which covers a period really from June to November.

One of the first hybrids Douglas Maxwell found on the Great Heath he named after his father, "H. Maxwell" who was probably responsible for sparking off an interest in heathers in his son's mind, or so the son always said. "Dawn" and "Gwen" were two of Beale's nieces, and spent their long holidays in the nursery, and "F. White" was employed there. *Watsonii* was found near Truro in Cornwall, and is said to be the only *ciliaris* x *Tetralix* representative from that county, and has quite recently been found growing wild in the same spot.

"Gwavas" and *williamsiana* are both *vagans* x *Tetralix* crosses, though A. T. Johnson is inclined to think *ciliaris* had a hand in the inception of the former; they were both found near The Lizard in Cornwall, the former by Miss Gertrude Waterer, the latter by Mr. P. D. Williams. While "Gwavas" is prostrate in habit, *williamsiana* is upright.

Amongst the winter-flowering hybrids, Mr. A. T. Johnson once found a seedling growing between *E.med.hibernica* and *E.carnea* "Ruby Glow" so that it may be regarded as a cross between these two heaths; he liked it when it eventually flowered, and named it after himself, "Arthur Johnson"; it has been said this variety is one of the most important additions to the heath family for some years. *E.med.darleyensis* came as a chance seedling in the famous Darley Dale Nurseries of James Smith and Sons, about the beginning of the century, and a deeper flowered edition was found in Maxwell and Beale's nursery and named "George Rendall". Now we have a white sport from *darleyensis* in "Silberschmelze", raised and distributed by a German firm.

ERICA TETRALIX . . . *The Cross leaved heath*

As the name of Maxwell will always be linked with

E.vagans, and the name of Sparkes with *Calluna vulgaris*, so surely will the name of Underwood be linked with *E.Tetralix*, for on the Surrey heaths near his nursery this species grows in abundance, and Mr. Underwood has introduced some lovely varieties into our gardens.

The story of the finding of "Con Underwood" is interesting; very briefly, it begins in 1938 with the finding of a very scrubby plant with a few small crimson flowers on it, and no cuttings. So the plant was dug up and planted in the nursery, where it lived but made no growth in 1939. Then the war came, and the nursery was closed for six years; the plant was rediscovered in 1945 struggling for existence amongst the weeds, but its true worth was apparent, and a stock was raised.

At another time, an old gentleman was taking his dog for a walk over the same heath, saw a nice looking heather, dug it up with his stick and planted it in his garden. It lived, but he was not able to do anything with it, so he made a present of it to Mr. Underwood, who named it "L. E. Underwood" which we know as an outstanding variety, with what the catalogues call "terra-cotta flowers".

ERICA CINEREA . . . The Fine leaved heath

Maxwell and Beale's nursery was in the middle of dry moorland that was almost entirely *E.cinerea* for some distance on every side, and whenever one walked across the moor in heather time it was comparatively easy to find variations from the type, usually in the colour of the flower, but often of the foliage. We were young and, at first, very apt to think many of our finds were bound to be out-of-the-ordinary, and we always hoped that one day we should find THE one that would startle the Heather World. We soon came to realise that few were good enough to even have a name put to them, so we were more careful what we brought in.

Though none of our *cinereas* won the jack-pot we did pretty well, as the following list of some of our finds of those days over 30 years ago, will show; they all came off our own moor, certainly within a mile of the nursery, and where a name is given it happens to be the name of the finder, and Maxwell found the other three. Here they are . . . Apple Blossom; C. D. Eason; C. G. Best; Domino; Frances; Golden Hue; G. Osmond; John Eason; P. S. Patrick; Victoria, and the list has been increased of late years with such varieties as "Joyce Burfitt" and "Velvet Night".

We are indebted to the late Miss Gertrude Waterer of Penzance for many fine varieties of *E.cinerea* for she was so very particular to only give names to those of her finds which she deemed worthy of naming. They all appear to have been found in Cornwall, and some have locational names like "Eden Valley" (surely one of the best of the varieties) "Cripples Ease", "Gwinear", "Mulfra", "Ninnes", I wish I had had the privilege of knowing the lady, and going round her garden.

As I come to the end of this list, I am very conscious how many other varieties there are that I might have mentioned, but for the purpose of this far-too-long article I have drawn almost entirely on my own recollections and from notes left to me by my friend of 50 years, D. F. Maxwell. So we can call this Part 1 . . . to be continued in our next, perhaps.

*

I saw here what I never saw before, the bloom of the common heather we wholly overlook but it was a very pretty thing; and here when the plantations were made, and as they grew up, heath was left to grow on the sides of the road in the plantation. The heath is not so much a dwarf as we suppose. This is four feet high, and being in full bloom it makes the prettiest border that can be imagined.

WILLIAM COBBETT (*on his 'Rural Rides' written on August 31st, 1823, while at Tenterden. Kent*).

Calluna Giantiana—a remarkable episode
of fifty years ago.

F. J. Chapple, Port Erin, Isle of Man.

MY introduction to heather came in a rather unusual way. I was a young man at the time, when an aunt, one hundred per cent more fussy than any normal person, invited me to go with her for a short holiday to the Lakes. On a fair morning we were sauntering over moorland (close to the road) when aunty spotted a heather of enormous size; how it came to be so tall and fat I don't just know. Aunty calmly said: "I would like that plant for my garden and I want you to dig it up for me—you will find a spade in the carriage (Aunty was like that—she carried tools around on her crazy botanical excursions).

I realized that to remove a heath which was probably a seedling in the reign of Queen Victoria was going to be no light task. After hitting boulders and what seemed to be a small stone quarry for about half-an-hour I was not an inch nearer even moving the thing from its deep seated cavity.

Some workmen were repairing the road a short distance away, so I enlisted their assistance. Two navy-looking hefty men set to work with pick and shovel. A few minutes later the Fire Brigade returning from a call stopped to see what was going on and out stepped several firemen who stood around the plant and suspected that we were about to set fire to the moor. Then quite unexpectedly the Mayor of a nearby town happened to be coming that way from a function and seeing a crowd of folk on the heath halted the car, and came out to see what it was all about. He was accompanied by the Lady Mayoress, the Town Clerk, a pretty secretary, chauffeur and a yapping pup. By now we

had become quite a large party, and aunty, on spotting the Mayor, greeted him with a wave of her parasol.

What she said to him and to the others is not repeated. Suddenly and without warning "Calluna Giantiana" was flung through space and with it showers of wet peat were hurled on the spectators.

How I managed to get the brute back baffles memory. Aunty went away again on the following day and upon returning I was fairly on the carpet. The plant looked very sick, it was all my fault if it should die; according to aunty I had planted it in the wrong place, too near trees, had given it no peat dressing, (we hadn't a particle of peat about the place), and I had failed to water it. (It was watered every day.)

"Just to think that *I* went to the trouble of getting the plant *myself* from the moor and I brought it back all the way from the Lakes. Some day, young man, I will show you how to plant a heather."



Every garden lover should read that fascinating book: "Garden Shrubs and their histories" by Alice M. Coats, who writes: "The reputation of white heather as a luck-bringer is old in Scotland, but it seems to have been unknown in the south until brought by Queen Victoria from Balmoral. It is unusual in that the luck is transferable, and not limited to the finder of the flower." The author quotes from St. James's Gazette, July 22nd, 1885: "On great occasions the table of a Highland chieftain would be poor indeed without its sprig of white heather . . . and it is considered the height of hospitality to present it to the stranger guest." There is a lot more in this book about *Calluna* and *Erica* which should not be missed by those who are interested in heathers.

A dozen good reasons might be given by way of explaining our affection for heaths. In the first place there is the peculiar fascination of their flowers, foliage and habit of growth. They have a glamour about them, a romance touched with that sense of the untamed moorlands, where grouse are chuckling and curlews call, of wide spaces, sanctuaries of untroubled and abiding peace. Born of our own soil, as most of the heaths are, and associated with those aspects of nature which in the midst of a distracted world, still seem as inviolate as a poem of Keats, they bring into our gardens something of their unspoiled purity.

A. T. JOHNSON (*A Woodland Garden*)

Heaths on the Mountains

J. E. Crewe - Brown, Florida, Transvaal, S. Africa

I CANNOT recall when or where my interest in heaths was first aroused. It certainly wasn't in Adderley Street, Cape Town, for when I first found myself being offered blooms by the Malay flower sellers there, I had already made the acquaintance of the *Ericas* but had never seen such colours and shapes.

I think it sprang to life sometime while, as schoolboy mountaineers, we roamed the top of the Bosberg Mountains in the Eastern Province. Heaths were rare there, so rare that I recall only one variety, white and honey-scented, that brushed our shoulders as we forged through it. It was part of the mountain's floral beauty which, surprisingly, we appreciated, possibly because it was a fragment of nature's wider appeal; the lure of wild heights and far-off views for youth freed from the limitations of the white-housed village far below.

From those distant days, I have always felt a fascination about heaths quite apart from their range of colour, their profusion of blossom, and their hardiness, which I have found also in certain other wild flowers. It is a fascination readily felt but not easily explained by those who have a love of the open country, for these plants have about them something of the atmosphere of remote places where the wind plays with the mountain grass and the hawk hovers above the high buttresses. If one likes to tarry on mountain tops drinking in the beauty of the panorama below, or to linger beside the bouldered stream, one is likely to find heaths specially attractive and to see in the *Nerine* something more than just a flower.

Not long ago I stood on a gigantic saddleback, high above

wooded valleys and overlooking tumbling land masses which stretch to the Lebombo Mountains. About me were the scarlet heads of *Erica cerinthoides*. How they came to be in that spot and where they came from are tantalizing questions, worthy of study. They certainly had entrenched themselves permanently. They clung with an easy air to precipitous slopes that made me weak with apprehension until the grand beauty of the place drove fear out. Not far from where they grow men found rich gold deposits nearly a century ago and worked them. They have since gone; natural forest and bush have healed the untidy scars. Over height and hollow nature once more reigns and under a lichened krantz the scarlet flowers come and go as they have doubtless done for centuries. How good to know it was only gold men took from those green mountains!

The passage of the years has not changed my feelings about heath. For me it ever brings the breath of the countryside, the heights and the far-off view. It cannot do this for all perhaps, but it does have inherent qualities which enlist wider recognition. It has been said that five hundred varieties of heath are to be found in South Africa. I venture to suggest that not more than an average of five kinds occur in possibly a thousand gardens. The reason for this is difficult to understand. However, interest is awakening, and it may be that soon heaths will come into their own. I, for one, believe that this will happen.



Twelve Favourite Varieties

FIFTEEN members living in different parts of the British Isles were asked: "If you were able to have only 12 varieties of heather in your garden, which ones would they be? It would be interesting to know the reasons for your choice."

Twelve questionnaires were returned; the senders have the Editor's grateful thanks.

Sixty-seven different varieties were chosen; even then there were some notable absentees.

The votes cast were as follows:—

	No. of Votes		No. of Votes
<i>CALLUNA VULGARIS</i>		<i>coccinea</i>	
H. E. Beale	8	Hookstone White } ..	1 each
<i>Alportii</i>	5	Startler	
County Wicklow ..	3	Velvet Night } ..	
<i>alba plena</i>			
<i>aurea</i>		<i>DABOECIA POLIFOLIA</i>	
J. H. Hamilton ..	2 each	<i>Praegerae</i>	4
Robert Chapman		<i>alba</i>	2
Ruth Sparkes		<i>atropurpurea</i> } ..	1 each
<i>Serlei aurea</i>		<i>bicolor</i> }	
Barnett Anley		<i>ERICA HYBRIDA</i>	
Camla		Arthur Johnson } ..	4 each
Drum-Ra		Silberschmelze }	
Elsie Purnell		<i>Darleyensis</i>	3
<i>Hammondii</i>		Dawn	2
<i>aurea folia</i>	1 each	George Rendall ..	1
<i>hibernica</i>		<i>ERICA MEDITERRANEA</i>	
<i>incana</i>		Brightness	4
Peter Sparkes		W. T. Rackliff	1
Torulosa		<i>ERICA CARNEA</i>	
		Springwood White ..	8
<i>ERICA CARNEA</i>		King George	7
Springwood White ..	8	<i>Vivellii</i>	5
King George	7	Eileen Porter } ..	2 each
<i>Vivellii</i>	5	Ruby Glow	
Eileen Porter } ..	2 each	<i>atroruba</i>	
Ruby Glow		<i>carnea</i>	
<i>atroruba</i>		Snow Queen	1 each
<i>carnea</i>		Springwood Pink	
Snow Queen	1 each	Winter Beauty } ..	
Springwood Pink		<i>ERICA CILIARIS</i>	
Winter Beauty } ..		Stoborough	2
<i>ERICA CILIARIS</i>		<i>hybrida</i> } ..	1 each
Stoborough	2	Maweana	
<i>hybrida</i> } ..	1 each	<i>ERICA CINEREA</i>	
Maweana		Golden Drop	4
<i>ERICA CINEREA</i>		C. D. Eason	3
Golden Drop	4	<i>atrosanguinea</i> } ..	2 each
C. D. Eason	3	Eden Valley	
<i>atrosanguinea</i> } ..	2 each	<i>TREE HEATHS</i>	
Eden Valley		<i>arborea alpina</i>	2
		<i>arborea "Gold Tips"</i> }	1 each
		<i>Australis</i>	
		<i>codonodes</i>	

The reasons given for the choice may fall, as one would expect, into three classifications—time of flowering, colour, habit of growth, in that order. We shall all be surprised that some of our personal favourites have had so few votes or have been omitted altogether, but surely there will be few who, in this year of grace, will disagree with the varieties that head the poll—*Erica vagans* “Mrs. D. F. Maxwell”, *Calluna vulgaris* “H. E. Beale”, *Erica carnea* “Springwood White”.



FROM OUR CORRESPONDENTS

MR. D. G. P. (Dumbartonshire)

Re my quest for *Calluna v. alba* seeds. These particular seeds appear to be unobtainable but why should the purple variety and other *Calluna* or *Erica* seeds be easily obtainable from seedsmen and *alba* not? One must remember that we in Scotland look upon the common white heather as a National emblem while our Sassenach friends look on it merely as the ling and stick to the rose.

MR. W. D. (Edinburgh)

I would be interested in a Scottish Branch in a non-official capacity. I would be pleased to advise any members visiting Scotland and would even be pleased to take a party to the hills near Edinburgh if they were staying here.

MRS. D. M. (Dorset)

One question I should very much like to ask. Is it possible to have a centre where the control of naming heathers can be kept? So many “new” heathers are found, put on the market and in reality are well known varieties. I have a heather which I found on our local moor some years ago and as yet I have not found a similar colour although I have searched diligently on Maxwell & Beale’s Nursery.

MR. C. J. D. (London, S.W.19)

I should like to say how much I enjoyed the [1963] Year Book and look forward to the next issue.

As I am in business it is really impossible for me to attend visits or meetings in ordinary working hours. I hope it may be possible to arrange some from time to time on Saturdays or at and after 6 p.m. in mid-week.

MR. L. H. (Staffordshire)

Is there room in the rules of your Society to foster an interest in the *Vacciniums* which like the heathers are an integral part of the moorland pattern? We have a rare species found only on Cannock Chase and the Weaver Hills in Staffordshire out of the whole of Europe. I have never [in Staffordshire] come into contact with anyone else with any interest [in heathers] except those people who are becoming alarmed at the decline of the heather on the moorland of Cannock Chase. For many years I have ploughed a lone furrow, making surveys, advising systematic burning, pointing out over the years the accelerating decline and slow death of this most lovely wild shrub—but to little avail.

MR. A. A. (Notts.)

May I add that if required, I would be prepared to take an active part in the Society not only for the sake of office, but in order to make a contribution along the lines of the Society's aims.

DR. S. B. C. (Dorset)

Apart from [my interest in] heathland and moorland, one of my particular interests is the Dorset Heath (*Erica ciliaris*) and I feel that many of the problems raised by this plant may well be answered by people who grow it in their gardens.

MR. D. M. (Kent)

Another matter that may interest you is that a certain very special form of Bell Heather as I consider it, "schizopetala" was, so I find, first found anywhere in the world on the Common at Crockham Hill in 1897. It has been seen in various other places since but it is a rare freak. Its added interest is that it is now learnedly considered to be one of three similar plants, all with split corollas, alleged to be hybrids between Ling and Bell Heather. Frankly, I do not believe this.

MRS. J. M. Y. (New Zealand)

I have found heathers most suitable for growing in my rather unprotected garden and have had year-round delight in them. An article I wrote for the "N.Z. Gardener" on my results with them has awakened quite a lot of interest and my nurseryman tells me that he has had phenomenal sales this year.

MRS. R. H. A. (North Carolina)

I would especially like to join your society in the hope of getting more

varieties of seed. Very few people grow heather over here and it has taken me several years to find out how to grow it in this climate which varies from 100° in the summer to zero in the winter with long dry periods in the summer. I have found that plants grown from seed will (usually) produce (eventually) plants that survive the climate extremes. I have quite a lot of trouble with transplanting heather seedlings. I do hope your Year Book will have some articles on raising heathers from seed.

MRS. D. M. (Seattle)

I am an amateur heather enthusiast with about 120 species and varieties of *Calluna*, *Erica* and *Daboecia*, perhaps 600 plants all told, on my sandy hillside. There are only a few of us who "speak the language" around Paget Sound and it would be of great interest to me at least to see your annual bulletins and to know what is going on, heatherwise, in Britain, the heather lover's Mecca.

Your comments on and criticisms of the above selections from letters will be welcome.

C.I.M.

A Selection taken from Members' Enquiry Letters.

Q E. carnea Eileen Porter. In what part of the country does this bloom from October to April as all the catalogues claim, in the North it is in colour in March and is not a good doer. (SHEFFIELD, YORKS.)

A I have it recorded that in Clackmannanshire it was in flower in October last year. Protect from the prevailing cold winds by planting a wind break of taller heathers or other small shrubs and as winter approaches top-dress with fine peat to a quarter of the height of the heathers.



Q What can I do to eradicate (a) *Sorrel* which is unfortunately enamoured of the peat dressing (b) A little couch. The least bit seems to extend rapidly underground. Can one "wipe" it with some systemic weed killer? (WRECCLESHAM, SURREY)

A No chemical that I can hear of will touch sorrel. I fear that hand pulling is the only way, but tread round the heather plants afterwards. This applies also to couch. Weed killer for couch must only be used on vacant ground.



Q From time to time I have applied gypsum to unplanted ground and it has helped to break down the clay; would there be any objection to digging it in between clumps of heathers? (PINNER, MIDDX.)

A We have no personal information regarding gypsum but it would probably be dangerous to use it on heather ground except perhaps with *carneas* and *mediterraneas*.



Q I have heard that heathers require no feeding only peat. Is this really so or would an occasional application of a fertiliser improve growth and flowering?

A Opinions differ. Some say that the danger of feeding heaths is that they are apt to make too much growth and less flowers. Others advocate mixing in powdered I.C.I. Plus with peat and watering it in as a "pick-me-up" for tired heathers.



Q A plant of *H. E. Beale* planted in January 1962 flowered well in 1963 and now appears to be dead. In the case of *Cal. tricolorifolia* small plants raised from cuttings appear to have failed. Can you suggest a reason? (DUNCHURCH, WARWICKS.)

A *H. E. Beale*: many people seem to have trouble with this lovely variety. It certainly seems to need a lot of water in dry weather. In pruning, do not cut below the flowering spike.

Tricolorifolia: Did you firm the young plants after any frost you may have had? They may have been lifted by frost, and frozen or dried out.



Q What triggers off the flowering of *Erica carnea* varieties? The buds of *E.c. Springwood* are formed and showing signs of colour in October and look as though 10-14 days of good weather would produce blossom, yet nothing happens till the latter half of January. Is it a combination of daylight hours plus temperature or lengthening of daylight hours after the minimum period?

(NORTHWICH, CHESHIRE)

A We were unable to suggest any answer to this question which the questioner admitted was a difficult and rather specialised technical one, posed by a chemist. Perhaps one of our readers may be able to help.



Q We should like to be able to identify wild heathers. Is there a book to help us, apart from "The Heather Garden"? (READING, BERKS.)

A "Wild Flowers in Colour" (Penguin, 17/6d.) is very useful. It has the pictures and descriptions of the three common species, *C. vulgaris*, *E. cinerea*, *E. Tetralix*. *E. vagans* grows wild only in Cornwall and *E. ciliaris* only in Cornwall and Dorset.

LIST OF MEMBERS

OCTOBER, 1964

Zone 1. Scotland

- ABERCROMBIE, J. S., The Scottish White Heather Farm, Toward, Dunoon.
- BOYD, MRS. D. E., 4 Bulloch Avenue, Giffnock, Renfrewshire.
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- KELLY, LT.-COL. H. A., Oliver & Hunter, Moniaive, Thornhill, Dumfries.
- LYLE R., Delaney & Lyle, Grange Nursery, Alloa, Clackmannanshire.
- LYLE, N., Maryfield Nurseries, Leslie, Fife.
- LEIPER, MRS. I. M., Douchlage, Balfron Station, by Glasgow.
- MACROBERT, MRS. H., Durisdeer, Kilmacolm, Renfrewshire.
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- MOUNSEY, E. R., Rough Knowe, Barrhill Road, Dalbeattie.
- PATERSON, G. D., Glen Dhualt, Cove, Helensburgh, Dumbartonshire.
- PONTON, J. R., The Gardens, Kirknewton, Midlothian.
- SCOTT, T. M., Clonburn, Resaurie.
- SHAND, W. A., St. Edmunds, Milngavie, Dumbartonshire.

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- SMITH, A. W., Agricultural Office, 52 High Street, Antrim.

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- BICKERSTAFF, C. E., Dyffryn, 2c Norfolk Hill, Grenoside, Sheffield.
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 WALKER, DR. J. K., Green Rigg, Riding Mill, Northumberland.

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- FARMER, G. G., Bryn Du, Mynytho, Pwllheli, Caerns.
 GRIFFITHS, MAJOR R. L., Little Heath, Trearddur Bay, Anglesey.
 JONES, MRS. E. THORNTON-, Afallon, Glynarth, Anglesey.
 OWEN, MRS. E., Talrafon, Dolgelley, Merioneth.
 PUDDLE, CHAS., Bodnant Gardens, Tal-y-cafn, Colwyn Bay, N. Wales,
 WILLIAMS, GRIFFITH, Bryn Eithyn, Porthyfelin Road, Holyhead
 Anglesey.
 WILSON, T. KIRKPATRICK-, Cefn-y-coed, Glynarth, Anglesey.

Zone 5, Midlands. (*Staffordshire, Nottinghamshire, Worcestershire, Warwickshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Shropshire.*)

- ANNABEL, A., Springwood, Church Drive, Linby, Notts.
 ASH, F., Folly Nook Lane, Ranskill, Retford, Notts.
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 LESTER, J. C., Furze Acre, Adbury Holt, Newtown, Newbury, Berks.
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- MACLEOD, MRS. C. I., Yew Trees, Horley Row, Horley, Surrey.
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Only a limited number of invitations can be issued and if Members wish to receive one, it is desirable to apply early to the Secretary. The garden abuts on Ashdown Forest and Members interested in wild heathers will also have an opportunity of studying the wild *Callunas*, *E. Tetralix* and *E. Cinerea*.

Tea will be provided.

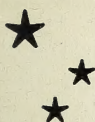
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