

Extract from the List of R.H.S. awards recently announced.

"VEITCH MEMORIAL MEDAL, conferred on persons who have helped in the advancement and improvement of the science and practice of horticulture and for special exhibits.

Gold Medal

To: Mr. D. McClintock, Bracken Hill, Platt, Sevenoaks, Kent, for his scientific and practical contribution to botany and horticulture and in particular for his work in connection with heathers."

We heartily congratulate David McClintock on this well deserved award.

BOOK REVIEWS

'A GUIDE TO THE NAMING OF PLANTS' by David McClintock (2nd Edition 1980) announced in the autumn bulletin 1980. Reviews in the press have been full of praise for this excellent booklet:

The Sunday Telegraph - "A warm welcome for a succinct and masterly exposition of this subject by the botanist David McClintock which he has compressed into one part of a slim booklet directed primarily at heather enthusiasts."

Amateur Gardening - "... Novice gardener and experienced amateur alike, after reading this book, should have no problem in understanding the way plants are named and the reasons why."

The Journal of the Scottish Rock Garden Club (written by R.J.D. McBeath)" "... anyone who labels their plants or writes about them should read this book, whether beginner or nursery man, as it will certainly clarify the correct layout for a plant name."

The Botanic Society of Edinburgh (Feb.1981) by John H. Rodgers "I would say that this clearly set out and expertly written booklet should be on the bookshelves of every botanist, both amateur and professional . . . full marks to the Heather Society for publishing it."

'PEATLAND ECOLOGY IN THE BRITISH ISLES: A BIBLIOGRAPHY' by E.M. Field & D.A. Goode (Nature Conservancy, £4.00) lists a rich range of some 1250 references in its 184 pages. Its indexes cover places and plants - Calluna 61 times, Erica cinerea and Erica tetralix 35 times, Erica ciliaris unindexed and Erica mackaiana ignored. The book is nevertheless said to include all relevant material published prior to 1979, and certainly adds to the annual Recent Writings in our Year Books, notably with University theses. But it is sad there is no mention of the only Society concerned with the main peatland plant, or to any of the useful articles it has published.

'GREAT COMP AND ITS GARDEN' by the owner Mr. R. Cameron (published by Bachman & Turner of Maidstone £10.75) is the story of an early 17th century house and its 7 acre garden which has been created by Heather Society members Mr & Mrs Roderick Cameron since 1957. Great Comp which is situated 7 miles east of Sevenoaks is well worth a visit with its five heather gardens and some 200 varieties of heather, also for the concerts held annually in the converted stable block.

'HEIDETUINEN' a translation into Dutch by Mrs C. E. Roberts of W. Dittrich's 'Unser Heidergarten', published by W. J. Thieme of Zutphen for an unstated price. This has been slightly modified from the original, e.g. a few cultivars added and deleted, but all except one of the strictures in Bulletin Vol. 2 No 20 still stand, illustrations misnamed etc. Nevertheless this is still a commendable book, and that the Dutch should have thought it worth taking over, when there is already a similar work in Dutch, just shows what a gap there is among our books for a small, cheap, attractive one on heathers.

GROUP NEWS

NORTH EAST (NEWCASTLE)

Our meeting on 23rd November was enjoyed by everyone present, including some guests and potential members. Colour slides were shown by a member Mr Jim Shipp of Corbridge who gave a comprehensive presentation with his characteristic commentary. No doubt the super slides of his own expansive garden planted with heathers and conifers will have given creative ideas to those present. Our next contributor, member Mr Bobby Thompson, showed slides of flowers, shrubs and general garden subjects. His intimate love of any garden or greenhouse plant was as usual very evident by his enthusiastic talk. Question time brought a variety of questions all fully answered by our two speakers, and concluded a very pleasant and informative evening.

It was agreed to form a committee consisting of Mrs D. McArthur and Messrs R. Thompson, D. Goodchild, A.P. Livingstone with Mr J. S. Courtney as convenor.

Next meeting. A visit by coach to the Edinburgh Botanical Gardens on Saturday 17th April when it is hoped that good support will enable us to minimise the cost per person. It was agreed to circularise the membership in March.

Syd Courtney.

SOUTHERN

On September 27th in brilliant sunshine, we explored the garden of Hugh and Hedda Nicholson's attractive 'Farm Cottage' at Dorking. This has recently been planted with a new collection of heathers - many of them unusual varieties brought from Germany and Holland - and although in a few years time they will be faced with a lot of transplanting and respacing, the plants are attractive in close proximity at this early stage.

A thunderstorm and torrential rain did pose a threat to this meeting, but fortunately the timely downpour came just before 4 pm giving us the excuse to admire and enjoy Hedda's delicious cream gateaux and fruit pastries. When the sun came out we were able to purchase plants from Eric Wiseman, who has helped us regularly and made several donations to Society funds. As a gesture of thanks to our generous hosts, a collection was made in aid of the R.N.L.I.

Future Plans. Meeting at Wisley and Esher on March 20th - see Autumn bulletin Group News. On Sunday May 23rd at 12 noon we will meet with a picnic lunch at Bohunt Manor, Liphook on the A.3. This is the home of Lady Holman whose garden is known for its lake with over 100 ornamental wildfowl. At 2.30 pm we will proceed to the natural heather and azalea garden of Dr Stephen Laing at Upper Rake Hanger, also on the A.3 near Liss and 1 mile south of Rake, where tea and biscuits will be served. Members from any group are welcome to join us at one or both of these venues.

Pamela Lee.

SOUTH WEST

The 1982 season is now upon us and I am able to announce three meetings for the first half of the year with brief details. Further details may be obtained by sending me two SAE's as soon as possible.

Saturday March 27th, 2.0 pm. Mr. John Kelly the Curator of Abbotsbury Gardens will be giving a talk with slides about the Gardens at Lytchett Matravers Village Hall. The hall is situated in Lytchett Matravers High Street adjacent to the playing field. Light refreshments at a small cost will be served during the afternoon.

Saturday May 8th, 2.0 pm. On this occasion we will enjoy the subject of Mr. John Kelly's talk when we visit the Abbotsbury Gardens near Weymouth, which contain heathers and a variety of acid loving plants. The gardens are situated just off the B3157 Weymouth to Bridport road 200 yards west of Abbotsbury village. We will meet in the car park.

Saturday June 5th, 12.30 pm. On this afternoon we will be visiting three members' gardens in the New Forest area. We are invited first to Ken and Beryl Farrah's garden at Highcliffe with our picnic lunches. Then at approximately 2.15 p.m. we will make our way to Mr & Mrs R. G. Swann's garden at Barton-on-Sea where we will stay until 4.0 pm. From there we will move on to Mrs P. Kennedy's garden at Sway where we have very kindly been invited to tea. The addresses of all three members may be found in the Members' List.

I am very grateful to John Kelly for offering his time on both March 27th and May 8th and to our three members for offering to open their gardens on June 6th. I hope that the 'three gardens visit' will become a feature of the group's activities in future years and to this end I would welcome offers from members who would like to open their gardens. I look forward to meeting you at some or all of the above meetings.

Phil Joyner.

FAR WEST

We look forward to seeing you at the entrance to Dr. Smart's Marwood Hill Garden 4 miles north of Barnstaple at 2.0 pm on April 6th. This is a 20 year old garden expertly kept with many interesting and varied plants including camellias, alpinas and an Australian plant collection. Plants will be on sale.

Mrs Collins has very kindly volunteered to provide a cup of tea for all those members who would care to return to her home nearby towards the end of the afternoon where we can hold a brief meeting. Please bring along suggestions for the next venue.

At the last meeting it was suggested that Cornwall who have 19 members and Devon who have 38 members might find it easier to run separate visits, as so many members find the long distances involved beyond their stamina these days - and of course the rising cost of petrol is an important factor. If you all think this is a good idea, a volunteer to gather the Cornish members together once per year would be required!

June Randall.

SCRAP BOWL - Titbits of news from members

Heathers on postage stamps. One more example of a heather design on a postage stamp has come to light. A Dutch series of charity stamps for Child Welfare was issued in 1927, with floral designs as background to the arms of different Provinces. The 2c plus 2c stamp showed the arms of the Province of Drente with a stylised heather design. This was almost certainly the first time that heather was used as part of the design of a postage stamp.

Pat Turpin. Zone 11.

Erica x darleyensis seedlings. Members will remember that Mrs Ann Parris who recently went to live with her son in Australia, was interested in crossing Erica erigena with Erica carnea and inducing Erica x darleyensis hybrids. She wrote articles in the Year Books of 1978 and 1980 and lectured about them at several conferences. Before she left for Australia she very kindly gave me the plants that were the result of her latest experiments in 1978. They have all been planted in my garden and are now very good sized plants. About half of them flowered in 1981. The majority of them have white flowers and look like a typical E. erigena 'W.T. Rackliff', the others are mostly a good deep lilac, not as pink as 'Furzey', with an upright habit. Of those plants that did not flower, some had outstandingly brilliant red tips even better than 'J.W. Porter', some had good white tips, and some are semi prostrate. If any members would care to come and see these plants, I shall be delighted to show them round.

Patricia Benson. Zone 7.

Books for sale? I frequently receive requests for secondhand copies of 'The English Heather Garden' - Maxwell & Patrick, 'Heaths and Heathers' - Terry L. Underhill, and 'The Heather Garden' - Fred J. Chapple. If members who wish to sell their copies of these books would let me know, I will put the enquirer in touch with them.

Ken Farrah. Zone 12.

Another soil fungus. Five years ago I planted a small heather garden at the front of my bungalow at Grayshott consisting of an assortment of cultivars of Erica and Calluna. Three years ago in a small group of Erica carnea 'Pink Spangles' there appeared a browning and dieback of the foliage of three plants. Having read about the scourge of Phytophthora cinnamomi and fearing the worst, I dug out these plants and changed the soil in the vicinity, thinking I had cured the problem. This year the same area was attacked again more extensively. I sent specimens for examination to the RHS laboratory at Wisley and received a report from the plant pathologist telling me that the specimen did not contain Phytophthora cinnamomi but was severely affected by another soil fungus Rhizoctonia solani. Apparently this fungus lives as a saprophyte in most soils but in the right environment can become parasitic to the detriment of living plants, and very moist soil conditions will stimulate the fungus to extend itself. Control is apparently difficult but some degree of check can be achieved by the use of a fungicidal dust QUINTOZENE available as BOTRILEX. I have carried out this treatment and await results.

The soil in which the heathers are growing is the acid greensand of the locality to which has been added a generous amount of sedge peat.

G.E.Salter. Zone 11.

Happy Birthday. On the occasion of the 97th birthday of one of our keenest and earliest members, I took a card signed by Heather Society members to "Papa" Horace Hale in Haslemere. He was standing in his lovely heather and conifer garden talking to Mrs Constance MacLeod one of our Vice-Presidents who had come over from Horley to be with him on this special day.

Pamela Lee. Zone 11.

The Monarch Butterfly at the Lizard. Not many people can claim to have seen the Monarch Butterfly (Danaus plexippus) wild in this country. The Monarch (or Milkweed Butterfly) is a rare migrant from North America and has been recorded mostly from the Scilly Isles and the West Country. It has been estimated that under favourable conditions the crossing of the Atlantic would take from 3 to 4 days. There have been records of "assisted passages" when specimens have settled on a ship. Persistent westerly winds made the autumn of 1981 a good one for migrants from across the Atlantic. An unusual number of rare vagrant birds from America were recorded and several specimens of the Monarch Butterfly were seen. We were very lucky to have watched one in perfect condition on the Lizard Downs, sipping nectar from Erica vagans at the end of September, and two days later a second specimen on the edge of Loe Pool near Helston. The Monarch is the largest butterfly on the British list and it was a thrilling experience to see one at such close quarters among the Cornish Heath.

Pat Turpin. Zone 11.

Calluna vulgaris. I wonder which of the Calluna vulgaris cultivars is the first to flower. In my garden - NE of Lancaster and 15 miles inland within sight of the Three Peaks - 'Mullardoch' was in flower on the 23rd June last year and had been clearly so for two or three days, though unobserved by me. This cultivar was then followed by 'Loch Turret'; the third to bloom was 'Tib'. I note that all these are of Scottish origin which may be of significance. Do they flower even earlier in the south? Members may be interested to reply in future bulletins with their own experiences. One rule perhaps should be observed: cultivars which are just beginning to show colour should be excluded - only those which could fairly be described as significantly in flower should be considered.

R.C.D.Kingsford. Zone 4.

Synonyms. Surely no other garden plant has ever been given as many illegitimate alternative names as Erica x darleyensis 'Silberschmelze'. David McClintock's 'Guide to the Naming of Plants' lists 13 of them and there are more. E.carnea 'Myretoun Ruby', E.x.darleyensis 'Darley Dale' and E.x.darleyensis 'Jack H Brummage' all have at least four synonyms, while E.carnea 'March Seedling' has two or more. Can anyone suggest other cultivars which have been dowered with a plethora of synonyms?

From the examples which have been cited above it may seem that synonyms are accolades received by good cultivars which have been widely distributed. However, their use is undesirable and should be discouraged. They are incorrect names and lead to confusion.

Bert Jones. Zone 12.

Heather enthusiasts. I am now surrounded by frenzied enthusiasm since introducing heathers to my neighbours - in view of their time saving qualities, I can only express astonishment at how few people grow them. I and my friends are willing to travel far for the express purpose of obtaining certain cultivars. I am also in danger of converting the whole of London's suburbia into a heathland!

Richard Canovan. Zone 12.

Heather for 'doing the chores'. Extract from "The Hungry Grass" in K. Danaher's Gentle Places and Simple Things, Irish Customs and Beliefs. 1964.

Any man or boy going to the bog or hill was requested by the womenfolk to bring back a bunch of heather for brooms and scrapers. For the housewife there were two kinds of heather; 'long heather' which made the brooms, and 'peck heather' the short stiff heath which was used to scour the wooden vessels. People also loved the heather for its colour and fragrance.

David McClintock. Zone 11.

Another garden to visit. If members are visiting Scotland this year they are welcome to visit my 20 acre garden at Blairhoyle, Port of Menteith, Stirling. (I grow heathers for the retail trade only now.)

Jean Pattullo. Zone 1.

Calluna vulgaris 'Multicolor'. Mr. R. Towe, Kilcunda, Australia, says that in Australia this cultivar is extremely prone to foliage reversion. The subsequent plant is quite a sturdy attractive form in its own right. He wishes to know the cultivar from which 'Multicolor' originated. Does anyone know the answer?

More news from the Antipodes. Mr A.T.A. McIntosh-Smith, Springwood, Australia, says he has much enjoyed correspondence with Mr Crewe-Brown, South Africa, and with Mrs Anne Parris now a fellow-antipodean. Mr Crewe-Brown has sent him seed of South African Ericas and some expert advice with which he has been very successful in germinating E.canaliculata which comes up like a veritable rain-forest! Mrs Parris has given him valuable help with identification of European species - nomenclature of heathers in Australia is completely haywire. He lives in Springwood and 'Springwood White' is commonly assumed to be of local origin.

"The Heath". The 185th Battalion, The Cape Breton Highlanders, of the Canadian contingent (militia) of the BEF published five parts of a journal called "The Heath" between 8th April and 6th May 1916. It can be seen in the British Museum Reading Room.

David McClintock. Zone 11

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Heathers and Heather Folk. A source of information about heathers and heather folk which is often overlooked is local papers. Last autumn, Mr Bottrill of Truro sent us a collection of cuttings from the Cornish local press which included a fascinating snippet from 'The West Briton' of 9th October 1980. It seems that the weather vane from St. Keverne Church was examined by steeplejacks for the first time in 40 years. The vane, which had been given to the church in recognition of the help given by the villagers at a shipwreck in 1898, was found to carry, in addition to seven holes made by .303 rifle bullets, the names of "Cannon Diggens, Vicar, and Messrs Grosvenor Knowles and P.D. Williams, churchwardens."

More recently David McClintock has lent us an obituary of "Miss Waterer of Eden Valley" from 'The Cornishman' for 20th March 1974, and a notice of the sale of Eden Valley on 6th August 1981. The obituary tells us that Miss Waterer's Christian names were Mary Betha Gertrude and that for many years she had taught botany at the West Cornwall School for Girls at Penzance. The notice of the sale mentions that the 1½ acres of wooded garden contain many rare species of flowering and ornamental shrubs and trees of particular interest to horticulturists.

Should you find any such items in unexpected places please let us know. For example did any member in the West Midlands area see an obituary to J. W. Sparkes who died on 8th April 1981?

Ed.

DIARY OF EVENTS

Mar. 20th	Southern Group - Visit to Wisley & Esher - See Autumn Bulletin.
Mar. 27th	South West Group - Talk at Lytchett Matravers - See Group News.
Apr. 6th	Far West Group - Visit to Marwood Hill Gardens - See Group News.
Apr. 17th	North East Group - Visit to Edinburgh Botanic Gardens - See Group News.
May 1st	CLOSING DATE for material for the Summer Bulletin.
May 8th	South West Group - Visit to Abbotsbury Gardens - See Group News.
May 12/13th	Mr & Mrs A.H. Bowerman's garden is open to the public - Nat. Gdns. Scheme. 11am - 7pm Champs Hill, Coldwaltham, Sussex.
May 18/21st	Chelsea Flower Show - SAE to Hon. Sec. for tickets.
May 20th	Midlands Group - An evening's entertainment at Mr Peter Lyons' office/garden, Edgbaston.
May 23rd	Southern Group - Visits to Bohunt Manor, Liphook & Upper Rake Hanger, Liss - See Group News.
June 5th	South West Group - Visits to Members' gardens - See Group News.
Aug. 10/11th	COUNCIL MEETING, R.H.S. New Hall, Westminster.
Aug. 11/12th	Mr & Mrs A.H. Bowerman's garden is open to the public - Nat. Gdns. Scheme. 11am - 7pm Champs Hill, Coldwaltham, Sussex.

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