



The Heather Society
Newsletter
Autumn 2017

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Diary 2017/18

Visit to Whitehall nursery Saturday 17th March 2018



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For contact details of the Society's Officers,
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Foreword

Hello members, autumn has found us and winter will soon be here. For this issue I decided to go for a walk on my local heathland to take some photos for the front cover. After convincing my husband that it wasn't going to rain we took to our journey. You can see that although a little late in the season I found some wild *Calluna vulgaris* and *Erica cinerea* conveniently placed near an old tree stump. However our trip came to an abrupt end as the heavens opened and we were drenched through! Needless to say I had a very unhappy husband! I hope you all have a safe winter, a great christmas and we will be back in the spring.

Samantha Barnes

Chairman's Piece

Following on from the September 2017 Society AGM and Conference, Council Members have an agenda to explore options for the future. The question was posed 'what do our Society members get from their membership'. As with everything in life you get out what you put in and those attending Conference had the opportunity to meet with friends, listen to informative talks and visit interesting garden locations. In addition members have access to the member's area of the Society website, the Cuttings Exchange Service and back issues of the Bulletins (1967-2016) and Yearbook (2011- 2016). Additionally, members also qualify for a discount on plants from two nurseryman members and exclusive offers on new varieties. Members are welcome to Society events at Wisley and by invitation to view heather trials.

Whilst the Society is fortunate to have considerable assets in comparison to many other societies, it has used these over recent years to subsidise its costs (excluding conferences), publications and memberships. The Society has a responsibility to manage the finances in a responsible manner whilst undertaking its charitable function and *raison d'être*. The reduction in the cost of membership for 2018 reflects a reduction in its output and activities due to a present lack of volunteers to take forward the Society's activities.

Council will undertake an urgent review of its future with a firm, positive aim and intention of continuing in a simpler form with fewer constraints and regulations whilst maintaining, as far as possible, its activities, aims and objectives

David Edge

Important

For those members who are on-line and who haven't provided an email address or have recently updated their e-mail address then please provide the Society with a valid e-mail address so that access to the members only area of the website can be made possible allowing future newsletters and other paperwork to be made available electronically.

See the website or page 17 for contact details.

Society events & news

The Heather Society Conference 2017

We received our usual wonderful welcome from Susie and Alan as we arrived at the Walnut Tree Hotel in North Petherton, Somerset. It had been a fairly slow journey with accident problems on the M5 and slow moving traffic on the alternative route as it was heavy with vehicles.

This area of Somerset is not the prettiest part so we were not expecting much but North Petherton whilst currently a dormitory town for Bridgwater and Taunton is in fact quite historic. It is here that the famous Alfred Jewel was found in 1693 and there is a replica of it in the 15th century church of St. Mary the Virgin opposite our hotel. It was only a few miles away that King Alfred the Great burnt the cakes. One could not help noticing the church tower, it must be one of the tallest and is grade 1 listed.

The Walnut Tree Hotel is 18th century and it was interesting to look at the pictures of it in former times with its different names. Today it has had a tasteful makeover and its rooms are extremely spacious and comfortable, whilst the meals we had were excellent, in fact they were very accommodating with my husband who can be difficult to please.

After a well timed dinner we were entertained in the old fashioned manner, with overheads and 35 mm slides by Roy Cheek, who belied his age, in the nineties, I understand. He spoke about when he was in charge of Cannington Walled Garden. This was originally a productive garden, for an old priory, set up by the Normans in the twelfth century. The priory was dissolved by Henry in the 1530s but then taken up as a home by the Rodgers and after by Lord Clifford under whom it became a nunnery and later the home of a catholic bishop, whose tomb but not remains, is in a section of the garden. From the 1960s it has become an ornamental garden, with various sections, including the Bishop's Garden, an Australasian Garden and several others.

Today the building houses the Bridgwater and Taunton College of Horticulture and Agriculture, where the gardens have been developed by the students. The restoration of the house has been done due to support by EDF energy, who are at Hinckley Point Nuclear Power Station close by. Roy completed

his talk by showing us his overheads demonstrating how he taught his students about heathers.

It was a busy but interesting Friday evening as we had a second talk by Tim Parish, a ranger, from Exmoor National Park. He spoke about balancing the environment, the economic and social problems of the area, the variation between the two local parks for Dartmoor is based on granite whilst Exmoor is on sandstone, and although it has deep valleys these are not glacial in origin. The crown tops are high moorland with ling and bell heather. Strangely there are no grouse on Exmoor but lots of wild ponies. The ploughing and fertilisation, which occurred on all high moors during the 60s and 70s has now stopped and the peat is being allowed to retain moisture. Tim's main topic was swaling or heather burning, which is done every 15 to 20 years to burn off the old dry heather tops, allowing grass to grow and the *Calluna* seed to regenerate (this requires smoke). If the heather is left too long it will not burn but surprisingly burning is better for the insect life of the moor.

In recent years there has been a lot less heather burning, it is a dangerous pastime, which requires careful control, serious damage can occur due to sudden change of wind direction. Today there is quite a lot of heather cut by machine for use as filters in sewage beds and the small chips thrown out act as a mulch. The big problem on heather moor of course is heather beetle, which arrives in great numbers in warm wet springs turning the moorland orange. There is no treatment for this but amazingly the heather seems to recover within two or three years.

So on to Saturday morning and the usual early start. Our morning visit was to Cannington Walled Garden in Bridgwater, which we had heard about the night before, so not a long journey. Here we were taken on a guided tour by one of the volunteer guides who told us about the historic plants, the ten or more garden rooms and the two national collections, one of *Santolina* and the other of *Deschampsia*. We spent a lot of our time there escaping from the heavy rain either under large leaves on trees or in greenhouses. The tour ended in the gardens tea room with coffee and large slices of cake.



Above Cannington walled gardens

We left Cannington to move on to Hestercombe, which involved returning past the hotel to the Taunton area. Our driver had not studied the route so he relied on his SAT NAV, which took our 33 seater coach along narrow, winding, single track roads giving us all quite an experience to the extent that Mike Preston, a former coach driver was feeling quite sick. I think the trip has brought back memories of times he had been stuck down narrow lanes.

Following this event our first experience at Hestercombe was being taken into the house and its Portland Room for a wonderful cold collation lunch. This was one of the best I have ever had and it was a shame that we could not do justice to it due to the cake. Come 2 pm and we were off on the next guided tour, of this garden of two halves. At the front of the house is a stunning Edwardian formal garden, one of the finest examples of Gertrude Jekyll and Edwin Lutyens famous partnership. We moved on from this to a long walk around the Georgian landscaped garden organised by the then owner of the house, Copplestone Warre Bampfylde, in Capability Brown style. We completed the tour by passing through the Victorian shrubbery. The 16th century house with Victorian overtones contained an art gallery, a small shop and a large second hand bookshop, which tempted several of our members. There was very little rain during the afternoon but the paths were wet and muddy and walking had to be fairly slow.

Below Hestercombe



It was then a quick turn round on our return to the hotel, maybe just time for a cup of tea before we had an interesting talk on wild flowers from Lady Rosemary Fitzgerald. She is a mature lady with a long experience of plants, who learned about wild flowers and Latin names as a child. She had worked for many years in botanical conservation and then run a nursery on "retirement". She follows the concept of drift planting and is fond of vistas of bluebells and wild garlic. Aren't we all apart from the smell of the latter? After this there was just time for a quick change and a later dinner.

On Sunday we had a longer journey fortunately on much better roads in a similar but different coach, which caused great discussion at the rear of the vehicle, the consensus of opinion being that the coach was in dire need of a gearbox repair, we arrived at RHS Rosemoor, Devon quite safely though. Here we were left to wander around at leisure, walking as far as wished and eating when hungry or there was a seat available in the restaurant. The net describes the garden as nestled in a Devon valley, blending formal and informal plantings to magical effect. I have visited RHS Rosemoor several times since its inception and it was good to see the garden looking much more mature. It was our first opportunity during the weekend to see heather in a garden and whilst there is only one small area at Rosemoor it was looking good and healthy. So much so that we decided to use it as a background to the group photograph. See page 6

The final event of the weekend was the Annual General Meeting. I will not report this in detail as our Secretary will have formally minuted it, but whilst longer than usual it was quite peaceful and constructive in its study of, "If and how the Society should be wound up". The main theme coming from the meeting being to get on with the job as soon as possible so that a modern "heather club" can be formed. Presentations were made this evening by Alison Fitz-Earle to the winners of the photographic competition....

Close-up John Plowman
Garden Photo David and Rita Plumridge
Scene Audrey Sprague
The trophy went to David and Rita Plumridge

Monday breakfast was quite a sad affair knowing that this will be the last weekend conference as Susie

and Alan Kay have chosen to give up organising them after 13 stressful years. Everyone in the Society thanks them and appreciates all the effort and hard work they have put in. Susie seemed genuinely pleased with the gift presented to her (a paperweight containing heather). So we now look forward to an afternoon Annual General Meeting at RHS Wisley in 2018 organised by Council and the Home Counties Group. No doubt lots of us will travel to this event and if we all stay overnight at the same hotel it will feel like a conference, albeit a short one. It is to be hoped this will occur as some of the more mature members find the THS weekend very important and would be lost without it.

Jean Preston



***Above close up by John Plowman
Erica terminalis 'Thelma Woolner'***

Below Scene by Audrey Sprague



Below garden photo by David and Rita Plumridge





Above group photo at RHS Rosemoor



***Above Presentation of the Julian Fitz-Earle trophy
to David and Rita Plumridge***

2017 Annual General Meeting of the Heather Society

The 2017 Annual General Meeting of the Heather Society was held at 8.15pm on Sunday, 10th September 2017, at The Walnut Tree Hotel, North Petherton, Somerset. Seven members of Council, fourteen ordinary and honorary members and six associate members were in attendance.

The Chairman, David Edge, welcomed the members to the Annual General Meeting of the Heather Society and proceeded to read out his statement (for a copy of the statement please see the last paragraph of this article).

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, held on 11th September 2016, in Perth, Scotland, were accepted without amendment.

The Hon. Secretary, Phil Joyner, stated that the draft 2016 Annual Report and Accounts, published on the website and mailed to those members without e-mail addresses, had now been signed off by the Independent Financial Examiner, without any amendments to the draft version being required. There were no questions or comments from the floor and the Report and Accounts were accepted.

Council proposed an amendment to the 2016 revision of the rules:

Replace clause 15(c) with:

Cheques drawn on the Society's account shall be signed by two of four persons appointed by the Council from among its members.

It was pointed out, from the floor, that the existing clause 15(c) and the proposed replacement refers to cheques only and therefore did not cover the electronic method of dealing with financial transactions or indeed any signatures on paperwork associated with financial transactions. On that basis, an amendment to Council's proposal was put forward:

Replace clause 15(c) with:

Transactions on the Society's accounts shall be authorised by two members of Council one of whom shall be an Officer.

The amended proposal was accepted.

Council recommended the appointment of John Griffiths as President and Daphne Everett,

Pamela Lee, Alice Knight, Kurt Kramer and ex officio President of NAHS as Vice-Presidents. The Council recommendation was accepted.

The incumbent Officers, David Edge as Chairman, Allison Fitz-Earle as Hon. Treasurer and Phil Joyner as Hon. Secretary, were willing to serve another year in those positions respectively so there being no other nominations, they were duly elected to their respective positions.

Under rule 6(b) 2016 Andy Collins had completed his three-year term on Council. However, Andy Collins decided that he would not seek re-election to Council for a further three-year term. The Chairman then thanked Andy Collins for his many years of service to the Society, as a member of Council.

The Independent Financial Examiner for the 2016 Annual Report and Accounts, Jason Foxwell, had indicated his willingness to examine the 2017 Annual Report and Accounts during 2018. It was agreed that Jason Foxwell be re-elected as Independent Financial Examiner for 2018.

A discussion was initiated on the future for the Society with the following proposal from Council put forward:

Within three years it is the proposal of Council that the Heather Society will cease to be a registered charity in England and Wales. In the intervening period consideration will be given to the distribution of the financial assets in accordance to the Society rules.

There was much lively discussion from the floor with several members voicing their opinion that Council had not tackled the problem of the future of the Society during the period since the last AGM. Council pointed out that being a registered charity tied the hands of the Society as stringent rules had to be followed and the Society needed to remove the constraints to become more flexible. However, it was important to maintain the legacy of the Society and therefore the Society would need to evolve to an, as yet, undefined form, possibly an interest group, a club or an internet forum.

An amendment to the Council proposal was agreed:

Within three years it is the proposal of Council that the Heather Society will cease to be a registered charity in England and Wales.

The issue of the level of the current subscription was raised as the Society now had no plans or facility for the production of a 2018 yearbook and also, for

2018, there would be just an AGM and no Conference. After much discussion it was agreed to advise members that the subscription for 2018 will be reduced to £10 for both UK and foreign members.

Finally, there followed a vigorous discussion on the Society's assets of £44K (at 31st December 2016) and that Council had achieved nothing with them and therefore what was the purpose of having ever increasing assets and not using them. The floor directed Council to realize the Society assets and put the monies to appropriate uses under the laws governing charities.

As no further Conferences are planned, future AGMs will be "stand alone" with the date of the 2018 AGM to be announced.

The Chairman sincerely thanked Susie and Alan Kay for their hard work during the 13 years they had been organising Conferences and the members present concurred with that thanks.

Although a full copy of the AGM Minutes and the Chairman's statement will be circulated with the AGM papers in July 2018 the Minutes and statement will be placed on the website within the members' only area and will also be available as a hard copy on request.

Phil Joyner
Hon. Secretary

Cuttings Exchange Scheme

This scheme is a unique facility for those members who are interested in propagating their heathers from cuttings. It is a golden opportunity to obtain cultivars which are only very rarely found in garden centres and nurseries these days, and, at the same time, helps to preserve some of these lovely plants for posterity.

For more details - you can phone me on 01885 482206, email me at dandmeverett@gmail.com or fill in the form in the 'members' section of the website.

We regret that the Cuttings Exchange Scheme applies to UK members only.

Daphne Everett

Group News

Home Counties Group

All members are welcome to attend any of the local group events

THS Home Counties Event

A warm sunny September day beckoned as THS & RHS members gathered outside the café at RHS Wisley Garden on Sunday 24th September. We were greeted by Mark Tuson who has recently taken over the running of the Heather Garden. We must thank the RHS (Vanessa Penn) for their publicity in the Garden Magazine and for the 'A' boards inside the garden directing people to the event, labelled again as 'The Heather Show'.

As we walked to the National Heather Collection we teamed up with more RHS members. Mark Tuson was on hand to give the group a brief history of the National Heather Collection. We were very privileged on this occasion to have been given permission by RHS Wisley to take cuttings of the heathers in the collection before it is replaced. Mark briefly explained how to take the cuttings of the right length and quality with no flower head. John Hall, Molly Hall and Mark had arranged polythene bags and labels so members could carry their cuttings to the Hillside Centre where they would be introduced to propagation. For about an hour members could be seen busying themselves amongst the heathers sourcing cuttings of interest to propagate.



After gathering and labelling cutting material members walked up to the Hillside Centre where John Hall had kindly provided plastic pots, compost and polythene to cover the pots. John gave a demonstration of how to do this and members then participated.

After the demonstration of propagation we all walked

over to the restaurant in the garden and enjoyed a lovely lunch, sitting outside in the warm sunshine.

After lunch we gathered at the Hillside Centre and were joined by Pamela Lee, THS Vice President. Barry Sellers gave a talk on several themes, heathers in the National Collection, THS visit to Spain showing heathers in their natural habitat, South African *Ericas* and a selection of the 88 heathers being grown in the Winter flowering *Erica* trials at John Hall's Nursery in Hampshire.

We then stopped for a short break to partake of cake and tea and an opportunity for members to purchase some of the well presented heather plants that John had brought along for sale.

The next event on the Heather Show was a demonstration of pruning heathers. John Hall showed members how to prune using shears taking off the spent flowers to enable the plants to bush out and provide a more compact plant for better flower in the next year.



The final talk of The Heather Show was given by Mark Tuson about the plans for the new National Heather collection at THS Wisley. He pointed out that a heather collection had been at Wisley since 1920. Why is the collection being replaced?

- Soil improvement
- Reduction of pest and diseases.
- Moving heathers into the 21st century
- Showcasing bigger drifts of AGM varieties

The design of the new heather collection will take inspiration from creating a landscape rather than individual beds. There will be focal points within the landscape and heathers will be displayed more in line with their natural environment.



The existing collection would be dug out from October 2017 and the area landscaped removing any diseased, tired or dangerous trees. At the same time 24,000 heathers will be potted up. Around January 2018 100 tonnes of ground works are to be carried out. Then around May 2018 replanting will take place with 1000 varieties of heathers. These have been raised from cuttings that John Hall, Molly Hall and Amanda Chesser had already been propagating at the nursery.

RHS Wisley is looking for any volunteers with experience with heathers to help out. So THS Members this is your chance to help with potting on and planting out.

Mark is also keen to demonstrate uses of heather in the Garden with heather thatch and bees. He showed an example of traditional bee hives (skeps) made of straw in an apiary on Lüneberg Heath, Lower Saxony, Germany. (See web link)

<http://www.alamy.com/stock-photo/honey-bee-colonies.html>

The Heather Show represents collaboration between the THS and RHS and can help to promote heathers, their cultivation, propagation and care.

The next THS event will be on Saturday 17th March 2018 (10am to 1pm) to view the Heather Trials at John Hall's Whitehall Nursery Red Lane, off Churt Road, Headley Down, Bordon, Hampshire, GU35 8SR. We will have the opportunity once again to see how the collection of winter heathers (*Erica carnea*, *Erica erigena* and *Erica x darleyensis*) have performed after 2 years.

Barry Sellers

North east Group

Saturday September 9th 2017 was an important date in the history of the Ponteland Flower Show because we celebrated our 40th anniversary. Unfortunately, neither Geoff nor I were able to exhibit or attend due to our mobility problems, but we understand from our Bush Telegraph that it was well attended and that there were plenty of exhibits in all 131 classes.

What an odd summer it has been! April was warm, June was wet and July drier, with sunshine, but very cool.

The heathers didn't seem to mind the fickle weather and stood up to it all showing their vibrant colours.

As I write this, the annual conference will be closing so I do hope all has gone well and that you've had some interesting and informative talks together with the visits to the gardens.

Dorothy M. Warner

Yorkshire Group

The group has had a sad time over the summer of 2017, we have had little success. Due to the fun of organising a meeting at RHS Harlow Carr on Saturdays, as explained in the last newsletter, we decided to cancel our meeting arranged for 10th June and have a visit out to Castle Howard on 6th June to look at the gardens there. No heathers but they usually have a wonderful display of delphiniums. The day arrived with torrential rain all morning, which was scheduled to continue for the day so the visit was postponed until 27th June. This date however clashed with a holiday so we then tried to organise it for July but one or other of us was away on holiday and we never actually made the visit.

We had arranged a second visit to RHS Harlow Carr on 29th August to view the *Calluna* collection but I had been ill and was therefore last minute reminding members only to find that John had a bad back and Valerie a virus infection. As the maximum number attending these days is six it was deemed not worthwhile holding the meeting especially as David and Rita have a two hour journey to Harlow Carr.

Fortunately it was not then long to wait for the annual gathering and it was good to see everybody looking fit and well at that meeting. I will try to organise two visits to Harlow Carr in 2018 starting with one in March for the winter heathers. Hopefully we will be successful next year and may even have a visit out also.

Jean Preston

Rootgrow

I think we have all heard about the benefits of planting with mycorrhizal fungi preparations, but I have just come across an advert for one which works with heathers - the normal ones don't! It's 'Empathy Rootgrow Ericoid Granules'.

The advert is in the Pomona Fruits catalogue, but strangely, I can't find it on the Rootgrow web site, but Crocus has it in stock along with 'Empathy after plant ericaceous'.

Before spending £7.95 at Pomona or (£5.99 at Crocus!), it would be nice to know if any members have tried this product and have they seen any benefits.

However, the Rootgrow web site includes their Ericaceous fertiliser:

Designed to support acid loving plants the sustainable harvested seaweed in 'Empathy Ericaceous seaweed' is a liquid concentrate that can be used on all Ericaceous plants both growing in the soil and in pots.

The natural hormones in 'Empathy Ericaceous seaweed' are taken up by the plant and promote faster and stronger root and shoot growth. They will also promote the development of beneficial bacteria, microbes and the Mycorrhizal Fungi in the soil. 'Empathy Ericaceous seaweed' is boosted with sequestered iron to green up yellowing foliage in plants such as Azaleas, Camellias, and Rhododendrons.

Can anyone recommend this product?

David Plumridge

Collateral damage

Readers may be kind enough to remember that, one spring some time ago (*Bulletin* Vol 7 No 20), the dog broke my ankle with dire consequences for the gardening schedule. Among the many problems was my inability to keep on top of the weeds, especially long grasses, which began to grow rapidly having been freed from the usual danger of being plucked as soon as the tips show above the heather. The garden has never really recovered from that one year of horticultural inactivity, one patch in particular giving cause for concern. A bed of south-facing *Erica carnea* 'Foxhollow' developed a circular area some three feet in diameter in which, despite an annual cull of long shoots, the grass began to win the battle.

Eventually, the grass roots were evidently strong enough to change the appearance of that part of the bed, discolouring the normal yellow tinge of that cultivar to a fuzzy rather embarrassing green in a patch which I can only describe as having a cancerous effect. What made it even worse was that it was in plain view from our kitchen window. Something had to be done to rid one of my favourite heathers of this obscene deformity - but what? The 'discriminating weedkiller' for which I had pleaded had not been forthcoming; killing off the heather with friendly fire was hard to contemplate, and was one of the reasons for the delay in doing something effective to rid myself of the offensive grass.

This year, I was left with no choice, as I noticed in the spring that the patch was growing larger. My efforts to pick off the shoots one by one was as ineffective as rummaging among the mass of fourteen year old, well established, heather roots to isolate those belonging to the intruder. I had to take the plunge before the grass seeded again, and hope for the best. Out came the Glyphosphate spray (I told you I was desperate!) which I held sideways, level with the top of the heather, and fired it upwards into the top of the grass. Common sense should have told me, of course, that the droplets would also fall onto the heather, but I'm not very strong on common sense.

The weeks went by, and gradually the grass grew brown, and died. The heather did not grow brown, but the colour of the leaves in the area turned a slightly darker shade of yellow than the rest of the bed. Now at last, however, in October, I have a measure of how successful such an inherently stupid procedure seems to have been, for now is *budding* time. Buds are appearing on the *E.carnea* 'Foxhollow' which had been glyphosphated. They are not as numerous as in the rest of the bed, but they are unmistakably there, and it is getting harder to see where the grassy patch had once been. No wonder they're called 'hardy heathers'!

Colin Rogers

‘Mysterious Colleen’ - a white-flowered Praeger’s heath (*Erica x stuartii*)

Susie Kay drew my attention last year to a plant she was growing, received from Professor John Griffiths, with white flowers and yellow new growth. It was said to have been a sport on the very fine white Mackay’s heath (*Erica mackayana* ‘Shining Light’) that came from northern Spain. After examining some flowers, it was clear that Susie’s plant was not *E. mackayana*, and therefore could not have been a sport from ‘Shining Light’. It possesses a sparsely hirsute ovary (see Figure 2) and so is *E. x stuartii*.

Only one white-flowered cultivar of this hybrid has been recorded, an artificially created seedling named ‘Bolster’ (*Ericultura* 163: 14; *Heathers* 9: 76) produced before 2011 by Mr J. Baron from ‘Shining Light’ crossed with *E. tetralix* ‘Alba’. I have never seen ‘Bolster’ and attempts to trace material in Holland have so far failed (my thanks to Evert van Hoef for making enquiries). ‘Bolster’ was described as having yellow shoot tips, the colour persisting into autumn, and white flowers.

Susie Kay had propagated this heather and we propose to name the clone ‘Mysterious Colleen’; an application to register that name has been submitted.

Erica x stuartii ‘Mysterious Colleen’

Bushy, low-growing heather, with pronounced tendency to produce “discoloured” (yellow) branchlets that gradually turn green; retains yellow (dis)colouring into late summer; long cilia (hairs) on margins of leaves and sepals usually not gland-tipped. Flowers in terminal umbel; VIII-XI; corolla white; sepals pale green; ovary pale green, cylindrical, with uneven covering (mainly around upper part) of short hairs; anthers pale red before anthesis, with prominent awns; style-end tinged red; nectary ring green.

Erica x stuartii ‘Mysterious Colleen’ has a pure white, elongated urn-shaped corolla. In young flowers and unopened buds a pink tinge is obvious (Figure 1). This happens because the anthers, before pollen is shed, are tinged pale red (see Figure 2), which is unusual in white-flowered heathers that generally have cream or tan anthers at this stage (see, for example, *E. vagans* ‘Golden Triumph’ on The Heather Society website as October 2017 “Heather of the month”: <<https://www.heathersociety.org/heather-of-the-month/erica-vagans-golden-triumph/>>). The style-end is also reddened. In ‘Mysterious Colleen’, the marginal cilia on the leaves and sepals generally

lack glandular tips.

The mystery remains: where did this plant originate? No wild white-blossomed plants of *Erica x stuartii* are recorded, and it cannot be a sport from ‘Shining Light’.



Figure 1

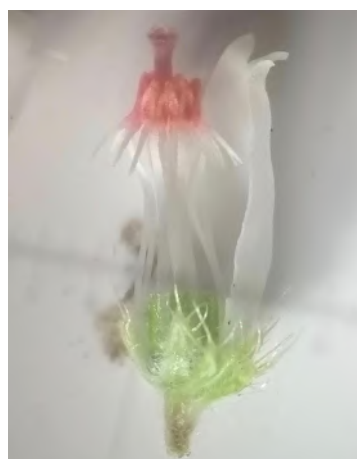


Figure 2



Figure 3

Dr Charles Nelson FLS VMM

Bernard de la Rochefoucauld
7 August 1922 – 18 July 2017



It is with great sadness that I and my partner Trish recently learned of the passing of Bernard de La Rochefoucauld.

Some years ago at a Heather Society Conference I purchased, more in ignorance and appreciating my insufficient knowledge of the French language, a copy of Bernard's book 'la bruyère' par La Rochefoucauld. It remains inscribed as a gift to Mrs Macleod from a name that I cannot decipher, containing comprehensive detail of heathers, their cultivation, propagation and associated plants and concepts of bed plantings.

I was fascinated to discover more of the garden that has been the occupation of Bernard and his wife Brigitte since its inception in 1972. Trish and I initially visited the gardens in the Autumn of 2011 when we met with Bernard and Brigitte and were kindly given

permission to roam the gardens in seclusion admiring the planting of heathers, Autumn colours of magnolia and acers amongst other plants.

We have returned on two further occasions to enjoy the spectacle and to renew our fond acquaintance with total admiration for the dedication and work that these two dedicated gardeners continued to undertake in their later years, certainly an example to us that age does not dim enthusiasm.

The arboretum is a valued legacy to visitors and to following generations to enjoy and admire, what a jewel to leave! Trish and I have always been welcomed with enthusiasm and friendship upon our visits, we will greatly miss the presence of Bernard and offer our condolences to Brigitte who we hope to visit again soon during our tours.

David Edge



World News

Rendez-vous in Cape Town

Fourteen years ago next month members of The Heather Society gathered for a plant hunting trip to South Africa. While I had hoped to join the group, it was not to be. I often dreamed of seeing the Cape Heaths in their native habitat, the fynbos, and now I wish to share a happy report.

Several months ago I decided to join a group of garden enthusiasts from North America who were embarking on a tour of the Garden Route of South Africa. The tour was to begin in Cape Town with a visit to Kirstenbosch Botanical Garden. Knowing that our Heather Society friend and expert on the Cape Heaths, Dr. EGH Oliver, an old friend, lived in the area, I wrote asking Ted to please join me for lunch. Ted went a quantum leap beyond that and invited me for a day of exploring on the Cape Peninsula. I arrived a couple of days ahead of my tour, and on September 11, 2017, this dream of many years was about to come true.

Promptly at 10 a.m. on the day, Ted and I were headed to Kirstenbosch for a visit to the green house which houses the primary collection of Cape Heath cutting material for the Garden. Multitudes of the plants were in bloom, and we also visited the display garden.

After a light lunch on a cool and very windy day, we headed up the Old Cape Road onto the plateau to a small area of remnant fynbos not burned in the very big fire of 2015. We were soon wading through patches of pink *E. glabella*, scattered plants of *E. imbricata* (white with black exerted anthers), *E. plukenetii*, *E. muscosa* (with microscopic flowers), striking red *E. cerinthoides*, and one or two large bushes of *E. tristis* (not flowering). In one spot three species were growing within one foot.

Next stop was up at the Silvermine Dam where *E. caffra* was seen growing up to four meters in height with masses of white flowers. *E. curviflora* with long pink tubes were seen in a marshy area, and further along we spotted *E. lutea* and *E. ericoides*, although the flowering had finished. We were also visited by a malachite sunbird.

While I waited in anticipation of awakening soon from this beautiful dream, our trip took us over the hill to a beautiful vista of the sea and the suburb of Fish Hoek. We were soon in Kalk Bay on the southeastern slopes of Table Mountain National Park where we

observed *E. tristis*, growing to four meters with thick trunks but not in flower. This was originally the genus *Philippia*, and Ted informed me that this is the best population of this species to be found anywhere. It is quite similar in growth and habitat of several species growing in Madagascar.

While our mission was to visit the Cape Heaths, it does bear mentioning that many protea, calla lilies, irises, bird of paradise, and pelargoniums, just to mention a few of the endemic plants of the fynbos were also competing for our attention.

I will be forever grateful to Dr. Ted Oliver for this wonderful gift of a day on the fynbos, and also to The Heather Society, which has enriched my life in many ways through the adventures we have shared over the years. I was with the late David McClintock at the

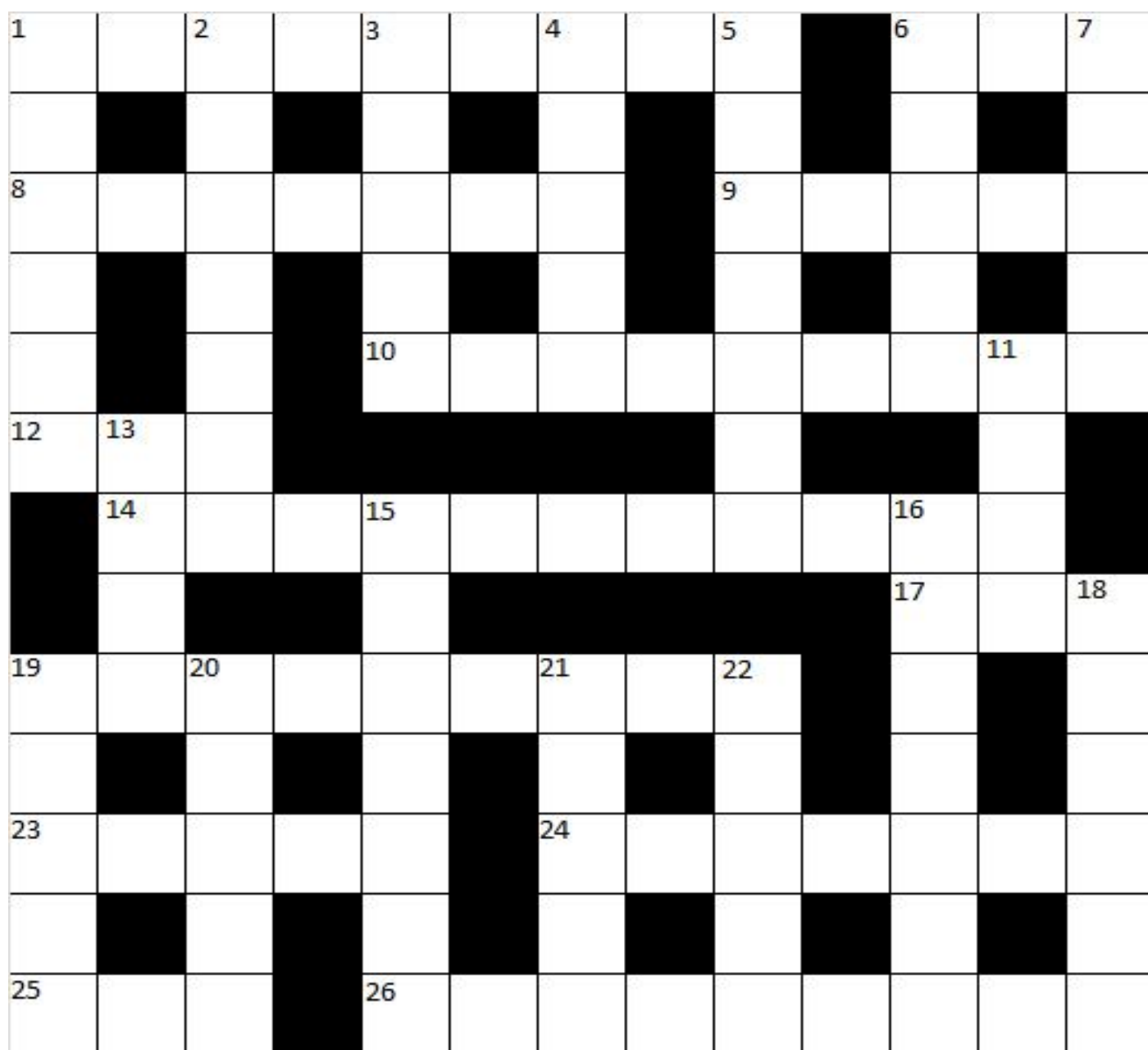


Chelsea Flower Show in the early 1990's when I first met Ted Oliver, who was manning the Kirstenbosch stand, and saw my first Cape Heath.

Deanna Daneri

Crossword by Dougal

This crossword uses your general knowledge, with some emphasis on heather. Some answers, marked with an *, are also contained in cultivar names!



Across

- 1 Sounds like an antipodean species. (9)
- 6 * Being part of Nevada, would red Indians naturally grow this? ; Ms Cassidy. (3)
- 8 Alternative names. (7)
- 9 You can be an early one or a late one; may be think of the stairs. (5)
- 10 Ethiopian princess rescued by Perseus. (9)
- 12 Of or at the age of; aged. (Latin abbr.)(3)
- 14 * From an area in Derbyshire. (11)
- 17 A large constellation. (3)
- 19 & 19D * An urban predator inside an empty container with a nymph? (9, 5)
- 23 A dome-shaped house. (5)
- 24 Hybrid named by McClintock; sounds like it comes from Alba (Gaelic). (7)
- 25 Nigerian culinary staple; Oca in New Zealand. (3)
- 26 * Named after a Scottish mountain in the Cairngorms range and a favourite to pan for? (5, 4)

Down

- 1 * "Worthy of love," a Latin female gerundive; Ms Holden probably thinks so. (6)
- 2 * An *Erica cinerea* with spikes? (7)
- 3 * Used to be a popular name for colour H7. (5)
- 4 Caused dissolution or destruction of cells walls. (5)
- 5 Kind of steak. (7)
- 6 * Double lavender *Calluna*; Coronation Street stalwart. (5)
- 7 * Golden form. (5)
- 11 Spoonful, say. (4)
- 13 Tropical vegetable root, related to taro. (4)
- 15 First king of Belgium. (7)
- 16 "The first", Italian. (2,5)
- 18 Kennedy's assassin. (6)
- 19 * See 19 Across.
- 20 It transports water from roots to shoots and leaves. (5)
- 21 Anyone except the winner. (5)
- 22 Friend of Buzz in "Toy Story"; can become like this if left un-pruned. (5)

Find the answers on page 17

Nursery Adverts



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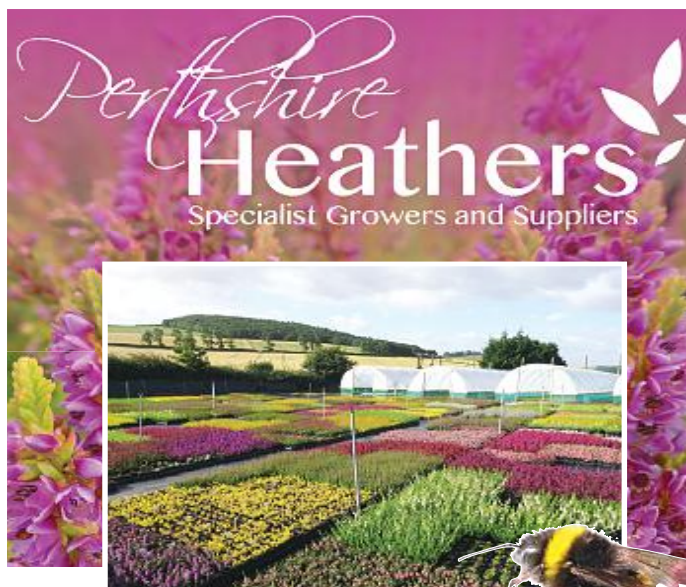
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If you would like to arrange a visit
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or email me at irene@perthshireheathers.com

Members Choice

In this section we would like to encourage members to tell us all about their favorite heather.

If you would like to be included in the next issue
please send your article to
admin@heathersociety.org

Erica erigena 'Golden Jubilee' was made available to members at the Annual Heather Gathering at Thirsk in 2013. We find it a wonderful addition to our heather garden - it is so bright, even on the darkest day! We are so grateful to Barry Sellers for his introduction and we wonder how other members are finding it? As a bonus, I find its cuttings root readily.



David Plumridge

My garden is located in the Sierra de Guadarrama in a village called Navacerrada (1300m), Spain. In this area we have very cold winters (min -12 ° C) and very warm summers (max 35 ° C) with little rainfall which makes many heather varieties unable to adapt well to the climate.

This year I discovered 2 varieties of heather that have thrived in this climate and with very exuberant blooms.

The first variety is the *Erica spiculifolia* 'Graft Dracula' which has an early bloom in May, just after some *Erica carnea*. This allows us to continue having flower until the *Ericas cinereas*, *E. vagans*... arrive.

Another thing that attracts me is its peculiar flower, very different from other heathers and this *Erica spiculifolia* has a spectacular cherry color



Above *Erica spiculifolia* 'Graft Dracula' with *Chamaecyparis obtusa* 'Hage'

The other variety is the *Erica mackayana* 'Maura' which has been one of the varieties that has not stopped flowering from June to October despite the heat. The bloom is a spectacular light pink with double flowers that look like mini rose



Above *Erica mackayana* 'Maura' with *Calluna vulgaris* 'Wickwar Flame'

Pablo Sáez

Members market Place



Exclusive 2017 offer to Heather Society Members

Erica australis 'Polar Express'

Seedling raised by K. Kramer in 2005 from *Erica australis* 'Mr Robert'. Selected and named by David Edge in 2016 after cultivation at Forest Edge Nurseries. Hardier than other clones of *E. australis* having survived a frost test as a seedling in Germany. Flowers distinguished from 'Mr Robert' and 'Hole-hird White' by green style end.



Description.

This new cultivar displays abundant clusters of pure white flowers from April to June on deep green foliage. A distinct improvement on other cultivars. This new release is offered exclusively to Heather Society members. One plant per member.

(Limited to UK mainland only, other areas by arrangement)

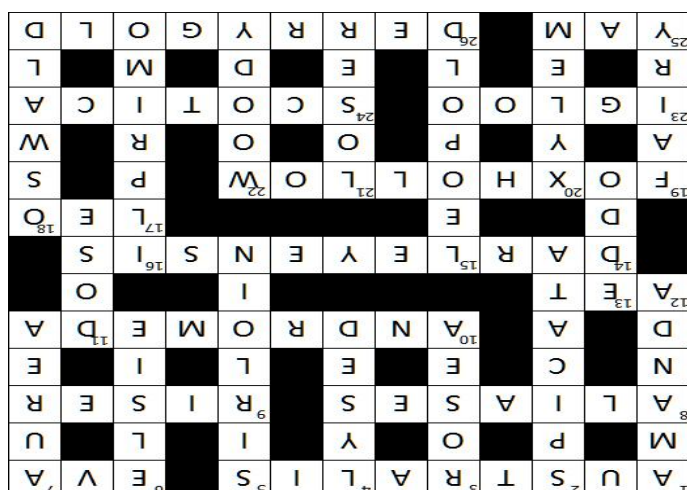
Plants are supplied in 1.0 litre capacity pots. Cost £9.85 inc VAT and P&P

Contact David Edge, Forest Edge Nurseries, Wimborne, Dorset. BH21 8LJ Tel 01202 824387

info@theheathergarden.co.uk

If you have plants or other items available or not wanted, books, catalogues, brochures for sale or disposal let the Society know for inclusion here in the next issue.

Crossword answers



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