

THE HEATHER SOCIETY

Bulletin No.8

Autumn 1969

From the Secretary.

September is perhaps our best "advertising" month when we put on our own Display at the R.H.S. in London at the height of the Calluna season. This year we were pleased to find that the competitions arranged by the R.H.S. on Sept. 9 and 10 were exclusively for heaths and heathers. Members and others took advantage of the opportunity and Mr. London with his customary thoroughness made full notes of the entries which we think worth publishing in part in this bulletin, if only to show those that top the list for popularity.

It is always encouraging when members from other groups take the trouble to arrange their business trips to London to synchronise with the Heather Show. We were pleased to meet Mr. A.S. Turner of Birmingham and an old friend, Mr. C.F. Robertson of Cheltenham. Miss Burfitt (yes, the same Joyce Burfitt whose namesake you may be growing, a lovely terracotta cinerea.) brought up from Dorset some most beautifully pressed and annotated heaths and heathers for the collection Mr. McClintock is making.

On the Wednesday afternoon, several members had to desert the display stand to attend a committee meeting. It was an important meeting, for the proposal "that a combined husband/wife subscription of 30/- be made available", postponed since the A.G.M. on April 30th, had to be decided. Those who have been pressing for it may now be assured that the proposal was carried without dissent to come into effect when the 1970 subscription is due, on March 31st. There is no compulsion to participate, but I shall need to know which Bankers' Orders will require to be altered. From this you will gather that I have decided that I can continue as Treasurer as well as Secretary, with the Committee's approval now that I am well. This certainly simplifies matters.

I have been asked to make clear the question of the copyright of articles written for both the Year Book and the Bulletins. The copyright remains with the author, not with the Heather Society. Anyone wishing to reproduce any copyright article would first approach the Editor of the Year Book who would contact the author for permission to do so. Perhaps this reassurance of your rights may persuade more of you to send in contributions for the 1970 Year Book and bulletins. Mr. Patrick would like articles of 600-900 words and they must be in by November 30th. Remember, his new address is 16 Prospect, Corsham, Wilts.

This is probably not the best time for photography, but Mr. Prew again stresses the need for individual specimen pictures. So many he has are of charming heather gardens, but for the education of those who attend lectures, the different species clearly portrayed are more valuable.

At the time of writing this it is not certain whether the Society's first booklet, "A Guide to the Naming of Plants" by Mr. David McClintock will be ready to go out with this bulletin or whether it will have to wait for Bulletin No.9. It will be issued free to all members, but it is hoped that they will recommend it or buy it for their friends. The price is 6/6d including postage (not by airmail) and will be obtainable from the Society's Secretary, Yew Trees, Horley Row, Horley, Surrey.

This resumé of our 1969 activities would not be complete without reference to the visits we have paid. Mr. Chapple has written an account of the afternoon spent in Nottingham with Mr. & Mrs. Yates and it remains for me to tell you of our visits in the south. A disappointingly small number visited Wakehurst Place, Ardingly, on a most beautiful afternoon on August 27th. While of course we were mainly interested in heathers, which are being grown extensively and superbly, the beauty of the trees, the lake and the setting of the Elizabethan mansion made a deep impression on us. On a less lovely afternoon, September 13th, a slightly larger party accepted Miss Ryan's invitation to her fine garden high up on Reigate Heath. Though cloud obscured the view, nothing could mar our enjoyment of the garden, which has been much enlarged by taking in part of a field since our last visit in 1966. We thank Miss Ryan for her hospitality.

With this bulletin we are sending out a circular from Mr. Ardron to members of Group 3, 4 & 5, to test their reaction to a proposed weekend gathering next year. I feel sure that if members of other groups are interested, they would be welcome. I have ordered a few spare copies of the circular if you would like one.

I now have a few dates fixed for 1970:

- 24 1. Carnea Display, February 25/25, R.H.S, London, S.W.1,
 2. A.G.M, Weds., April 29th. 5 p.m. Sherry Party at 19, Rochester Row, S.W.1,
 3. Autumn Display and R.H.S, Heather Competition, Sept. 8/9

Report on the Heather Competition at the R.H.S. Hall, London, on Sept 9/10. 1969

A record number of entries, 98, comprising 12 for E.vagans, 37 for Cal.v. (coloured) 16 for Cal.v. (white) 12 for E.cinerea, 6 for Daboecia, 6 for Any other heather and 9 for Foliage Effect.

Prize Winners 1st & 2nd

E.vagans 'Lilacina' (Miss Ryan)
 " 'Mrs.D.F. Maxwell' (Mrs.Bowerman)
Calluna vulgaris 'Peter Sparkes' (Hydon Nurseries)
 " " 'Barnett Anley' (G.K.Pilkington)
Cal.vulg.white 'Serlei' (Mrs.Potter)
 " " " 'Tomentosa Alba' (G.K.Pilkington)

E.cin. 'Cevennes' (Mrs.Valerie Proudley)
 " " 'Atro Rubens' (G.K.Pilkington)

Daboecia Cantabrica' Praegerae' (D.McClintock)
 " Cantabrica 'Alba' (Mrs.Potter)

Any other Heather

E.terminalis (Countess of Rosse)
E.ciliaris 'C.H.Gill' (Mrs.Bowerman)

Foliage Effect

E.tetralix 'Alba Mollis' (Hydon Nurseries)
E.ciliaris 'Aurea' (Mrs.Potter.)

The Heather Society Display again tastefully put on by Brian and Valerie Proudley showed three 'Proudley' cultivars, two Callunas, 'Sally Anne Proudley' and 'Lyndon Proudley' and a new Vagans with gold foliage, 'Valerie Proudley'. The Display won the award of a Silver Banksian medal.

We thank the members who again so kindly gave up time to man the stand.

AWARD OF GARDEN MERIT PLANTS

The issue ((1969 Pt.1) of the Proceedings of the R.H.S, lists certain heaths which the Award of Garden Merit Committee recommends for the award. They are to be included in the completely revised edition of 'Some Good Garden Plants'. Those to be so honoured are:

| | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| <u>Calluna vulgaris</u> | * <u>Daboecia cantabrica</u> | * <u>Erica arborea</u> |
| including clones: | including clones: | |
| * 'Alportii' | 'Alba' | 'Alpina' |
| 'Alba Plena' | " 'Atropurpurea' | |
| 'Barnet Anley' | 'Bicolor' | <u>E.carnea</u> |
| "County Wicklow' | <u>E.x darleyensis</u> | including clones |
| 'Gold Haze' | including clones: | * 'King George' |
| 'Hammondii' | 'Arthur Johnson' | 'Ruby Glow' |
| * 'H.E.Beale' | 'George Ren dall' | 'Springwood Pink' |
| * 'J.H.Hamilton' | 'Silberschmelze' | * 'Springwood White' |
| 'Hirsuta Typica' | <u>E.vagans</u> | 'Vivellii' |
| 'Peter Sparkes' | 'Lyonnesse' | <u>E.cinerea</u> |
| * 'Robert Chapman' | 'Mrs.D.F.Maxwell' | 'C.D.Eason' |
| 'Serlei' | * 'St. Keverne' | 'Eden Valley' |
| | | 'Knap Hill Pink' |
| | | 'P.S.Patrick' |
| | | 'Rosea' |

* already have the Award of Garden Merit.

It will take some time to prepare this new edition. In the meantime we have been told that

it would be worth while collecting the views of as many members as possible on which cultivars they would themselves recommend for this high honour. What are our best heaths? There is no limit to how many may be recommended, if they deserve it. Send in your views to Mr. D. McClintock who will forward them to the Secretary of the Award of Garden Merit Committee.

A HAPPY DAY AT NOTTINGHAM

On Sunday, July 6, Mr. and Mrs. Yates warmly welcomed between forty and fifty members from the Midlands, north and North Wales., at their beautiful garden in Newstead Abbey Park. What a wonderful setting this is for naturally growing heathers with a background of silver birch and matured trees.

At the start, Mr. Yates said as he led the band of enthusiasts - 'it is as well to keep together, there are nine-and-a-half acres here and if you stray you might get lost.' Fortunately, there was no need to send out a search party for a lone straggler at the end of an enjoyable peregrination.

With Crail House extending over a wide domain thousands of plants (300 varieties) have ample room to develop - and there is ground for thousands more. Some of the beds are so widely spaced that each one is a garden on its own.

The cinereas were a joy to see and the Callunas almost breaking from the bud. We saw expansive drifts of the Sparkes classics in all their colours.

A cup of tea provided by Mrs. Yates was as refreshing as the pleasant surroundings. We felt at ease, at home, and indeed grateful for charming and informal hospitality. In these outings to Harlow Car, Ness and Nottingham it is not so much a question of belonging to a party but of being happily associated with friends we have come to know with the passing of time.

On July 6 a bridgehead was established at Nottingham, another valuable landmark in the Society's progress. We are gradually moving nearer and nearer towards the south. One day we expect to arrive there.

F.J.C.

MEMBERS' FORUM

WILD LIFE IN THE HEATHER GARDEN.

(Many members have visited Mr. Hale's delightful garden, so on a hot summer day when disinclined for gardening, he sat in his summer house and at my request, wrote this charming sidelight on his chief joy in the autumn of his life.)

I have often thought that a chapter or two if not a whole book could be written about the Wild Life that visits my Heather Garden. Although I have probably encouraged the many species of beasts, birds and insects that now think they have acquired the right of free access and action, making use of everything that grows there, I do not always agree with the advantage taken of the privilege given. Great though my interest is in watching this wild life, I think on balance the result of their attentions would have to go down on the debit side of the accounts and not to the welfare of the heathers.

It is no longer necessary to live in the heart of the country to get a close-up view of a Fox, as the shriek of the vixen or the short bark of the dog-fox can often be heard without leaving home in town or village. Some twenty years ago, the wild rabbit population which was the fox's chief diet was practically extinguished by myxomatosis, causing this marauder of the countryside to adopt Dick Whittington's ideas and to go to town to get a living. This he chiefly obtains from dustbins and garbage heaps which he visits on a regular nightly round. It is one of these scavengers that is at the moment my chief "bete-noire", having acquired the habit of varying his diet by hunting for frogs and snails which may have their hiding places under my choicest heathers, investigating a fresh group nearly every night with disastrous results to the plants, and taking a nap between meals in a cosy lair under some of the taller varieties.

Though we may perhaps tolerate the damage our own domestic pets may cause, we are apt to resent the depredations of uninvited visitors. I have a slim, elegant golden foliaged conifer

that visiting dogs seem to imagine is meant for a makeshift lamp-post and its reaction to this indignity can be imagined. 'Eileen Porter' is no lover of the feline race: I had begun to wonder why the centre plants of a particular group looked sick and dejected until I noted that all the dying plants were those brushed by the cat on his frequent trips to and fro. I was further convinced that 'Candy' was the culprit because another group of the same carnea planted nearby looked fit and flourishing.

I love to see the birds, but they too cannot all be placed on the credit side of the account. I had no ill-feeling, however, towards a stately heron that one day alighted on the top of a tall larch tree and for a full twenty minutes watched the goldfish in the small lilypond. Whether his visit was mere curiosity I do not know but if he had other intentions, his courage must have failed him, as he has never been back. I could do without the Jackdaws that come regularly to the bird table and having collected a crust or bone take it to a very old and twiggy but specially valued 'alba rigida' near by. It has now been used so long as their "chopping block" that owing both to old age and the birds' attentions, it can be forgiven for going quite bald on top.

Spotted Woodpeckers are very ornamental and I have welcomed a pair that turn up regularly hoping the starlings have left some morsel acceptable to them on the bird table. They always wait until all the other birds have left before making an appearance, although I have seen them agreeably sharing the fragments with a grey squirrel, a pretty sight. They too I am afraid are falling from grace since deciding to strip the bark from a large Japanese acer that carries a deep red foliage throughout the summer months, adding considerably to my over all colour scheme.

Here is another point of interest for Natural History lovers. I have I suppose about 120 varieties of heather, but one variety only, Calluna 'Durfordii', is sought out each year by a species of moth, on which to deposit a wonderful display of eggs. I have twice taken twigs of this heather covered with these eggs down to our local museum for identification. The Curator has failed to get any of these eggs to hatch out, but he had hoped they were those of the Emperor Moth. He has promised to pay me a visit shortly to investigate further and at the same time collect a Tree Wasps' nest that these busy insects have attached to one of my conifers. I am not quite sure on which side of the balance sheet these vivacious little visitors should be placed, but they already think they belong and as they seem very well organised, I am not arguing with them. The bees and butterflies are certainly an added attraction to the heather garden and they seem to have a good idea as to the variety and bloom on which it will be profitable for them to linger. The bees literally make a short cut to the nectar in the bell heather, boring a small hole in the base of each and every tiny heather bell.

Ants seem to congregate whenever and wherever I may have to get down on my knees to reach the ground level, which by the way, seems to get further away as the years go past. As regards the ants, for my part, any bird or beast which would like to make a meal of these small but industrious insects is welcome to the feast. Perhaps 'George' the hedgehog might accept this invitation. He is usually snuffling around in the evenings, leaving the cat's saucer in such a condition that I think he has been using his nose to dig with.

All these and many more birds, beasts and insects are at varying seasons to be found in my heather garden and in most other gardens, maintaining Nature's Balance Account. Perhaps from a practical point of view, the balance seems weighted on the debit side as it affects the garden. We have however to live with it, and each species has a right to maintain its existence and way of life. From the aesthetic angle it would be a great loss to have to live without it.

To me it forms a pageant of never ending fascination and interest. To those who lend an ear, Nature can provide the answer and to those who are closest to the whole process of husbandry at ground level is most revealed.

Horace Hale,

("Papa" to his children, grand-children and great-grandchildren)

Haslemere.

EXPERIMENTING WITH SAWDUST FOR A MULCH

As a new member of the Heather Society, what a delight it was to receive my Year Book and copies of earlier Bulletins. It is thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Letts' magnificent garden, which enthralled me last Autumn, that I am now an enthusiastic Heather Collector. Although a complete "novice", I note from the various writings in the Society's publications, that I am one of an ever-increasing band of gardeners completely won over to the beauties of a Heather Garden. Surely there cannot be another plant to stir up such enthusiasm.

Such was my interest, that immediately following my first glimpse of what could be achieved with Heathers, I set to work and soon Rose Bushes disappeared (to the horror of friends, who could not understand how we could possibly live without them), Rhododendrons were transplanted to the shrub border, and soon four freshly shaped and curvy Heather beds emerged. My experience with growing Rhododendrons and Azaleas proved that they would survive in our rather dubious soil, provided that I supplied plenty of peat and sand for their initial planting and followed this up regularly with mulches of the same materials. I therefore followed this routine with my baby Heather plants and decided to chance a selection from each of the major groups, rather than play safe with the Winter-flowering varieties only.

Winter evenings were filled with hours and hours of reading from both Catalogues and Library books - in theory my mind was filled with endless hints and notes, do's and don't's. In practice, I decided to experiment. It seemed that according to THE BOOK, one could use Sawdust as a mulch instead of the usual rather expensive Peat. Having checked and double checked that each book agreed this was a good idea, my beautiful Heather beds suddenly took on the appearance of a freak snowstorm that had missed the lawn, but clothed the bare earth. Or, as one friend said in all innocence when viewing the scene for the first time "A bit generous with the bone meal, weren't you?"

Having made up my mind that I could stand the sight of glaring white beds for approximately one month, (when according to THE BOOK weathering of the saw-dust should have rendered it almost the colour of the earth), I certainly wasn't prepared for the hearty gale-force winds which immediately whipped up. THE BOOK hadn't mentioned how I was to cope with this dilemma, but as it seemed tap water was prohibited, the next few days saw me running back-wards and forwards every few hours with cans of rain water from the butt, in a fruitless effort to allay the dust before the entire garden became a landing ground for the little white specks. Eventually, I pronounced myself beaten and when the winds finally died away, the lawn and most of the other beds as well had been "mulched" with saw-dust, leaving only a very thin layer on the Heather Beds.

Four weeks later, when a "nice crumbly mould" should have been the result, I decided to surrender and hoed the last few specks into the soil. Despite the frustration of my efforts, I must admit that the top soil does seem to have taken on a slightly improved texture, so maybe it was worth it after all!

I wonder what other Heather Gardeners' results have been with this type of mulching? I would be interested to hear of their experiences,

Mrs. D. Goode, Southend-on-Sea.

BECOMING CAPTIVE

I think basically everyone is aware of the majestic and yet restful effect of moorland and to create one's own moorland with the best cultivars must surely be the ultimate satisfaction for the enthusiastic. This grand scale will, I fear, be beyond possibility for most, but I firmly believe satisfaction can be gained on a smaller scale and not long ago I started with a modest rockery approx. 55ft. x 25ft. Around this time I read Mr. Chapple's book and it dawned on me that I might just make a go of a heather rockery. I needed further moral support and found it in Maxwell and Patrick's book, so in due course the rockery boasted some carneas ('King George' and the Springwoods with some mediterraneas) and just a few summer varieties with C.v. 'Spitfire', 'Robert Chapman' and 'Ruth Sparkes' for foliage.

That rockery is still pleasing but it did not offer enough scope for a heather garden, as I

could not bear to dig up various other healthy rock plants.

By now I had also read Mr. Letts' book and was hopelessly ensnared. I eyed an area of approx. one fifth of an acre adjoining the rockery but my wife firmly stated that I had to let the children play somewhere. So now, undaunted, I have decided to sacrifice most of the sacred 'front lawn' and try again, this time with less rock and mainly for summer/autumn heathers. As Worthing's limey soil means building up with peat/grit mixture, I must be mad, but at least I'll be happy and after all the children are bound to grow up one day and then I'll have that one fifth of an acre!

Brian R. Malin, Worthing.

A THREE YEAR STINT

In August 1964 I gave my two daughters one year in which to decide whether they wanted a Tennis court or not.

By September 1965 it was obvious that they did not. The court had been used for one Sunday morning only.

During early 1966 the hard court was broken up and stacked in uneven piles about the area and in April 130 tons of soil were brought in and spread thickly over the ground and the piles of hard core. This was left to consolidate and by June we had a "field" of twitch! July and August we forked, shook collected and burnt and by September we were clear of weed. We then covered the whole area with three to four inches of peat mixed with $\frac{1}{4}$ " aggregate plus lime free sand. Next day we took delivery of and planted 500 heaths and heathers and since then we have been adding conifers and colourful shrubs and many different kinds of bulbs. We have, as we are slightly exposed and a wee bit northerly, taken a little gamble with *Embothrium Norquingo*, *Eucryphia Glutinosa*, *Pieris Formosa Forrestii* and several difficult rhododendrons such as *Augustinii*, *Thomsonii*, *Ficto-Lacteam* and *Falconerii*. So far, no casualties.

The heaths and heathers are going very well and we now have 130 varieties. Cuttings and seedlings all root and take in the mixture of soil, peat and grit. One interesting heather has materialised. In 1966 near Matlock, Derbyshire, I found a small heather nursery full of ordinary varieties but one small group caught my eye and I asked what it was. The answer intrigued me. 'It's one of my own and I call it 'Serlei Cupraea'. I bought four plants and for the first year they were like an ordinary heather. Foliage green bronze and copper. But in April 1968 on two plants on about three branches only, five yellow tips appeared. These persisted during the year and stayed yellow. In early November I cut them off and potted them up. In February 1969 they were growing very slowly but were still yellow.

If possible I hope to take one along to Harlow Car when next we meet for the "experts" to have a look and give their verdict.

A.P. Toothill, Sheffield.

CARNEAS FROM SEED

After reading the Secretary's notes in the bulletins I wondered if members would be interested in the adventures of a packet of Erica carnea seed from the date it arrived up to the present time.

In 1962 we were living in Sussex and after reading a book I sent to Thompson and Morgan, Ipswich, Suffolk, for among other things a packet of Erica carnea seed. The seeds were duly sown and germinated nicely; they were pricked out into seed boxes and into a seed bed in early autumn. In the following June we moved to the Midlands and while house hunting we had a flat. Thinking it would not be long before we had another garden some of the erica seedlings were pricked out once again into a large washing up bowl, in a compost of 80% peat and 20% sand,

and we brought them with us. All the plants ended up spending a year in their container on a windswept roof, and to my surprise most survived. In June 1964 we moved into the present house and the only quick place to put the ericas was in a narrow border in the front garden fully exposed to all winds except the North. As the seedlings looked rather small I bought some Erica darleyensis and planted them on the east side of the carneas.. In 1965 some of the darleyensis flowered but the carneas though still small were growing. In 1966 some of the carneas flowered but not all, and they were spreading. In August my then three year old son pushed the lawn mower and mowed some of the carneas. We picked up the pieces and used them as cuttings - they rooted better than a good many others have done. In 1967 everything flowered and the bed was becoming overcrowded. One carnea which was very much lighter in colour than the others was transplanted as it was easy to disentangle it.

In 1968 everything flowered really well and a few not so well coloured were marked for removal but unfortunately after the flowers had gone the marks vanished. Meanwhile in the back garden the transplanted variegated one was making a nice clump but in August five magpies had a fight in it and almost tore it to pieces. What was left looks anything but happy now, while in the front garden we keep seeing people passing looking at the colourful flowering heathers.

Please could your experts advise me on how to deal with the variegated erica in an attempt to save it, and what to do about the overgrown carneas and darleyensis in the front garden.

Shirley E. Wood,
Solihull.

MEMBERSHIP LISTS

Change of Address:

Capt. Robert G. Brown, Budapeststr. 43, 1 Berlin, 30.
Mr. B. G. London, 6 Roedich Drive, Taverham, Norwich, Nor 53X.
Mr. N. C. Graham, Straid Nurseries, Gracehill, Ballymena, Co. Antrim.
Brian & Valerie Proudley, Yew Tree Cottage, Two Bridges, Nr. Blakeney, Glos.
Mr. J. Strickland, Wings, Larchwood, Little Kingshill, Gt. Missenden, Bucks.

New Members: June 12 - October 15th

R. R. Adam, Barnards Green House, Malvern, Worcs.
G. I. Beswick, The Cottage, Hilderstone Rd. Meir Heath, Stoke on Trent.
A. Buckmaster, 3, Rothschild Road, Linslade, Leighton Buzzard, Beds.
M. J. Carpenter, 91, Denfer Rd. Dartford, Kent.
Mrs. Joanna Cutts, The White Lodge, Reading Rd. Yateley, Camberley, Surrey
L. T. Davies, The Bungalow, Berrymoor Rd., Banbury, Oxon.
Mrs. J. Adam Smith, Yacht 'Mhari', The Yachting Centre, Gzira, Malta.
Mrs. Mary Davis, 20, Morpeth Mansions, London, S.W.1.
Mrs. B. Dodds, Fairbourne Mill, Harrietsham, Kent.
Mrs. J. W. Giles, 43, North Park, Eltham, London S.E.9
G. S. Hemming, 58, Barnford Cresc., Oldbury, Warley, Worcs.
W. J. Hill, 540, Loose Rd., Maidstone, Kent.
Dr. P. Hörchner, Kerkweg 58, Berkenwoude, (Z.H.) Nederland
G. F. Johnson, 63, Farhalls Cresc., Horsham, Sussex.
Mrs. G. G. Lee, Birches, Kingswood Firs, Grayshott, Hindhead, Surrey
Maurice Loiseau, Alle sur Semois, Belgium
T. S. Martin, Abbey View, Heath Rd., Potters Bar, Herts.
Milton Hutchins Ltd., Field Heath Nurseries, Hillingdon, Uxbridge, Mdx.
Sir Frank Morgan, Hyde Heath Farm, Amersham, Bucks.

(Cont'd)

S.R.Mullard, Danny, Hurstpierpoint, Hassocks, Sx.
J.G.Neil, 12, North Dumgoyne Ave., Milngavie, Glasgow.
Notcutts Nurseries Ltd., Woodbridge, Suffolk.
C.W.Oakman, 24, Yalverton Ave., Evington, Leicester LE5 6XR
J.A.Pink, 10, Decourcy Ave., Carrickfergus, Co.Antrim.
B.Poulter, 41, Pine Tree Hill, Pyrford, Woking, Surrey
Dr. D.M.Prinsley, 113, Guisborough Road, Nunthorpe, Middlesbrough, Teesside.
Mrs.C.Wilson, 10, Oakwood Close, Altofts, Normanton, Yorks.
J.R.Ritchie, 138, West End Avenue, Harrogate, Yorks.
Mrs.A.Smith, 11, Range Drive, Woodley, nr. Stockport, Cheshire.
Miss E.M.A.Sutton, 6, Cornium Way, Stratton St.Margarets, Nr.Swindon, Wilts.
C.H. Urquhart, 35, Bain Cresc., Helensburgh, Dunbartonshire, Scotland
J.G.Walker, 47, Carr St., Marsh, Huddersfield, HD3 4AU
H.E.Wharmby, Cherry Burton, 3, Powys Ave., Leicester, LE2 2DQ
J.D.Wright, 7, Withy Grove Close, Bamber Bridge, Preston, PR5 6NT

From your Letters

From Mr. A.W.Umpelby, Newton Abbot, Devon.

The contribution in the recent No.7 issue by Mrs.Kimber following other members' comments and views on suitable subjects to plant in association with Ericas prompts me to agree that the larger members of the Narcissus family are unsuitable for interplanting due to the untidy leaves. However, I have found that the miniatures such as *N.bulbocodium* 'Hoop Petticoat' and *N.Cyclamineus* are ideal being extremely floriferous and easy to control.

For summer flowering interplanting I consider *Sisyrinchium Bermudianum* (Blue Eyed Grass, 9") an ideal non-invasive small spot plant, flowering vigorously if split up each spring. *S.brachipus*, yellow, about 6" high seeds easily and adapts well to the edges of a heather area. As a large feature plant, which can be complementary to conifers, *Dierama Pulcherrima* (*S. African Wandflower*, 4') is very effective by virtue of its upright growth and pendulous flowering characteristics; Donard Seedlings produce a magnificent range of shades and clumps of 4 or 5 plants are extremely attractive as a spot or back-drop to any Erica planting.

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From Mr.Filippo Triaca Fabrizi, Milan, to Mr. Chapple:

In Bulletin No.6 I read that you would like to have more descriptions of heather gardening in Milano.

In this city I don't cultivate heathers because a too heavy smog doesn't allow it, whereas I have several Ericas and Cullunas in my country garden near Varese (about 60 kilometers from Milano). This spring, *E.darleyensis*, *E.X.darleyensis*, 'George Rendall', 'E.A. Johnson' (correctly, 'Arthur Johnson'), *E.carnea* 'Eileen Porter', 'King George', 'Springwood White', and others are beginning to blossom, while the leaves' hue of *Calluna* 'Blazeaway' and 'Robert Chapman' are wonderful. The ground is covered by 4" of snow.

I have also six *E.arborea* 'Alpina' four years old and 6' high, some *E.mediterranea* 'Superba', some *E.terminalis* and two *E.australis* against a sunny and sheltered wall. During the winter I protect them from frost with a glass frame.

This spring I have planted some *E.cinerea* 'Atrorubens', 'C.D.Eason', *E.vagans* 'Lyonesse', 'Mrs.D.F.Maxwell' and 'St.Keverne' and *E.tetralix* 'Con.Underwood' and 'Alba Mollis'. I hope warmly they can develop well because they are a magnificent thing.

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From Mrs.A.Parris, Usk. An article in the Gardeners' Chronicle, "The Tufa Mystery" on Sept. 5th 1969 is in some ways of general interest to Heather people. It would seem to indicate that the presence of magnesium is more critical for heathers perhaps than the absence of lime. (c.f. Mr.H.C.Prew's article, Year Book 1967, page 38)