YEAR BOOK OF THE HEATHER SOCIETY

1977

THE HEATHER SOCIETY

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Editorial

I suppose that, looking back at the summer of 1976 it was obvious that the main topic uppermost in member's minds was the drought, hence the number of articles in this Year Book on this subject. The fact that members took the trouble to write to me with their own observations can only help others to gain knowledge of their well-loved heathers.

Mrs. Mary Jones, elsewhere in this publication calls it The Great Drought, certainly nothing has been experienced like it before this century. However Mother Nature has a way of putting things right in her own way and has certainly tried hard since with the exceptional rainfall during the Autumn.

Space forbids me from publishing all the articles, but I have collated the salient points which might prove of interest.

Jack London lost over 80 mature plants on his arid Norfolk soil, but the surprising thing was that his Daboecias, although not liking the conditions, survived and when the rains came in September bloomed exceptionally profusely, as indeed did many plants of this species up and down the country.

With Daboecias eventually flourishing in the conditions, it was surprising to learn of the Cinereas falling by the wayside at an alarming rate. Miss Joyce Burfitt, in a disturbing report from Dorset, said that she had lost all of her Cinereas, in addition to high losses amongst her Callunas. Miss Burfitt went on to say that her remaining gold foliaged Callunas appeared to be more green than usual for November, although they had survived better than the green-foliage cultivars. An indication of the conditions plants experienced in the Dorset area in 1976 is set out below with figures of the average rainfall over the preceeding 20 years and the actual rainfall in 1976.

	Average Rainfall		Rainfall 1976	
January	3.80 ins.	8.50 ins.	0.49 ins.	4.18 ins
February	2.30 ins.		2.11 ins.	
March	2.40 ins.		1.58 ins.	

	Average Rainfall		Rainfall 1976	
April	2.20 ins.		0.12 ins.	
May	2.25 ins.		1.23 ins.	
June	2.05 ins.	11.25 ins.	0.26 ins.	2.47 ins.
July	2.25 ins.		0.50 ins.	
August	2.50 ins.		0.36 ins.	
Sept.	3.60 ins.	7.75 ins.	8.16 ins.	17.20 ins.
October	4.15 ins.		7.09 ins.	
		27.60 ins.		24.80 ins.

Mr A. W. Jones writing from West Camel, Somerset also supplied rainfall figures for his area which were very similar. One of the benefits he pointed out was that with the high temperatures, his cuttings, propagated in a cold frame rooted very quickly and rooting success was increased by 50%

Let us not forget that although 1976 was extremely dry, we all had our problems in 1975 which was also dry. My own experience with *Erica vagans* is worth recording, in that they did not bloom at all that year, but from late June 1976 they put on their best show ever, presumably because of the partial development of the flower buds the previous year.

Other points mentioned in letters received were that although *Erica carnea* and *E. erigena* cultivars tended to survive, the young growth was stunted and flower buds severely reduced. Another member stated that *E. carnea* suffered more than any other species, one comment was that even when growth did appear it suffered from sun scorch, but didn't we all in 1976!

A. J. Stow

From the Chairman

Alfred H. Bowerman, Champs Hill, Coldwaltham, Pulborough, Sussex

The year 1976 will be long remembered for the hottest Summer for over two hundred years and one which has caused havoc in many gardens throughout the British Isles. Those of us who live in the South of England suffered from the continued drought from April until early September and I am afraid many heathers were lost through lack of moisture and the scorching sun in June and July. The heavy Autumn rains have revived many plants which seemed doomed, but in some of the hungry sandy soils I fear the losses are severe. In our particular garden the heaviest casualties seem to be among the Carneas and winter-flowering hybrids. For them it was unfortunate that the excessive heat came just at the time they were producing new tender growth.

As I look back to the early days of the Heather Society, started by Sir John Charrington and so ably supported by Lieut-Colonel and Mrs. MacLeod as Treasurer and Secretary, I realize we have come a long way. We now have a strong society with a virile Council and Committees dealing with financial, technical, publications and events. One most encouraging aspect of the society is the Area Groups who meet regularly to exchange ideas and visit one another's gardens, thus keeping alive local interest and encouraging new members.

I wish to thank those who have so loyally served on the Council and Committees and many others who have helped the society in various ways. We are especially indebted to those who have given so much time and energy to make the Trial Grounds at Harlow Car such a success. May 1977 see us as a society going from strength to strength and for us all a return to happier days, free from the endless toil of carrying out the bath water and a season in which we can relax and enjoy our heathers to the full.

The Heather Society

Report of the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, held at 3 p.m. on Tuesday, July 13th 1976, in the Fruit & Vegetable Committee Room at the RHS, London.

Eleven members attended, thus equalling the number of Councillors. The members attending were: Mesdames Mayne, Mahrer, Nicholson, Powell and Vickers and Messrs Boxall, McClintock, Oliver, Taylor, N. H. R. Yates and Brig. Lucas Phillips.

The Chairman, Mr. Bowerman, opened the meeting by welcoming the visitor-members. This was followed by a report of the Society's work during the past year. The Treasurer then presented the audited accounts which were accepted without question.

Election of the Council: The appointment of Major-General P. G. Turpin, C.B., O.B.E., M.A. was agreed unanimously. The three ordinary members standing down, Mr. Small, Mr. Stow and Mr. Vickers were re-elected. The Treasurer Mr. Turner had for the past year expressed his wish to be relieved of his position, and after thanking him for his past services, the Chairman asked if he would remain in office until after the first Council Meeting in September. This Mr. Turner agreed to do.

All other councillors were elected en bloc, as were the officers. It was pointed out that according to the rules, officers, including the President, the Vice-Presidents, the Chairman, the Secretary and the Treasurer, must be re-elected (unless indicating their wish to resign) annually.

New nominations to the Council. Mr. D. B. Oliver, was elected, (being proposed by Mr. Vickers and seconded by Mrs. MacLeod.)

No other business remaining to be settled. A brief interval ensued while the two hostesses of the afternoon, Mrs. Boxall and Mrs. P. Lee made final arrangements for the refreshments, which, together with pleasant conversations, made a very happy ending to this 1976 A.G.M. at about a quarter to five.

C. I. MacLeod

Plas Tanybwlch, Maentwrog

Mrs. D. Jones, West Camel, Somerset

Our arrival at Tanybwlch on Friday 20th August was full of expectation and delight. This lovely house, which was to be the venue for our conference, could not have been in a more beautiful setting. It stands halfway up a hillside overlooking the village of Maentwrog, with the mountains of Snowdonia all around. To complete the picture, there were many friendly faces in the car park to greet us. 58 members attended (*Photo. p.* 33)

We were formally welcomed by the Principal of the Snowdonia National Park Study Centre Mr. E. A. J. Buckhurst. We were greatly impressed by the aims of this new study centre and the scope of the activities which it provides for all age groups. After a short interval we heard from Mr. R. Haigh of Anglesey how his heather garden had been developed from pasture land with large outcrops of rock on it. The accompanying slides did not do it justice, as we were to see the next day.

An ambitious day had been planned for Saturday when at 10 o'clock, armed with packed lunches and thermos flasks, we set off by coach to tour Snowdonia with Mr. and Mrs. Haigh as our guides. It was a magnificent drive via Bettws-y-Coed, Capel Curig and Bangor to the Menai Bridge and across to Anglesey to visit their garden. It was quite a sight to see more than 50 heather society members sitting on the grass eating their picnic lunch. We were all enchanted with the garden and what had been achieved by two very active retired people! Our journey back to Tanybwlch was through the magnificent Llanberis pass with some spectacular views of Snowdon.

After dinner that evening we had a very interesting and entertaining talk by Mr. H. Street entitled "Lessons we have learned" during which there were frequent references concerning a large black plastic bag on a nearby table. The contents of this bag became the subject of much speculation and had us all on the edges of our seats. When it was finally opened we saw a most beautiful

plant – a magnificent new white *Calluna* found as a sport on 'H. E. Beale' by Mr. Graham Cookes of Fenny Drayton near Nuneaton, who has named it 'My Dream'.

Then came a useful questions and answers session with four panel members: Mr. D. McClintock, Mr. J. Platt, Mr. D. Small and myself.

On Sunday, our morning began with a lecture by Mrs. A. Parris entitled "Possible hybridisation of heathers". (*Photo p.* 28). This was a most fascinating subject and although botanically technical, we were spell-bound by the detailed work involved, including the possibility of using bees for the pollination, which would of course be required to be washed thoroughly before commencing this delicate work! Mrs. Parris concluded by inviting interested members to try some experiments themselves.

After a break for coffee we had a progress report on the Harlow Car heather trials by Mr. J. P. Ardron. A great deal of valuable and interesting work has been done in observing and comparing different cultivars. This work has now been published in a report and is available to members through our Distribution and Sales Manager Mr. D. B. Oliver of Leicester.

The conference came to its official close with a few words from the acting chairman Major-General Turpin. He expressed the thoughts of all of us in sending our good wishes to Mr. and Mrs. Bowerman who were unable to be with us for family reasons. He also expressed our thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Scantlin dealing with the booking arrangements, and to Mr. and Mrs. Haigh for organising the programme. Once again a very enjoyable and worthwhile weekend was greatly appreciated by everyone.

But for those of us who were staying until Monday morning the weekend was not yet over. An invitation to visit Mr. and Mrs. Chattaway's garden at Llanbedrog had been extended to us for Sunday afternoon.

Those of us who were able to accept this invitation were to see just what can be achieved by two retired but very enthusiastic members in less than 10 years. We saw some very lovely plants and the clever use of window boxes to display miniature heathers and conifers to

great effect. Mrs. Chattaway had very kindly prepared tea for us which was much appreciated. We returned to Tanybwlch to spend an enjoyable evening seeing slides provided by several members. I'm sure that everyone will agree that this opportunity for members to "get together" each year is invaluable; one can learn so much and you meet such nice people.

Plant Labels for your Heathers (Gilridge pattern)

B. Boxhall Kingswood, Surrey

Over the years I have searched for long-lasting labels at a reasonable price and after many requests from my wife have devised the following method which really pleases her! Using offcuts keeps the cost to 1½p. each.

The Materials

Offcuts of black Formica sheets. Roll of 2mm. galvanised wire. Quantity of ½ in. by 1 in. aluminium rivets.

The Tools

Saw and ⅛ in. drill. Wire cutter and pliers. Vice and 2½ in. by ⅛ in. nail. Light hammer. DYMO tape machine and ⅜ in. black tape.

The Method

1. Mark out the Formica sheet in pencil into 3 in by 1 in. rectangles and cut with fine toothed saw.
2. Drill ⅛ in. hole as close as possible to the edge at the middle of the long side of the label.
3. Cut 6 in. or 9 in. lengths of the galvanised wire (according to choice) and bend one end carefully round a nail in the vice leaving a slight gap in the loop.

4. Insert $\frac{1}{8}$ in. rivet in the hole in the label, place the wire loop over it at the back of the label, and cut rivet leaving about $\frac{1}{8}$ in. or less for peening with light hammer.
5. On the anvil of the vice peen the rivet until flush with wire loop.
6. Wipe labels clean before applying DYMO tapes of plant names.

Further note on a cross between Erica erigena and E.carnea

Mrs. A. Parris, Usk, Gwent

In the 1976 Year Book, I stated that at the time of writing the original note in November 1975, one of the 'Rackliff' offspring had flowering shoots.

As reported at the annual conference in Snowdonia, it did indeed flower. Like the other *E. x darleyensis* hybrids, the flowers were sterile, continually elongating the inflorescence with a long flowering period, and a more pink colour than 'Darley Dale', but not as bright as 'Arthur Johnson'. This is further confirmation of the probable parentage of the *darleyensis* forms already well known.

Again as I write now, at the end of October 1976, a second 'W. T. Rackliff' x 'Springwood Pink' offspring is showing flower buds. There are, however, none so far on the *erigena* 'Brightness' x 'Springwood Pink' offspring, which is disappointing. It seems a long time to wait. The hybrid plants are now three years old, four by the time this note is published.

Cape Heaths in the Hebrides

K. A. H. Cassels, Dunoon, Argyll, Scotland

In the 1973 edition of the Year Book I wrote the story of my heather garden on the Island of Coll and of

how I became interested in Cape heaths. With Coll's mild climate to help me I wondered if some of these could be grown out of doors. One of the problems is that I can only visit Coll intermittently, so that the plants have to fend for themselves in the intervals. Because I only see the Island in the summer I did not realise that the comparatively sheltered site I had selected for "Africa" became waterlogged in the winter. As a result I have had a number of losses which really have nothing to do with hardiness. However my experiments have been going long enough now for me to be able to make some comments.

I grow a number of Milton Hutchings hybrids, 'White Spray', 'Limelight', 'Gaiety' and 'Majestic'. Of these the first is outstanding and seems to be absolutely hardy here, though I admit this statement is based on the evidence of a single plant. Mine is planted in a very exposed part of my garden between *Calluna vulgaris* 'Arran Gold' and 'White Gown', and it certainly over-winters better than the latter. The salt winds have not hurt it and it was covered in flower in the spring. Anyone who has this hybrid should propagate it. My 'Limelight' planting suffered badly from waterlogging, but even so some survived and have been moved to a new site. 'Gaiety' is impressive. It is a *hyemalis* hybrid, but slightly more apricot in colour than usual. This year this planting has been covered with bloom for weeks, though the tender young growth is badly cut by the sea winds.

Of the species, I have had *E. discolor* out of doors through two winters. The extreme tips of the young growth are cut by the salt wind, but it grows vigorously and appears to have at least some flowers on it all through the year.

E. glauca var elegans is planted next door to it and seems quite impervious to Hebridean weather. I suspect that this species is among the hardier Cape Heaths and well worth trying in other places. Even the newly germinated seedlings seem tougher than most. *E. caffra* has now been here for four years and seems quite happy. The young growth gets slightly nipped but the plants come away again.

Other species which are surviving but have not been out long enough to draw conclusions from are *E. verticillata*, *E. mauritanica*, *E. melanthera*, *E. chamissonis*, *E. peziza* and *E. diaphana*. .One species which does not seem to do is *E. oatesii*, but I am not sure if it is a general lack of hardiness or the blasting of the salt winds. *E. taxifolia* is another which has not performed very well so far.

Heather Gardens: No. 3 Windsor Great Park

Major-General P. G. Turpin, West Clandon, Surrey

About 20 miles south-west of London, near Smith's Lawn and the Valley Gardens in Windsor Great Park, there has been created a garden which offers the heather enthusiast almost everything he could wish for: an almost perfect site, beautifully landscaped, in which most of the well-established varieties of heather have been planted, together with many of the newer introductions and a very comprehensive selection of associated trees and shrubs. The general effect is the result of a most imaginative approach to heather planting, which has taken full advantage of the impression made by large groupings of single cultivars, combined with a skilful use of mixed plantings to give variety and contrast. Great care has been taken to ensure that the plants are carefully labelled. And so the visitor is presented, at most times of the year, with a display which is as full of interest for the expert as it is for those who have only just begun to appreciate the beauty and variety of the heather garden.

The best months of the year in which to see this garden are from March to May, when the winter-flowering heathers and the tree heathers are at their best, and from August to October, when the summer-flowering species combine with autumn foliage to make a striking display. A visit in May has the advantage that the nearby

Valley Gardens may be seen in all their spring glory at the same time. From April to the beginning of June visitors may park their cars in the Valley Gardens car park, which is within a hundred yards of the Heather Garden.

The site of the garden covers about seven acres and consists of what appears to be a natural bowl or hollow, gently tilted towards the south, in which the ground undulates in such a way that the landscape presents a great variety of slopes with miniature valleys running in different directions. Grass paths wander in and out around the plantings. So that there is a constantly changing horizon. In many places the same design, seen from different angles, gives completely different effects. In fact the site was an old hand-worked gravel-pit which had not been used since before the first World War.

Scots pines provide an effective back-ground on one side of the garden, and mature silver birches with a variety of choice conifers create the vertical effect which a site of this size demands.

The setting allows for generous plantings of single cultivars and there are large beds with several hundred plants of *Erica vagans* and *Daboecia* and over 200 plants of *E. carnea* 'Myretoun Ruby' provide a brilliant patch of colour in early spring.

One attractive aspect of the garden is provided by the clumps of wild heather, mainly *Calluna* and *E. cinerea*, growing on the banks and slopes between the beds of cultivated varieties. In particular, there is a wild plant of *E. cinerea* which is indistinguishable from Vivienne Patricia'. Entirely by chance they are growing within five yards of each other, so that they can be easily compared.

Early this year (1976) a rather drastic experiment was repeated, having been successfully tried before. A large bed of *E. vagans* was becoming rather tall and straggly and it was decided to cut all the plants down to ground level. Just after the operation it was a dreadful sight, but by the beginning of August, in spite of the hot dry summer, many of the bushes were once more sprouting from the ground with fresh green foliage. Although the

amount of flower is temporarily reduced by this treatment, the ultimate effect of this hard pruning on the plants is entirely beneficial. The same treatment cannot be given to Callunas and other summer-flowering heathers, but it can be successfully used with the tree heathers.

Another successful experiment has been to plant beds of mixed cultivars of *Erica carnea* and *E.* x *darleyensis*. Small groups of about half-a-dozen of each of fifteen or twenty cultivars have been planted in single large beds and these give a most pleasing patchwork effect.

The overall variety of the display is enhanced by the skilful use of associated plants: dwarf Rhododendrons, prostrate and low-growing Junipers, and Thuyas, Potentillas and Genistas, Hebes, Pernettyas, Berberis, Rose species, Bruckenthalia, Cyathodes, Leiophyllum, Arctostaphylos and many others, including two fine specimens of *Betula* 'erminii', with their glistening white bark. An unusual plant to find flowering among the winter heathers is Prunus tenella gessleriana which, in company with Cytisus praecox, *E. erigena* 'W. T. Rackliff' and 'Brightness', and with a back-ground of *E. arborea* 'Gold Tips. and Scots pines make a perfect picture in March.

All the tree heathers appear to grow well in this garden: *E. arborea* 'Alpina' and 'Gold Tips', *E. australis* 'Riverslea' and 'Mr. Robert', *E. lusitanica* and *E.* x *veitchii* 'Exeter'. Anyone who has difficulty in distinguishing the last two can easily see the differences between them here. *E. umbellata* seems a little unhappy, but this is probably due to late frosts and the dry conditions of the last two years.

There are too many different cultivars of the various heather species to catalogue here but there must be well over 200 different varieties, mostly *Calluna*, *E. cinerea* and *E. vagans* among the summer ones, and *E. carnea*, *E. erigena* and *E.* x *darleyensis* among the winter-flowering species, although *Daboecia*, *E. ciliaris*, *E. tetralix* and the summer-flowering hybrids are all well represented. In addition to the well-tried varieties many new cultivars have been included, such as: *E. erigena*

'Irish Salmon', *E. terminalis* 'Thelma Woolner', *Daboecia* 'Snowdrift', and *Calluna* 'Hypnoides' and 'Lochnaseil'.

When it is realised that this garden has only existed for just over 20 years, it is astonishing what an air of maturity it presents. Clearing of the site began only in 1954 and the original planting was started in 1955 and continued into the spring of 1960. Since then it has been steadily enlarged and improved and, when necessary, new plantings have been made.

The overall responsibility for the garden lies with Mr. John D. Bond, who, after many years of practical experience, became Keeper of the Gardens in Windsor Great Park in 1970. The Heather Garden is in good hands and, thanks to his great interest and his experience of growing heathers, it will, no doubt, continue to delight its many visitors with its comprehensive collection of heathers displayed in such an attractive setting.

Erica australis Seedlings in the Garden

Mrs. D. Metheny, Seattle, Washington

I have found very little reference to the occurrence of *E. australis* from seed in gardens. There was the, apparently now defunct, 'Wishanger Pink'[1], which suggested seed origin; and Mme. Colmegna wrote[2] that she wished for, but never found an *australis* seedling. As of this year (1976) I have now numbered 39 *australis* seedlings.

My original *E. australis* planted in 1958, has had an up-and-down career, having been frozen to the ground five times, by -8°C (16°F) or lower. (This same phoenix-like propensity was reported of *E. australis* at the Royal

REFERENCES

1. *Brickell, C. and McClintock, D.* 1969 *Jnl. Roy. Hort. Soc. XCIV*, 136-7
2. *Colmegna, Mme. V.*, 1973 *Yr. Book of the Heather Soc.* 23-4

Botanic Garden, Edinburgh.[3]) 'Mr. Robert' was planted 4 ft. away from it in 1961 and has never suffered more than minimal frost damage.

Early 1966 was the first season in which *E. australis* and 'Mr. Robert' had an opportunity to flower together, without a severe freeze the following winter. And it was in October, 1966 that I discovered and lifted the first 11 seedlings, lining them out in an open bed. They had all been growing close to the base of 'Mr. Robert'. In the autumns of 1967 and 1968 I took up more, numbered to 26, the lowest numbers going to the largest plants. The same December 1968 freeze, which again levelled *E. australis*, killed a number of the little plants in their open bed. A January 1969 slide shows them weighed down with snow which fell after the worst of the freeze,

At any rate, I now have 8 flowering-size seedlings that have come through the freezes of December 1968 and January and December 1972 with little or no damage, 4 plants (3 of which flowered this year) that survived the 1972 freezes, and 8 not yet flowered and so far not tested for cold endurance.

Of the flowering-size plants, one, No. 2, is a prodigious grower, having now achieved a height of 2 m. and a width of 2.3 m. Its nearest rival of the same age, No. 3, is 1.65 m. No. 6, now only .65 m. high .5 m. across seems unlikely to ever grow very large. The others range in between.

In foliage colour (measured in April) they run the gamut of the 7 darker cards (R. H. S. Colour Chart, 1966), between 137A (same as the *E. australis*) and 147 (same as 'Mr. Robert'), all in the A/B tints.

The fast-growing No. 2 had a few flowers in 1971, two years before the next seedling to flower, No. 7. Once started, they all have flowered profusely. In colour, the corollas range from a delicate 69B (No. 10), through 75A,B,C, to the more intense 78D (No. 8). Some of them have corollas with more intense colour at the bases.

The corollas of my original *E. australis* measured 7 mm. long by 3.5 mm. across the bulge. Seedling No. 28 measures the same. The other 10 all have longer flowers,

3. *Evans A.* 1974 *Yr. Book of the Heather Soc.* 21

five 9 mm., one 8.5 mm., and four 8 mm. The largest corollas, 9 mm. long, 4.5 mm. broad, are on No. 27. The fast-growing No. 2 has corollas of 75B, 77B at the base, 8 mm. long, and 4 mm. across the bulge.

I have had reasonably good luck with *australis* cuttings taken in July-August and inserted in a hot bed. I took a few cuttings of No. 2 in 1971. The best resulting plants were given away in 1973-4 and the only one I have been able to follow up, at the University of Washington Arboretum, has shown the expected rapid growth and flowered well this past spring (1976).

In the summer of 1975 I took cuttings of a fasciated branch of No. 28 to see if they might possibly produce a dwarf form. Thirteen of these are now potted and in my cold frame.

The more recently lifted seedlings were from a few feet further down the slope They lean out further toward the downhill side, perhaps as the parent's stems lengthen. No. 27 is more mature than its number indicates because, since it rises from the base of *E. australis*, I supposed it to be part of the parent plant, until it stood out like a lightning flash when sturdily surviving the 1972 freezes that levelled *E. australis*. Nos. 28, 29, 31 and 32 are growing in rock crevices from which I cannot expect to succeed in extracting them. If they turn out to be worth the effort, cuttings can be taken, as they already have been of No. 28.

Since all of these delightful creations are nature's gift. and no doing of mine, I cannot say which is their mother and which is the father. But the range of colour of their foliage and flowers, the alignment of the foliage on the twigs, and the generally larger size of their corollas seem to me to suggest that they might be *E. australis x E. a.* 'Mr. Robert'. I might append that I have seen no seedlings in the vicinities of two other plants of 'Mr. Robert', which now have had three flowering seasons, or of *E. a.* 'Riverslea', after two flowerings-all elsewhere in the garden, though certainly not too far for a bee to fly.

And, finally, it seems extraordinary not to have seen reports of *E. australis* seedlings in other gardens. If there have been such, I do hope the proprietors will let us know.

Heathers in Germany

H. Westermann, Borstel-Bispingen, Germany

What heathers are there in Germany?

My answer begins with the Luneberg Heath, a vast moor in the north-west of Germany, which is very beautiful when in bloom, and at other times pretty bleak. But nature-lovers point out that winter also has its charms, and the wild life carries on quite undisturbed in its natural surroundings.

As early as May come the first pale pink blooms of Bog Rosemary, *Andromeda polifolia* - in the south there is quite a different picture with its naturalised *Kalmia angustifolia*. At the end of June the flowering of Broom, *Cytisus scoparius*, has ended and *Erica tetralix* unfolds its first light pink blooms. Now appears the Dog Rose, *Rosa canina*, with its pink flowers peeping through the Junipers. Ling, *Calluna vulgaris*, grows over a large area in the sandy basins and up to the moorlands, presenting by 20th August a landscape of indescribable beauty. Late forms bloom until the end of September. I am a little sad that, in contrast to the moors in Britain, there is no Bell Heather, *Erica cinerea*, which, in Germany, occurs only in the Lower Rhineland.

Now a word about the heather gardens we have here. In general only a limited number of sorts, of *E. carnea*, *E. vagans* and *Calluna*, are to be seen. Heather gardens are therefore incomplete, being filled in with other shrubs and with perennials and presenting an unsatisfactory picture. It has been my wish for some time to have heather gardens in flower throughout the year. In England these have existed for a long time.

By chance I had the opportunity of meeting two English women on a visit to Austria to see the alpine flora, and I received a spontaneous invitation to visit England. From this developed an extremely good relationship between German heather growers and the Heather Society. My colleagues were so enthusiastic at the possibility of enlarging their collections that we are now growing many new varieties. Our displays at hort-

icultural shows have helped to develop an even wider interest. One can say – "Heathers are in".

An important German heather nurseryman I would like to introduce is the old master Georg Arends of Wuppertal. His introductions in the thirties included *Calluna* 'Alba Praecox' and 'Alportii Praecox', *E. cinerea* 'Atro-purpurea', 'Atrorosea', 'Delicata' and 'Splendens' and *E. x darleyensis* 'Silberschmelze', At much the same time *Calluna* 'Alba Plena' and 'Kuphaldtii' came from near Oldenburg, the former introduced by J. Brun's nursery, the other by Hesse's.

The first large display of new forms was in the grounds of the Hospital at Heidberg, Hamburg-Langenhorn. Herr F. Kircher, the head gardener, is, so to speak, the pioneer in the laying out of genuine heather gardens. He it was who found *Calluna* 'Heideteppich', 'Heidezwerg' and 'Rica'. Plantings made earlier are to be seen in the Herrenhäuser Berggarten at Hanover, and in the Botanic Gardens at Bremen, Frankfurt, Heidelberg and Schloss Nymphenburg near Munich. Of particular interest is the private arboretum of Herr W. Harten of Lutterloh in the south of the Luneberg Heath, which is on extremely dry soil. He it was who introduced his 'Harten's Findling'.

Several nurseries are helping promote the interest in heathers. Herr J. Hachmann of Darmstedt in Holstein crossed *Calluna* 'C. W. Nix' and 'Mair's White' in 1971. Two of his 1800 seedlings were chosen for the final tests to be named 'Purpurpolster'. Herr Kramer of Süddorf in Oldenburg is another. Herr U. Schumacher at Winnekendonk in the Lower Rhine has been hybridising too and *E. cinerea* 'Flamingo', 'Heidebrand' and 'Violetta' are his, as well as *Calluna* 'Harlequin', a sport on 'Serlei Aurea'* Herr K-H Schurig, also of Darmstedt, noticed 'Schurig's Sensation' as a sport in his rows of 'H. E. Beale' in 1967 and is now selling 30,000 a year. And there is my own nursery at Bispingen on the Luneberg Heath.

Herr E. Hahn, who is a journalist, wrote an article about the new heathers in England in "Gartenwelt" in 1970 and one on new cultivars in 1974; and Herr Kircher wrote another on the same theme, also in the same

journal, in 1976. Herr Hornung it was who found *Calluna* 'Heidberg' and produced the original of the article which appeared in the 1974 Year Book as "The Disappearing Heaths". Dr. G. Krüssman translated Harry van de Laar's "Het Heidetuinboek," the first heather book in German, which came out in 1976 called "Heidegärten".** Frau Christine Döhler has translated the Proudleys' "Heathers in Colour" into German.

And on 17th November 1976 began the first talks about forming a German Heather Society, which are to be continued in 1977.

*It seems this not the same as "Christina", as was at one time thought.

**In his Introduction, Mr. van de Laar asked why Germany should not have a Heather Society. Certainly its creation would be warmly welcomed.

It might also be added that it was Herr Westermann himself who found *Calluna* 'Carl Röders' on the Heath, and introduced it in 1967. D. McC.

Phytophthora Cinnamomi

Dr. W. A. W. Small, Middlesborough, Cleveland

This fungus kills by destroying the rootstock as it leaves the ground. It is active in temperatures of 70°F and over, and in humidity of 80% and over. At a tropical 90°F and 90% humidity it is rampant. It is therefore most active at the time of maximum growth – June, July, and August – when any sunshine on a wet day will produce this micro-climate a few millimetres above and below the soil surface. It can be clearly spotted at this time, as wilting in an otherwise healthy plant with ample soil moisture. When the fungus is acting more slowly, the affected plant's leaves and flowers redden, brown and die from the base outwards. Any stem touching the ground makes abnormally vigorous attempts to layer itself, and

is often successful, so that when the central stem dies a ring of new plants may take over, concealing the damage only, eventually to die similarly. This fungus cannot invade the intact plant, therefore seedlings can flourish in infested ground where transplants die in a few days. Healthy growing plants, which may be seedlings, do not necessarily indicate clean ground. (For more detail read D. A. Richards, 1972 Year Book p. 13).

I have a report of success in the treatment of plants and ground affected by *Phytophthora* using ARMILLATOX as recommended for Honey Fungus. I have also noted a limited protection of plants using BENLATE as for Black Spot.

The conclusions which follow have been drawn from observations on plants which were established in a propagating area with an impermeable base and finite edges, all of which were cleanable:

ARMILLATOX, 1 in 12 solution, saturating the soil destroyed the fungus without affecting the roots of established *E. cinerea* and *Calluna* plants which were in their 3rd year. (It is a defoliant and must be carefully allowed to flood the soil without touching the foliage). Soil so treated has, to date, remained clear for two growing seasons.

BENLATE, as prepared for Black Spot, gives protection and probably has some curative action, when used on *Calluna* transplants. It has some protective action on *E. cinerea* and *E. carnea* transplants, but no apparent curative action on plants already affected. All plants were treated with Benlate a week before moving into the infected soil, and weekly after moving.

Much more detailed investigation is required to find what strength and what frequency of application is needed for long-term clearance, and to find if the cost to the small amateur grower comes within the small amateur's budget!

I have discovered that it is the practice of some commercial growers to use Benlate or some similar substance to give protection and thus enable them to grow their plants in infected ground. This raises a very important issue – are these plants effectively cleaned

before sending out, or do they go, infected soil and all, to ruin some innocent's garden? I have seen for sale at a nursery of repute plants dying of *Phytopthora*, indicating either ignorance or the callous indifference of the vendor or supplier, or both.

This subject is raised with feeling. I have lost a personal collection of "finds" from distant corners, and my garden is so infected that I will have to spend too much to rehabilitate anywhere but a corner. My infection came from nurseries on at least two occasions, and was spread all over the place before I knew what was wrong. In 1972, D. A. Richards' article made it very obvious what was wrong. It is time an "infection free" certification system was thought about. No one is safe and no one can say "It won't happen to me". It's a bit late, but the horse's tail might be caught if the stable door is slammed now.

Windlesham Court

Brig. C. E. Lucas-Phillips, Oxshott, Surrey

The blistering drought faded away, the blessed rain returned, the grass green again and it was a perfect September day when the Mid-Southern Group visited Windlesham Court near Bagshot in Surrey. This is a wholesale heather nursery, not open to the public, so we were particularly grateful to Mr. & Mrs. N. R. Willcox, the owners, for giving us so rare a pleasure, and to Mrs. Pamela Lee and Major-General Turpin who, between them metaphorically, opened the door.

Some 43 members attended, including the Society's Chairman, Mr. Alfred Bowerman, and 92-year old "Papa" Horace Hale, veteran heather and conifer enthusiast, We were shown around by Mr. Willcox and by Mr. John Hall, the Manager, who told us that the nursery were producing some 750,000 heaths and heathers this year, including many of the newer cultivars.

Cuttings are taken throughout most of the summer and early autumn and are pricked out by a team of girls. Using ordinary, standard seed-trays and a simple

compost of sand and peat, each girl can make and set out 600 cuttings an hour, 200 to a box. These are placed in a mist propagation house with bottom heat for about two weeks and then moved to "poly tunnels" – greenhouses made of long polythene sheets stretched over big metal ribs, like inverted boats. In these, a warm, humid atmosphere can be maintained and root development continued. When space in the propagation house is not available, the polythene tunnels can be used to root cuttings, though sometimes a slow-rooting batch has to be removed and put into the mist for a "boost".

As the little plants develop, they are pricked out into poly pots, using a peaty compost, and then lined out in the polythene tunnels. The polythene roofing is removed in the spring, leaving the plants in place and open to the weather. Saleable size is reached in about a year from the cutting being taken. Mr. Hall told us that the best seller was 'Springwood White' and the most difficult to rear were 'Silver Queen' and its likes, of which only about one in three struck satisfactorily.

Nurseries must, of course, be designed on functional and utilitarian lines but, even so, Windlesham Court was a pleasure to the eye and the mind, whether in the long, gleaming rows of the stock plants or in their various stages of infancy, from tiny specks to flowering shrublets. The solid phalanxes of the foliage varieties minted in glittering gold, were a gorgeous sight and more colourful than many plants that display themselves in floral costumes. Afterwards our generous hosts entertained us to a most delectable tea and so brought to an end an afternoon that was both enjoyable and instructive.

The Kiwis are coming

Mrs. E. Godbolt, Crowborough, East Sussex

In January 1976 "Garden News" printed a letter from Mrs. Una Hawken of Wanganui, New Zealand outlining the visit of a party of garden enthusiasts to Britain in the summer. An abbreviated itinerary was included, showing dates when they would be at various centres. When it was seen that they would be in the Tunbridge Wells area in the middle of July, we thought it would be a good opportunity for them to see an English heather garden. Accordingly a letter of invitation was despatched for 18th July, and an acknowledgement soon received.

It was obvious that assistance would be needed to look after such a visit and so it was decided to make the occasion a Weald & Thanet and Mid-Southern Groups get-together. It was heartening to have a good response to the proposal. In addition we were overwhelmed by offers of help with the catering side. So the planning went forward.

As the weeks went by with various flowering shrub displays even better than usual, after the ripening of the wood in the previous year, we frequently uttered the gardener's lament "Oh if only they were coming this week". Then we were into the drought period and garden work became tedious, with the additional chore of watering the kitchen garden and a few special ornamentals. Always the recurring thought arose, that of all years this was the one that the visitors had picked to visit "England's green and pleasant land". Then on the day before the visit – a terrific thunderstorm. On Sunday 18th a fine day made the garden look refreshed after just the one good soaking.

Then along came the helpers and the rest of the Group and the stage was set. Very promptly at the appointed hour the New Zealand party arrived; In no time, the two groups were intermingled as happens when people with strong common interests meet, and the conversations were of their liking for our hedgerows and trees, their own farms being bare of such amenities.

One hope expressed in the original published letter from Mrs. Hawken had been for a strawberry and cream tea at a garden fête, as described by their forebears from the "old country". In the event, with the dry weather, strawberries were not on, but we did manage to finish with raspberries and cream.

Eventually the time came for the visitors' departure and as a souvenir, each was given a Group notelet containing pressed heathers. After joining hands and singing the Maori farewell (Now is the hour), they boarded their coach and left us.

The Kiwis are gone, but not forgotten.

The Double-flowered Heathers

D. McClintock, Platt, Kent

'H. E. Beale' was the first double-flowered *Calluna* to be propagated after a century or more of 'Flore Pleno' or some similar name. Three small cuttings reached Maxwell & Beale in a matchbox who most skilfully struck two of them, whence all the cohorts of 'H. E. Beale' derive and will derive. But who found it, and thus dowered our gardens?

That happened probably in 1926, just 50 years ago. It was apposite therefore in this jubilee year that its progeny's 'My Dream' should have been, literally, unveiled at the Snowdonia conference. Some notes on, and a list of, the recorded double heathers may therefore be timely.

'Flore Pleno' is the name recommended for the clone that has come down to us from earlier times. Other names used for double-flowered Lings include "Double-flowered", "Many-flowered", "Monstrosa", "Multiflora", "Multiplex", "Plena", "Polypetala" and "Prolifera" with equivalents in French and German. I have notes of over 90 such references in the first half of the last century alone, here and abroad. In those days, and for some time after, varietal names were not always

applied to the same clone. Thus, for example, "Pallida" would cover any plant with pale flowers, and "Flore Pleno" any doubles, if one of the other expressions were not used.

From the hundreds of mentions of double Callunas before 1926, the inference must be that this variation was found on more than one occasion. Some of the, relatively few, revealing phrases imply a new plant; and from the tally of the last 50 years, it would be unlikely that only one was found in the previous 120 or more. Yet, however true this supposition may be, only one form seems to have survived from those days – and who is to say if it is the same as Dicksons of Hawick catalogued in 1795 at 1/6, when all their other heathers were 2d or 6d?

I referred to this in greater detail in the R. H. S. Journal rather over ten years ago on pages 438 – 440 (and to the double whites on page 441). I wish someone would collect 'Flore Pleno' from as many sources as possible, in particular from America, and compare them. But one should bear in mind that all doubles are botanically of the form *flore pleno*, while 'Flore Pleno' betokens only the single clone that bears that name, a fine but most useful point of nomenclature.

The only definitely distinct plant earlier than 1926 was seen before 1917 by Miss Appleby (who later lit on 'Radnor') between Danby and Ralph's Cross in N. Yorkshire – she found her book propped on the bush. But she did not keep a specimen. It is just possible that both 'Co. Wicklow' and 'J. H. Hamilton' antedate 'H. E. Beale'. D. F. Maxwell wrote that he was promised cuttings of the former when he was exhibiting heathers in the horticultural section of the Dublin Horse Show, but says neither when this was or who the lady was. A local opinion was that this happened in the 1920's and the lady was a Miss Wynne, but her brother, now aged 100, says it was not; and the Royal Dublin Society can find no record of Maxwell & Beale at the show at all. So 'J. H. Hamilton' may be earlier, which had been known to Maxwell & Beale in 1935 "for a number of years", but they could not get the finder to part with it.

A recent cultivar with an incomplete history is the

white 'Platt's Surprise'. Mr. J. Platt saw it on a stand at the Southport Flower Show in 1974. (He brought a sprig to Farnham in 1975). After the show was over, he acquired all the plants there, label and all – it was named 'Bransdale'. But it was not the same as the single 'Bransdale White', and in any event the Registrar would not permit two white Callunas to bear such confusingly similar names. The identity of the nursery has been lost – a visit to the 1975 show failed to find it; nor has any instance been found of this new cultivar being offered elsewhere, let alone listed. So it has been decided to epitomise the event by calling it 'Platt's Surprise'. It differs from 'Alba Plena', which was shown alongside in 1974, by being taller and flowering later, often starting off with 2 or 3 single flowers. It is not the same as 'Kinlochruel'. It has been passed to Clive Benson to propagate, and should be on sale in 1978. Mr. Platt gathered from the nursery that it originated as a seedling locally. Can anyone add more?

Four other cultivars names call for special comment. I am most grateful to those who have responded helpfully to my badgering about them and others.

"Ruth Sparkes Improved"

The status of this name is enigmatical. Many people, for example Mr. Ardron, Dr. Lead, Mr. Yates and myself, who grew 'Ruth Sparkes' early on, have never had it revert to green foliage, i.e. to 'Alba Plena'. So Dr. Lead was surprised about 1964 to notice reversion in several gardens. As a result he rooted possibly 100 cuttings and sent them to various people – he offered our members a "non-reverting form", the only one he had ever had! But how his, or those of others, differed from the now widespread reverting form is unknown. Is this reversion hereditary or in some way due to soils, age or other conditions? Has anybody grown the two side by side?

Mr. Yates suggests that "Ruth Sparkes Improved" is a fallacy as in his experience any well-grown plant will not revert and "certainly the tendency does not carry on in cuttings taken from plants which have had reversion

Photo F.B. Rice

Mrs. A. Parris addressing the conference in Snowdonia.

DOUBLE-FLOWERED CALLUNAS

No.	*Date found or Recorded*	*Name and (Synonym)*	*Where found*	*Finder*	*No.*	*Progeny*		*No.*	*Progeny's Progeny*		*Remarks*
						Date	*Name*		*Date*	*Name*	
1	Before 1795	'Flore Pleno' ("Monstrosa" "Multiflora" "Multiplex" "Plena" "Polypetala" "Prolifera" etc)	?	?							See text p.25 and RHS Jnl. Oct. 1966 p. 438
2	Before 1917	–	Goathland, Yorks.	Miss H.M. Appleby							See text p.26
3	by 1926	'H.E. Beale' ('Mrs. H.E. Beale')	Picket Post, Hants.	?	19	1954	'Elsie Purnell'				
					20	1955	'Peter Sparkes'	34	by 1969	'Llanbedrog Pride'	
								40a	1973	"Peter Sparkes Improved"	
					28a	*c.* 1967	"Pink Beale"				
					29	1967	'Schurig's Sensation'				
					41	1974	'My Dream'				
4	? in 1920's	'County Wicklow' (? 'Camla')	Wicklow Hills, Ireland.	?	33	by 1969	'Baby Wicklow'				
					35	1969	'Kinlockruel'				See text p.26
5	Some years before 1935	'J.H. Hamilton' ('Mrs. J.H. Hamilton')	Yorkshire.	?							

6	8.12.1926	–	Mook, Holland.	J. Jansen							*"multisepala"*
7	10. 8.1927	–	Wijchen, "	"							
8	20. 8.1927	–	Overasselt, "	"							See text p 36
9	by 1928	–	Heumen etc, "	"							"15 plants."
10	18.11.1930	–	Malden, "	A de Wever							*"sepaloides"*
11	Before 1934	'Alba Plena'	Bad Zwischenahn, Germany	A. Bruns	16	1950	'Joan Sparkes'				
		("Alba Flore Pleno")			17	1951	'Ruth Sparkes'	27a	by 1965	"Ruth Sparkes Improved"	
		'White Bouquet')						31	by 1968	'White Bouquet'	Reversion to 'Alba Plena'
								(–	*c.* 1970	'Dart's Gold'	Single-flowered sport)
					26	*c.* 1965	–				
					27	*c.* 1965	–				
					40	*c.* 1971	'Isobel Hughes'				
12	1934	"Tib"	Pentlands, Scotland	Miss I. Young	30	1968	'Ingrid Bouter'				
13	24.9.1935	–	Wijster, Holland	W. Beijerinck							See text p 36 ? 'Tib'
14	1935	–	Westerwold, Holland	Hyllen							See text p 37
15	Early 1940's	'Else Frye'	Seattle, U.S.A.	Mrs. Frye.							Sport on pink-flowered plant
16	1950	'Joan Sparkes'	Redditch, Worcs.	J.W. Sparkes							See No.11

17	1951	Ruth Sparkes	"	"	27a	By 1967	Improved"				See No. 11
					31 (–	By 1968 c. 1970	'White Bouquet' 'Dart's Gold')				Single flowers
18	1953	–	Near Swansea, S. Wales	Miss Sykes							Not collected
19	1954	'Elsie Purnell'	Redditch, Worcs.	J.W. Sparkes							See No. 3
20	1955	'Peter Sparkes'	"	"	34	By 1969	'Llanbedrog Pride'				See No. 3
					40a	1973	"Peter Sparkes Improved"				
21	1955	'Radnor' ('Miss Appleby')	Radnorshire, Powys.	Miss Appleby							
22	1960	'Carl Röders'	Luneberg Heath, Germany	H. Westermann							Sport
23	c. 1963	–	Yorkshire	Miss Buffard							
24	c. 1963	–	Yorkshire	?							
25	1963	'Cramond'	Edinburgh	Mrs. S. Hall							
26	c. 1965	–	Windlesham, Surrey.	J.F. Letts							White seedling near 'Alba Plena' See No. 11
27	c. 1965	–	"	"							"
27a	By 1965	"Ruth Sparkes Improved" ("Non Revert")	–	(Dr. Lead)							See No. 11 and Text p 27
28	c. 1967	–	New Forest, Hants.	Mrs. Grove							Mrs. Turpin's sister-in-law
28a	c. 1967	"Pink Beale" "Underwood's, Variety" or "Sport"	?	?							See No. 3 and text p. 34

29	1967	'Schurig's Sensation	Holstein, Germany	K.H. Schurig							See No. 3
30	1968	'Ingrid Bouter'	Boskoop, Holland	C. Bouter							See No. 12
31	By 1968	'White Bouquet'	?	?							See No. 11
32	By 1969	'Glencoe'	Glencoe, Scotland	?							See text p 36
33	By 1969	'Baby Wicklow'	Boskoop, Holland	D. Boer							Witches broom See No. 4
34	By 1969	'Llanbedrog Pride'	Near Criccieth, Gwynedd	J.F. Chattaway							See No. 3
35	1969	'Kinlochruel'	Colintraive, Scotland	Brig. E. Montgomery							See No. 4
36	1970	'Mrs. E. Wilson'	Victoria, British Columbia	Mr. Wilson							
37	1970	–	E. Grinstead, Sussex	W. Ingwersen							
38	1971	'Jimmy Dyce'	Brancaster, Norfolk	J.W. Dyce							
39	1971	'Applecross'	Applecross, Scotland	J. Mair							
40	*c.* 1971	'Isobel Hughes'	Bearsden, Scotland	Mrs. Hughes							White seedling. See No. 11
40a	1973	"Peter Sparkes Improved"	–	(R.J. Brien)							See No. 3 and text p. 35
41	1974	'My Dream'	Fenny Drayton Northants	G. Cookes							White flowers See No. 3 and "English Heather Garden" p. 77
42	By 1914	'Platts Surprise'	?	?							See text p. 27
43	1976	'David Platt'	Ulness Walton, Lancs	J. Platt							Yellow Foliage

Photo F.B. Rice

Setting out from Plas Tanybwlch to tour Snowdonia and visit Mr. & Mrs. Haigh's garden. The Editor leads the way with Mr. & Mrs. H. Pattenden left, Mr. B. Boxall, background, and Mr. & Mrs. H. Street.

on them". Mr. Ingwersen writes "I share your puzzlement about the so-called "Improved" double Callunas. We have had them all but, after one season's growth, I fail to distinguish any marked difference between them and the originals . . . I think they are very unauthentic and were . . . hopeful selections of an odd spray showing at some time a slight difference. I was totally unable to pick them out without checking for the label." Mr. Baulu also writes that "after a time we found that "Ruth Sparkes Improved" was the same as the original 'Ruth Sparkes'.

There is a nomenclatural difficulty too. I have discussed it with Mr. Brickell, our most ardent member on the subject, and I think he is right, that the International Authority would not like "Improved" in a plant name. This is because it is a matter of opinion if the plant is improved – some might prefer the variegated effect of two colours of foliage; and the plant might be improved again in some other way.

But it does seem that the original plants did not revert, so "Improved" or "Non-revert" are just synonyms for 'Ruth Sparkes' and should be dropped; and in so far as the reverting phase may be transient, it hardly calls for a separate name.

If anyone does prefer mixed foliage, they will in any event need to keep the more vigorous green shoots (which have more chlorophyll exposed) at bay, or their plant will soon end up as 'Alba Plena', which is where 'Ruth Sparkes' came from; or even with 'Alba Elegans', which is where 'Alba Plena' came from. I once collected at Wisley with Mr. Brickell, a shoot which had both these reversions on, and thus showed the full ancestry of 'Ruth Sparkes'. It is now in their herbarium.

"Pink Beale" or "Underwood's Variety" or "Sport"

This seems to have come from Underwood's Nursery about 1967. Plants under this name are at Harlow Car from an unrecorded source. The results show their flower colour as 70D, size 43 x 70 cm., flowering to mid November, inflorescences 10 cm., foliage dark green, habit open, amount of flower good, garden worthiness good. 'H. E.

Beale' differs as 65C, 50 x 100 cm., to early November, inflorescence 18 cm., foliage brown green, habit open and branching, amount of flower very good. How significant these two sets of measurements and appraisals are is a matter of opinion and the two plants were not specifically noted for differences.

Mr. Ardron writes "The doubles in the 'H. E. Beale' group appear to vary considerably in response to growing conditions, exposure, soil quality, moisture and especially sunshine". Dr. Lead at one time thought "Pink Beale" looked better and grew it on. Now he says it looks exactly the same as 'H. E. Beale' in form of growth and flower, but it does seem "cleaner and fresher looking in every way". Is there a parallel in these subjective assessments with 'Co. Wicklow' and 'Camla', where some swear to differences which are still unresolved? Mr. J. Platt for example says his 'Camla' is "very different, later, better", but many 'Camlas' are undoubtedly identical.

Mr. Ingwersen says "they did decide that "Pink Beale" showed sufficient distinction to be kept apart, but this year I could not really distinguish enough difference to maintain it as a separate cultivar." Mr. Lyle "did have a form of 'H. E. Beale' (selected by us for its very long sprays of flower which were exceptional), this being the only difference . . . we have not continued with the separation, we grow only the better form now". Mr. Yates has "grown "Pink Beale", "Underwoods Variety" and 'H. E. Beale' alongside and finds no difference in flowering time, habit or indeed colour". Mr. Vickers opines that they, and some others, are "commercially the same", and I agree. But the key fact whether these plants are from a selected sport or just some that have been thought pinker or better, is not yet ascertained. For the present it seems they may be considered as coming within the variation that can be found in 'H. E. Beale' and do not warrant separation.

"Peter Sparkes Improved"

Mr. Brien writes that " "Peter Sparkes Improved" is progeny of a plant from Peter three years ago, when I told him my stock of 'Peter Sparkes' had gone single on

me. Naturally they are all sold as 'Peter Sparkes', the label "Improved" being a temporary one to make sure I kept the correct stock for propagation". Mr. Baulu used to grow a plant "in the time of John F. Letts, called "Peter Sparkes Improved", but over the years it seems to have died out or at least the "Improved" part of the name has been dropped". Was this plant the same as Mr. Brien's?

Mr. van de Laar and Mr. R. Zwijnenburg compared 'Peter Sparkes' with Brien's "Peter Sparkes Improved", and it is no surprise they found them identical. But then they found 'Cramond' identical too, which suggests they had not got correctly named stock of that, admittedly similar, cultivar.

Such temporary nursery names do get out only too easily. It seems clear that this name is a synonym for 'Peter Sparkes' and should disappear from our lists.

"Glencoe"

'"Glencoe"', John Letts writes "was found growing wild at Glencoe in Scotland by . . . "sorry have forgotten". It was given to me (cutting material) by a lady who lived in Wentworth somewhere, but again forgotten her name. It was only different in my opinion in as much as it was possibly more vigorous than 'H. E. Beale' because it was a *new* strain . . . I am writing from memory and as my memory is so short lived the above is not necessarily correct. However it may be some help". Who can add to this?

Sorting the Dutch records has taken much time and I am most grateful to Mr. van de Laar for his help. They are based on the following data:

1. Specimens at Wageningen, Nos. 6-8 and 10.
2. Specimens at Leiden, Nos. 8 and 13.
3. *de Levende Natuur* 1927 31 372, presumably Nos. 6-8.
4. *Ditto* 1928 33 142. "Double-flowered Ling is not so very rare. I found 15 plants of it . . . Near Heumen I found one with stamens on". Cf No. 9.
5. W. Beijerinck in "*Calluna*", 1940, 136. "(double-flowers) belong to the most frequent deviations of Scotch heather in the Netherlands".

6. *Nederlandsch Kruidkundig Archief* 1935 45 127, presumably Nos. 6, 7 and 10.
7. A note I made after visiting the herbarium at Wageningen in 1975, but I have not been able to confirm the details, No. 14.

The chart which follows, I hope, speaks for itself. All the original finds were presumably seedlings unless otherwise noted, while the opposite is true of the progeny. The sequence is chronological, with progeny noted under their begetters and, more fully, in their chronological place, indicated by their number. Many more details are available about nearly all the plants mentioned. Specimens exist, mostly in the Society's herbarium, of all the named cultivars and of some of the unnamed seedlings as well.

Apparently erroneous records are left out. These include "Alportii Flore Pleno", "Co. Limerick" (error for 'Co. Wicklow'), "Cuprea Flora Pleno", "Dumosa Flore Pleno" and "Rubra Plena". The first and last could have referred to ordinary "Flore Pleno", (but see p 77 of "The English Heather Garden") and the other two be printer's errors running on consecutive names in a catalogue.

Finally, briefly to complete the recorded double heathers, there are claims for Ericas, for which there is no supporting evidence, such as *E. cinerea* double, var *monstrosa*, var *pleno*, and var *prolifer*, *E. tetralix flore pleno*, *plena* and *pleniflora* (some of which refer to *E. mackaiana* 'Plena'), *E. multiflora flore pleno* and *E. vagans flore pleno*. The only unassailable double hardy *Erica* is still the form of *E. mackaiana* - 'Plena' - which Dr. Crawford collected in 1901, unaware it had been collected by A. G. More in 1869, or that it would be again collected, always in the same area of Connemara, in 1965 and 1970. But who can find it now?

Among the tender Cape Heaths, I know of only three doubles, all sports on hybrids. The first was on *E. x hyemalis* at Haynes Nursery at Penge in 1868, which was propagated; the next on *E. x wilmoreana* in France in 1908; the last a recent one Milton Hutchings had, also on *E. x hyemalis*, which was such a poor thing it was discarded.

Observations on Lime Tolerance

A. W. Jones, West Camel, Somerset

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 heathly 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 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 *D. c.* '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.

Ericaceous Plants on Alkaline Soils

G. Yates, Nottingham

A great deal has been written over the years about the problem of growing heathers, rhododendrons and other *Ericaceae* on alkaline soils, and a great deal of progress has been made, especially in work with rhododendrons, which makes it clear that the problem is really caused by plants taking up too much calcium at the expense of other essential plant foods, such as magnesium and manganese. By giving the plants the essential foods in a form which they can readily absorb, the indications are that heathers and other *Ericaceae* will grow satisfactorily on soils previously regarded as impossible. I do not suggest that results so far are such that I would advise all and sundry to start growing heathers in the areas of high alkalinity, but I certainly feel that anybody of an experimental nature should try a few plants.

I have always considered that soil texture is the most important factor in growing heathers, and a suspected high pH level is often blamed for problems caused by heavy clay soils, or very badly drained sites, and plants that prefer higher moisture levels will look very unhappy on a dry, dusty soil with no humus in it. In extreme cases one can only make peat beds in the well tried traditions, but I believe that many gardens at present regarded as hopeless for heathers and other *Ericaceae* can be made suitable by using seaweed type products and fritted trace elements, and even suitable gardens can be improved considerably by using the same products.

I will be pleased to send more technical information to anybody sending an s.a.e. to Tabramhill Gardens, Ollerton Road, Nottingham. NG5 8PR.

Summer in Yorkshire 1976

John P. Ardron, Sheffield, Yorkshire

Drought has always been a threat to newly planted heathers but, in the past, our established plants have

held out in the drier seasons remarkably well. But 1976 has been a calamity year for many genera and our heathers have been stressed as never before. Experience of losses varies considerably according to the type of soil. Summer of 1975, followed by a winter of little rain and less snow, left our soils with a deficient water table to support vegetation being baked in high temperatures for weeks on end. When shade temperatures are over 80°F the sun reading is perhaps 120°F, which our plants cannot tolerate unless moisture can be supplied by the roots. When the garden hose is banned the little overhead watering from the bathwater is a poor substitute, even in a small garden. Ergo, peat block walls proved disastrously difficult to dampen!

This combination of circumstances is worth recording mainly if it reassures us that the season was so exceptional as not likely to be repeated so direly. Experience in a very dry garden has shown that all the Tree Heaths, *E. erigena* (*med*:) *E. x. darleyensis*, *E. umbellata* and perhaps *E. vagans* have managed a higher survival rate. In general, the conditions and situations which have favoured survival appear to be closer planting on fertile soil and north facing gentle slopes, the humus content of the soil and its depth. Indeed survival on the moorlands appears to stem from the depth of the mould and the ground cover of the closely growing heath. Even there the flush of bloom has tended to be less dramatic and of short duration.

In bright contrast, our Society has had a very good year. The Conference in Wales was a notable success thanks to the organisation by Mr. Scantlin, Mr. & Mrs. Haigh and the chairmanship of Maj.-Gen. Turpin. Most encouraging is the growing number of local Groups so well reported in the Autumn Bulletin. Their many activities have great social value in addition to fostering our interest in the garden Heather. One notable item was revealed at the Harlow Car Group lecture given by Dr. McAllister (from Ness Gardens) who had discovered that *Erica mackaiana* was capable of developing adventitious shoots on its roots to produce new plants as do species roses and other genera. This was illustrated

graphically along with excellent slides depicting the wide range of heather adaptation to various habitats.

(It is hoped an article on the reproduction of *E. Mackaiana* by Dr. McAllister will appear in the next Year Book. *Ed.*)

Heathers in the Great Drought

Mrs. Mary Jones, Trowbridge, Wiltshire

When we left our mature heather garden of acid sandy soil above gravel, with a good deal of moss peat incorporated over the years, we wondered if it might prove to be the end of our heather gardening. We knew we were about to tackle a new and much smaller garden on the heaviest of clay. We were ignorant then as to its pH, which we feared might prove to be alkaline. However, since gardeners are incurable optimists, we took with us from Worcestershire to West Wiltshire, a large selection of rooted cuttings from our old garden.

We moved at the end of August 1975, and, the dry autumn and winter, which failed to fill the country's reservoirs, proved an ideal opportunity for us to press ahead on soil which in a wet autumn would have been of the consistency of old-fashioned toffee.

The moss peat we had used in the past had become too expensive, but we were able to fetch a load of sedge peat much cheaper direct from the digger. Where the original top soil remained, it consisted of old meadow land, and this of course was much better than the area where trees had been removed and the subsoil brought to the surface. In fact, like most new gardens, our soil was like the curate's egg, good in parts.

We took a pH test, and found to our delight that this was neutral, so with the addition of peat we planted our heathers. By Easter of this year our garden had taken shape. Mr. and Mrs. Jones of West Camel kindly supplied us with various plants of Carneas. We were also able to obtain several tree heaths, including the golden-foliaged 'George Hunt', from other local sources, and

some of our favourite hybrids and erigenas, such as 'George Rendall', 'Furzey' and 'Superba'.

May came, and we began to think it would be nice to have rain, but enjoyed sitting in the sun and watching the profusion of butterflies, (many of them quite uncommon varieties – but this is not a lepidopterists" article!). The butterflies really had a ball on the early annual flowers, but when they were over, and June ran its course, we began to look at each other with a wild surmise, as our water butt became quite empty, and whenever a small cloud appeared in the dazzling blue, it seemed to turn sharp left and make appropriately for Bath.

July came, hoses had long been forbidden, and the era of saving the washing-up water began. There was no ban on using a watering-can, but our mains water came from deep boreholes, and was very chalky. Just the weather for lying on the beach, but after so much effort to get the new garden established, my husband was determined not to go away and abandon his pets to that perpetual sunshine. Morning and evening the old watering-can went its rounds, *Camellia* or *Calluna*, they had their dose of chalky water, there was no alternative, and most of their tipple was laced with Fairy liquid as well.

Thus we continued until the Great Drought broke with thunderstorms at the end of the first week in September, and since then the heavens have opened almost every day.

What has been the result? Deaths; only three small Callunas. Growth of the young plants, very little, but more than we expected, and now going ahead. Carneas on the whole have budded up very well, but in the front garden, which we watered more than the back (because it was nearer!), the Carneas have more flower. 'Ann Sparkes' in the front area received more water than at the back, and has coloured better at the front and made more flower buds. To our surprise the Cinereas, of which we have only a few because we did not think they would do well on our soil, flowered well for their size, and are looking very healthy. Our tree heaths very miserable by the end of the drought, but did not turn brown, and now are improving rapidly. The new 'George Hunt' is doing particularly well and is a lovely golden colour.

'Mrs. D. F. Maxwell' flowered well for the size of the plants and is now making new growth. 'Valerie Proudley' went brown at the tips despite regular watering, but appears to be gradually recovering.

'Elsie Purnell', although watered very little, stood up to the drought amazingly well. 'H. E. Beale' also survived quite well. We brought only one young plant of 'Peter Sparkes' with us, and although it was a good plant it has scarcely survived; 'Robert Chapman' and golden-foliaged Callunas were looking rather distressed at the end of the drought. We lost two, but a dressing of damp shredded pine bark seemed to help them and the others are now looking well. The other casualty was one *Calluna* 'Alba Plena'.

We are astonished at the resilience of the heathers. We wonder if the impervious nature of the subsoil actually helped us in this situation, and whether we should have had more casualties on free-draining soil. We are busy top-dressing with well-matured shredded bark, which we can obtain very easily. It now remains to be seem what the effect of perhaps a very wet winter will be on our soil, the texture of which has already improved. Perhaps gardeners *should* be optimists, as long as they do their homework properly. Of course, a fairly small garden plus retirement meant that we were able to concentrate our minds wonderfully, like Dr. Johnson's man about to be hung.

How did your Heathers stand the Drought?

G. Yates, Nottingham

Two successive hot, dry summers, with a very dry winter in between have created a new standard by which garden plants are judged, and it is interesting to assess the performance of heathers in this context. I have taken every possible opportunity in the past few months to find out as much as possible about garden conditions,

including soil and shade, and especially how plants have been planted, and cared for in the gardens of those who have lost no plants this season, as well as those who have lost many.

It does seem that there has been little difference, if any, between the various species in tolerance to the drought and heat, but I am not alone in finding that *Daboecia* cultivars have recovered rapidly once rain did come, flowering with abandon and still doing so in late November. Most other species produced poor flowers, if at all.

Several lessons can be learned from the information that I have been given. In every case that I have come across where very heavy losses have been sustained, the heathers have either been quite old, covering the ground and having little or no room for the roots to spread and seek out moisture, or if planted in the last few years, far too much peat has been used. In most cases of recent planting, heavy losses have almost invariably been where heathers have been planted in pure peat or in soil that has been very inadequately prepared.

The factor which caused most damage of all during the summer of 1976 was the very high temperatures experienced several times during the hot, dry spell. When West Indian cricketers say that they have never played a Test Match in such heat, it makes you realise what our plants had to contend with. There is little doubt that gardens enjoying light shade during the middle of the day have fared better than those without any shade at all, but shade or no shade, gardens where heathers have been well planted in well cultivated soil have suffered very little.

It does seem that heathers in beds against house walls, or other situations where reflected heat has created even higher temperatures, have suffered more than usual. Brickwork has always tended to work rather like a wick in such situations, sucking water out of the surrounding soil, and trees also cause the same sort of problems.

If it is possible to draw conclusions from these observations, I think it emphasises the importance of thorough soil preparation to make a good friable medium. Use a mixture of moist peat and soil for filling around the roots, preferably equal quantities of each, and certainly

not all peat, and finally give a thorough mulching with moist peat, or some other suitable humus-making material.

One final word on watering. A little and often does more harm than good, bringing roots to the surface. A thorough soaking at weekly intervals is far more successful, and the people I have spoken to who have kept older plantings alive have all watered infrequently, but thoroughly. I know that watering at all was a problem this year, but, despite the difficulties, the rule remains the same.

The advice given in all books on heathers amounts to the same thing, and those who follow the advice have fared better than those who choose to ignore it in one way or another. Surely that is the lesson we can all learn?

Save Water — Save Heathers — Save Money!

A. Mackay, Norwich, Norfolk

As we squelch about our waterlogged lawns this winter to plant or prune our heathers, it seems a far cry from those soaring and searing temperatures of the drought-ridden summer of '76. Added to the dismay of seeing a carefully nurtured *Erica* quite suddenly give up the struggle, one must also count the cost of replacement and the loss of time for the one year old to grow to a handsome 4 or 5 year old cushion of colour.

Being a frugal Scot I felt duty bound to do something about it. It was with these thoughts in mind that I tried to beat the "hose ban" with a two pronged attack. As distinct from heather grown in the wild, which gives a "blanket" cover of the ground sufficient to preserve the life saving moisture round the root system to the bitter end, our garden cultivars tend to be planted in splendid isolation to give maximum effect. This has the disadvantage, in drought conditions, of the ground surrounding the plant becoming extremely arid, particularly if the

"peat" additive has been allowed to dry up for even a day or two.

When a bucket of precious "washing up" water is deposited on the dried up mound of the heather bed it tends to run off the edges against the lawn. The lawn proceeds to have more growth on the part it doesn't need - and only succeeds in promoting stolonisation of the grasses into the heather bed. To combat this draining off effect I used a tool, originally designed for potato planting, which lifts out a cylinder of earth. A number of holes were let into the heather beds to a depth of 7″ or 8″. These were interspersed not too close to the root endings to damage them, and were then the receptacles into which all watering took place. Secondly I had been collecting a lot of cobble stones and flints for some time and if these are ringed around new and young plants it kept the roots cool and damp just that much longer to give them a fighting chance. Their blue grey colours and textures also contrast quite effectively with the dark peat and bright heathers.

The combination of both methods had the desired affect with the exception of one 'Robert Chapman' which succumbed in spite of the precautions. But out of 200 plants of ages from two to seven years, I suppose I should count my good fortune and also the consequent savings in time, effort and money.

If you are coming to the conference in Norwich, or indeed at any time, please feel free to visit my "experiment", tell me about yours or chat about our favourite subject.

New Introductions

J. Platt, Ulnes Walton, Nr. Leyland, Lancs.

(Those members who have met Jack Platt at our annual Conferences will quickly realise that he is an avid collector of new cultivars and likes to grow them all despite his relatively small garden. This was apparent as long ago as April 1972 when, at Westham House in Warwickshire, he was the winner of the first ever quiz held at a Conference, on heathers and their origins.

This year he has kindly listed all the cultivars he has recently acquired, together with their origin, where known and these are set out below. *Ed.*)

Calluna vulgaris

'Ben Nevis'–Aug-Sept.
9″. White flowers. Twisted growth. R. Brien, Perth.

'Crimson Glory'–Aug-Sept.
12″ Crimson flowers. Gold foliage in summer turning deep orange red in winter. Bushy habit, long arching spikes. C. Benson, Preston.

'Edith Godbolt'–Sept.
Upright growing with spikes completely covered with flowers, also on laterals, Colour Red-Purple 74C Foliage grey/green. Very floriferous. Seedling 1972. A. Taylor, Mrs. Godbolt's nephew Crowborough.

'Firefly'–Aug-Sept.
18″. Deep crimson flowers. Foilage shades of terra-cotta in summer turning to a striking brick red in winter. Erect habit – long stiff spikes. C. Benson.

'Flamingo'-Aug-Sept.
12″. Purple flowers similar to 'Spring Torch' excepting that the new growth is more red. Raised by J. W. Sparkes, Redditch.

'Flatling'–Aug.
3″. Purple flowers, spikey growth. D. Hutton, Callander.

'Gold Turret' syn 'Golden Glory'–Aug-Sept.
12″. White flowers. Gold foliage keeps its colour throughout the year. Sport on "Loch Turret". A. Smith, Lochearn.

'Isobel Hughes'–Aug-Sept.
12″. Double white flowers, free flowering upright growth. See chart No. 40.

'Pewter Plate'–Aug-Sept.
6″. Purple flowers. Dwarf creeping habit, silver foliage turns to pewter colour in winter. Tabramhill Gardens.

'Platts Surprise'–Sept-Oct.
9″-12″. Double white flowers, very free flowering. Upright growth, compact bushy habit See p. 27.

'Purple Plume'–Sept.
12″. Purple flowers on long spikes. D. Hutton.

'Purple Sandwood Bay'–Aug.-Sept.
2″. Similar in growth to the St. Kilda varieties. Gold green foliage turning red in winter. Sport on 'Sandwood Bay'. R. Brien.

'Salmon Leap'–Aug-Sept.
2″. Mauve flowers, prostrate growth similar to 'Gold Carpet', but more vigorous. Foliage light gold tinged pink in spring. J. W. Sparkes.

'Serlei Lavender'–Aug-Sept.
12″. Lavender flowers, gold foliage. Pennyacre Nurseries, Fife.

'Torogay'–Aug-Sept.
9″. Purple flowers, bright red tips on new growth in spring and summer. Grey green foliage, spreading habit Seedling N.Uist 1969. J. Drake.

'Trinklet'–Sept.
3″. Purple flowers. New growth pink tinged red. Dwarf compact habit. Seedling Cornwall 1972. R. B. Ide. Camberley.

'Rica'–June-Sept.
2″. Purple flowers. Prostrate growth, very free flowering. F. Kircher, Hamburg.

Daboecia cantabrica

'Rainbow'–June-Oct.
24″. Purple flowers. Sport from 'Atropurpurea'. Variegated foliage of green, gold, bronze and red which is more intense in winter. P. Lloyd, Fordingbridge 1966.

'White Carpet'–June-Oct.
White flowers, spreading growth, found in Spain. P. Zwijnenburg. 1972.

D x Scotica

(*D. Azorica x D. Cantabrica*)

'Tabramhill'–June-Oct.
9″. Rose crimson flowers, free flowering, very compact growth. c. 1970. G. Yates. (May not be a hybrid).

'William Buchanan'
6″. Crimson flowers, nicely flecked with gold foliage. Sport on 'William Buchanan' C. Baulu, Newick 1975.

Erica arborea

'Estrella Gold'
Foliage green gold turning gold in winter. Seedling found in Portugal 1972. Introduced by P. Zwijnenburg.

E. ciliaris

'Delta'
6″. Foliage grey green. A very compact seedling found in 1970 by A. Taylor in his garden. It is the 'Foxii Nana' of *E. ciliaris* Introduced by D. Small.

E. cinerea

'Aberfoyle'–June-Sept.
4″. White flowers, dwarf compact growth. The earliest flowering *cinerea* in my garden. D. Hutton.

'Betty MacDonald'
White flowers. tinged pink, foliage light green. Seedling in Argyll 1957. Introduced by J. Drake.

'Novar'
Soft lavender flowers. Local seedling 1974.
W. A. Cadman, Inverness.

E. erigena
'Irish Silver'–April-June.
24″. Flowers silvery pink. Late flowering. Proudleys.

E. tetralix
'Humoresque'
6″. Pink flowers. A "fissa" form, corollas split and fimbriated, Grey green foliage. C. G. Hollett. Sedburgh.

E. vagans
'White Lady'–Aug-Oct.
9″. The whitest flowers with attractive golden anthers. Habit prostrate for the first few years. The light green foliage on the tips of the flower spikes is reflected by the flowers, throwing a faint green light over an established plant. Very floriferous. C. Benson.

Recent writings on Heathers, 1976

ANON. Erica-Werbeaktion der VEHA. *Gärtnermeister* 79, 37/76, 669.
Containers planted with *E. gracilis* on display at numerous railway stations to publicise it. (VEHA is the Society of Swiss cultivators of Ericas, Hortensias and Azaleas. 30 of their members dealing with Ericas are listed on p 676.)

ANON. Cheer up with heaths. *Amateur Gardening* 4 Dec. p 3.
Rochfords selling German-raised *E. gracilis*.

BARCLAY ESTRUP P. & GIMINGHAM C. H., Seed shedding in heather (*Calluna vulgaris*, *Trans. Bot. soc. Edin.* 42, 275-8.
Seed yield may be of the order of 800,000 to 1 million per square metre. Most falls in November and December, and then intermittently until about March, but much depends on the weather each year.

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Effects of heathland fires in 1976.

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Data on *E. x watsonii*.

COX D., Alpines and Heaths. *Garden News* 13 Feb. 14-15.
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GODWIN H., *The History of the British Flora*, 2nd Ed. (C.U.P.) pp 290-300.
The data of the fossil record summarised, with maps and illustrations.

HELLYER A., Summer-flowering heathers. *Amateur Gardening* 10 July, 15.
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HUMPHREY-JONES D. R. Leaf die-back (*Rhizoctonia solani* Kühn) of *Erica carnea*. *Plant Pathology* 25, 56.
A new record for *E. carnea*, noticed on 'Foxhollow' and 'King George' in Norfolk.

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KIRCHER, F., Der Heidegarten immer aktueller. *Gartenwelt* 76(21), 431-2.
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Discussion on the distinction between these cultivars.
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Notes on an exhibit of ten variants not mentioned in Floras.
MEARS J. A., A collection of South African Ericaceae. *Taxon* 25(2/3) 327-30.
Notes on nearly 1,000 sheets in the herbarium of the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia.
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SCANNELL M. J. P., *Erica erigena* R. Ross, the second station in W. Galway. *Irish Nat. Jnl* 18(9) 270-1.
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, , *Erica erigena* R. ROSS; a note on the derivationof the specific epithet. *Jnl. R. H. S.* 101(9) 489-90.
Shows that *erigena* means early race and not Irish born as was intended.
, , *Erica x watsonii* Benth. in the Flora of Ireland. *Contributions from the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin*, No. 1 40-7.
A full report of the single, fortuitous, find with discussions on its congeners.
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Sources of over 60 distribution maps of this species.
VAN DE LAAR H. J., Het sortiment *Erica carnea. Groen* No. 12 365-6.
A useful preliminary report on the trials at Boskoop.
VAN DEN BERGHEN L., La végétation a *Erica vagans* de la Haute Soule. *Colloque* U.E.R. de Pharmacie, Lille.
An analysis of some Basque vegetation.

Nurserymen Members

OUR APPRECIATION AND THANKS are due to the following whose advertisements appear in this issue.

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Will members please enclose a stamp with their enquiries.

Members who would welcome Visitors

A supplement with a complete membership list will follow wjth the summer bulletin.

A* will indicate members willing to show their gardens by appointment.

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Zone 8: South West Group
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Book Review

HEATHER TRIALS 1971 - 1975

by The Heather Society. £1.75 post free to members £2.50 to non-members. Post free, from Mr. D. B. Oliver, 27 Valentine Road, Leicester LE5 2GH.

If any justification for the existence of the Heather Society was needed, then its report on a trial to determine the characteristics of cultivated heathers conducted at Harlow Car and edited by G. P. Vickers, well satisfies that need. Only an organisation of size with enthusiastic and dedicated members could undertake a complicated trial of this nature and bring it to a conclusion. I feel that all taking part are to be congratulated; I only hope they enjoyed doing it.

Presumably it is intended to continue these trials indefinitely, particularly in view of the number of new cultivars coming along, and those older cultivars not yet trialed. If this is so, this work will be invaluable to amateur and professional alike. One would hope that once the bulk of cultivars has been cleared it will be less arduous to trial the new cultivars. It might be desirable though perhaps not practical to run a trial in another part of the country. The selections on page 60 exclude some fine foliage cultivars and, while I note the explanation on page 42, I feel they would perhaps have done far better elsewhere The described layout and planting distances on the site, seemed to me excellent. The details recorded in the final report appear to lack nothing relevant to the task contemplated.

If I may be allowed three critical comments based on personal preference and with a view to quicker and easier identification,

1. Pages 7 to 78 would benefit from the use of clearer or larger print.
2. The abbreviations are difficult to carry in the mind and need too frequent referencing.
3. The colour code could well be amplified by a word description (for example "Pale Pink"). This would enable the reader to pass by cultivars of little present interest while having the colour codes for subsequent more detailed study.

Apart from these minor comments and a few rare factual errors, I have nothing but praise and admiration for the people who have been prepared to devote so much of their time and energy to the compilation of this interesting and authoritative Report.

J. HALL, WINDLESHAM, SURREY