

Bulletin of The Heather Society



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Vol. 7 No. 12

Spring 2011

DIARY OF EVENTS

2011

12 March	Yorkshire Heather Group	Matchams House, Askham Richard
19 March	Home Counties	RHS Wisley.
15 May	Closing Date for the Summer Bulletin	
9-12 September	Annual Gathering	
15 September	Closing Date for the Autumn Bulletin	
1 October	Home Counties	RHS Wisley

A Gift of Membership for 2011

The Society is keen to encourage new members to join. Every existing member could assist by giving a year's membership as a gift. Remember, it is a gift that will last until the close of 2011! Fill out an application form (we enclosed one with the Autumn 2010 *Bulletin*) for a family member or a friend, someone keen on gardening and the outdoors, and leave the rest to us.

For each gift membership we will send *you* a beautiful bell-heather card with a printed message inside — *A full year's membership of The Heather Society for 2011 is sent with very best wishes by ...* — for you to personalize and give to, or send on to, the intended recipient. Soon afterwards, or at any time you specify, we will send the recipient a letter of welcome, a complimentary colour chart and badge with *Heathers 8*, the Spring *Bulletin* ... and so on.

For only £15 (for UK addresses, or £18 for Europe or £21 anywhere else, you can solve your gift "problem" and give a whole year's pleasure.



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Cover illustration Erica Carnea by Brita Johansson

There surely cannot be anyone in the Society who didn't know (either personally or by reputation), David Small, who sadly died in November 2010 (the 2011 yearbook is dedicated to his memory). David was a remarkable man, knowledgeable, helpful, kind and generous, for whom nothing was too much trouble. His contribution to the Society is incalculable and as a friend he will be greatly missed. Our love and sympathy go to his wife Anne, who supported him throughout his long illness.

David Small 1939-2010

David Small was a kind and generous man, with both his friendship and his knowledge. Before becoming a nurseryman David had quite a stressful job, working in communications research, in particular with silicon chips and computers. He had to work away a lot and his personality did not lend itself



to snatching relaxation when a moment became available. So he, like many others, suffered from high blood pressure, which exacerbated the kidney failure, which caused his death.

He had a brilliant brain and would have gone far if he had continued in his profession, but he was happiest with his family, and the majority of photographs I have seen of him show him rolling on the floor with his grandchildren. He was at his happiest when working with heathers.

David Small's funeral service took place at the West Chapel, Ipswich Crematorium on Tuesday, 23rd November. Anne had struggled to get heathers for his wreath but managed a few white bud bloomers. Several members of the Heather Society attended, together with many

family members, including David's son and his family from Australia and his daughter and her family from France.

In lieu of flowers there was a collection for the Ipswich Hospital Community

photograph by Eileen
Petterssen

Gardens Scheme; hopefully they will put some heathers in the gardens.

Jean Preston

Chairman's Piece

David Edge

Looking back on Chairman's Messages over the preceding three Springs, I note that it seems to be a regular theme now that I report that we have just experienced another of the coldest Winter periods. Certainly the past December of 2010 has been recorded as the coldest for 100 years but fortunately our heathers appear to have shrugged this off with contempt.

Regrettably we see the passing of many of our stalwart members who have contributed so much to the Society in its earlier and perhaps more flourishing days. The sad loss of our 'recently retired' President, David Small, will bring to mind by many his immense knowledge and skills. His input into the Society will remain with us all for the future years and has provided a firm base on which we build.

The British Heather Growers Association have agreed a garden design for the 2011 Hampton Court Garden Show and this will now be entered for approval to the RHS. The selected design is a more formal design based on a suburban garden size plot displaying the colour, shape and versatility of heathers in a modern design concept.

Our conference this year will be in the Lake District (see the enclosed invitation) and having visited this region last Autumn I am sure that the scenic location coupled with the conference will make it a memorable and enjoyable occasion.

The Society still needs two willing volunteers to fill the post of secretary and treasurer to enable it to continue its duties. If you are able to assist with some spare time then your help would be appreciated.

Annual Gathering 2011 – September 9th – 12th

Have you read the wonderful flyer that has come with this Bulletin? I certainly hope so, as it shows what an interesting Conference we are going to have in this spectacular part of England.

Our venue is The Damson Dene Hotel at Crosthwaite, which is close to Windermere and Bowness, but far enough away to be a tranquil haven, where you can meet old friends and make new ones - all interested in heathers.

The Damson Dene Hotel is set in beautifully landscaped gardens and has a swimming pool, spa and gym facilities; if you find you have a few moments to avail of these leisure pursuits.

On our agenda for 2011 will be a presentation on "The History of Holehird" by Peter Hoggett. The next day this will be followed by a visit to Holehird Gardens. Since we last visited in 1998, the volunteers at Holehird have extended the gardens and made some changes, which enhance this superior venue.

After a pub lunch, we shall travel to Grange-over-Sands for a visit to Yewbarrow House. This small town enjoys a microclimate, which allows the owner of the garden, Jonathan Denby, to grow a large range of exotic plants with great success.

For Saturday evening, Geoff Yates, a revered member, will be talking to us and dinner will be served after Geoff's talk.

The A.G.M. takes place on Sunday morning and, after morning coffee, the coach will transport us to Holker Hall, near Cartmel, the home of Lord & Lady Cavendish. The Hall overlooks Morecambe Bay and towards the mountains of the Lake District. There are extensive gardens and we shall be having a guided tour of these. Be prepared for anything on Sunday evening when we hope to entertain you in a heathery manner.

The annual plant and book sale will be running throughout the weekend, so this is a timely reminder to think about taking some cuttings of a favourite rare heather.

To book your place, if you have not already filled in the form at last year's Conference at Kings Lynn, please fill in the form on the flyer and send it to Dr. Charles Nelson, along with a non-refundable deposit of £5:00 per person.

The costs are as follows

Double or twin room £235 per person

Single room £280 per person

There are only 4 single rooms in the main hotel building. The other 6 single rooms that have been reserved are in annexe cottages. Each of these cottage apartments has 2 bedrooms and a shared bathroom. The cost of these is the same as a double or twin share.

The cost indicated includes all entrance fees, speakers, coaches, lunches and tips, and of course dinner, bed & breakfast. The Council of The Heather Society looks forward to meeting all of you who decide to come to the Conference.

For anyone who wishes to attend on a daily basis, please call or e-mail me at the address below.

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David Small

David's knowledge of heathers was encyclopaedic, practical and very discerning. He could recognize a good plant, one with potential, and know how it differed from others in cultivation – and, just as easily, he could discern one that was no use or so similar to an existing cultivar as to be pointless. He was able to apply modern technologies to their propagation and their identification, and he shared his knowledge most willingly. More than that, throughout the Nineties and into the middle of the "Noughties", David and Anne worked

tirelessly for The Heather Society. Indeed, from his retirement until quite recently, David spent almost all the time he could spare on heathers and the Society and its activities. As a team the Smalls produced (from start to finish) its major publications, maintained the membership list and website, and also propagated young plants for the cultivar distribution scheme. I can remember going to Denbeigh to work on the international register with David, and while we were editing on the computer, Anne was at the kitchen table inserting hundreds of cuttings, meanwhile preparing and serving lunch. For so many years, The Heather Society was a "cottage industry" based at Denbeigh in Creeting St Mary, with Anne and David as its "invisible" dynamo. May he rest in peace.

New members since October 2010

We welcome these members:

Michael Clark, Egginton, Derby

Richard Jones, Lancaster

Else Jorunn Melstokká, Det Norske Arboret, Norway

Marianne Nilsson, Vanersborg, Sweden.

2011 yearbook, *Heathers* 8

The 2011 yearbook is enclosed with this issue of the *Bulletin*. As honorary editor I am most grateful to everyone who has assisted, especially the authors and the proof-readers. It is, sadly, rather a different issue to the one envisaged in late October 2010.

The splendid photograph of the heather in Farndale in the North York Moors was taken by Ian Snowdon, and we thank him for allowing us to put it on the cover (he has also indicated we can use it on the Society's website). Ian also has produced prints and cards of the same image (and another one showing the same locality, also with heather). The cards cost £3 each or four for £10. The Fine Art prints are signed and limited to 150: sizes available are approx. A3 and A2 and each print is double mounted in an off-white acid free mount (unmounted prints are available on request) and cost A3 - £105, or A2 - £155.00 (prices include p&p). If you want to see more of his superb photographs or order some of his cards and prints go to his website www.downtoearthimages.co.uk (I can provide an email address on request).

I came across his Farndale photograph when the winners of the Landscape Photographer of the Year 2010 were announced. Ian's image was commended in the "Your view" section. For more on this and for some more stunning images, see <http://www.take-a-view.co.uk/>.

I would like to encourage members to contribute to the 2012 issue and I am pleased that I already have one article in hand and another promised.

The Heather Society website

One consequence of the death of David Small is the urgent need to establish a new website that can be managed by individuals who are not "boffins". While the present site remains accessible, work will soon commence on a new website using the latest content management systems which should

enable us to keep it up-to-date. We may have to abandon some of the very elaborate and time-consuming aspects, such as the garden design programme that David and Ian devised, but none of us has the same amount of time to devote to maintenance as David had, nor, indeed, the same intimate knowledge of how the very complicated and vast site was assembled and how it worked.

Distribution of publications in 2010

As I have learned of at least one instance of a member not receiving the Society's Autumn mailing, this is the distribution information for 2010. All publications are posted in Outwell, with copies to UK members usually being sent out first, and all copies are posted within a two-day period. UK members should have received their packages within three days, and overseas members often get theirs within less than a week.

Spring Bulletin: posted on 12 and 13 February 2010.

Heathers 7 + Summer Bulletin: posted on 21 and 22 June.

Autumn Bulletin + Annual CD: posted 19 and 20 October.

These dates are likely to be closely matched in 2011, although as you will realise the 2011 yearbook, *Heathers 8* is enclosed here. The 2011 CD will be distributed in October.

Annual CD

Please keep in mind that we welcome members' photographs for inclusion in the CD. They do not have to be close-ups of heathers, nor even include heathers. Activities, gardens, views are all suitable.

If you are taking photographs with a digital camera, we would like to have images that are reasonably large, so the lowest setting will not be ideal. An image that is around 200-400K in size gives the best viewing quality without being so large it makes emailing difficult.

2011 subscriptions

Thank you to all those who have renewed their subscriptions. If yours is still due there will be a reminder in this package and we look forward to receiving your cheque, or payment by other means. Please remember that from 1 January 2011 the additional fee for paying by credit/debit card is £5 per transaction due to the amount that the Society is charged by the bank to maintain the facility for using credit and debit cards.

... and finally, some magazine articles

In December the Society sent out about three hundred leaflets announcing the Premier Award to 'Lucie'. We hope this will generate some interest in heathers in the horticultural press, and several journalists have responded. If you are a regular reader of gardening magazines do let us know of any articles you see because other members will be interested.

There was a 3-page article on heathers by Gerry Daly in *The Irish garden* issue for September 2010. "Heather – boring or invaluable?" was the title, but Gerry firmly said that there "is a place for them in most gardens": "Used in a

supporting role, heathers are invaluable, providing a touch of colour where needed, often at a time when others are leafless or dormant." In the RHS magazine, —*The garden* October 2010 issue, the RHS Advisory Service's topic of the month was "Choosing winter bedding": apparently "winter flowering heathers" are now deemed to be bedding plants. We are told "they combine with evergreen foliage plants such as heucheras, ferns, sedges and grasses to add colour and texture." No comment on the fact that heathers are evergreen, too! A photograph shows one pot with pansies and *Erica* (probably *E. x darleyensis*), with a companion pot of a bud-flowering *Calluna* with hybrid cyclamens.

Lastly, I have had quite a lot of contact recently with *Détente jardin*, a handsome French gardening magazine. Its November/December 2010 issue had a novel article on heathers – "La bruyère une plante de caractère" – illustrated with photographs including one of a *Calluna* called 'Million' (I suspect a mistake for 'Mullion'). In a section headed "Pour une déco raffinée", which included an extract from our colour chart, the use of heather (mainly double-blossomed *Calluna*) in table decorations was extolled – napkin rings (les ronds de serviette), floral rings for putting on the rims of vases, and les bougeoirs (floral candle-holders) were described. **—(for a translation of the instructions, and illustration, —see p 13).** There is also a basket-arrangement, composed of a wicker basket with pots of pink *Erica gracilis* and some of those coloured cabbages that look like over-fed roses – but, it is very attractive. The magazine will be following up with an article on freezing *Calluna* for decorative use – complete with a photograph of the inventor of the technique, Josie Stow (see page 14 for a facsimile of her original article.)

Charles Nelson

Beryl Mayne 1926 to 2010

Beryl and her husband David were long-time members of the Society. In



Photograph by David Plumridge

recent times David's illness prevented them from travelling far, but for many years they were regular attenders at Conferences and meetings around the country. Beryl's happy and lively personality will be sadly missed.

Just after her funeral, Beryl's son, Eric, wrote: "Beryl passed away peacefully, and unexpectedly, at home, in her sleep on 26th November. A short service was held for her at Scarborough Crematorium on December 10th. We will be scattering her ashes over the Moors as per her wish when the weather gets better."

David's address (at the time of writing) is 5 Whitby Road, Pickering, North Yorkshire YO18 7HD. We send him our sincere condolences.

Philomath Frolickings

Ella May T. Wulff

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There was some real frolicking going on in the Wulff household a year ago as we celebrated the wedding of our younger daughter, Tasha, on March 20, 2010. When Tasha's sister, Sabrina, had been married fifteen years earlier (pre-heather garden), I had done all of the wedding planning, sewed both Sabrina's and Tasha's dresses, tried to make some sort of garden around our new house for the setting of the August wedding in our meadow, made five bouquets, four corsages, five boutonnieres and numerous floral arrangements for the reception tables (with flowers I had picked two days before the wedding at a pick-your-own flower farm a few miles away, plus a few of my own garden flowers that the deer wouldn't eat, such as *Nepeta*), prepared some of the food for the reception, and whatever else needed doing. Tasha said on Sabrina's wedding day, "I'll never put you through that when I get married," and she kept her promise.

The only thing Tasha asked me to do for her wedding was to provide the flowers, and there would need to be fewer bouquets, because her only attendants were Sabrina and Sabrina's daughter, Maya. So I had to make only three bouquets, three corsages, five boutonnieres, and a couple of big arrangements. Because the wedding was in March, flowers for the reception tables were a cinch: pots of *Narcissus* 'Tete-a-Tete' purchased inexpensively at a local discount store, their plastic pots wrapped in coloured foil and tied round with ribbon. The big arrangements were also easy. I simply cut branches off of the wild cherries flowering in our woods and stuffed them "artistically" into tall vases. That left the bouquets, corsages, and boutonnieres.

One would think that finding flowers for the bouquets would be easy, too, what with all the spring flowers that bloom here in late March. However, Sabrina and Maya complicated things in the floral department by choosing pink dresses without a hint of blue in the pink, an extremely difficult shade for me to match in both flowers and ribbons. It was a 'given' that I'd use heathers in these bouquets, but most pink heathers have some blue in their pink. The fortuitous exception with flowering stems long enough for a bouquet is *Erica erigena* 'Irish Dusk'. Its flowers are of the same tone as but a few shades darker than the colour of the dress fabric. Unfortunately, my plants of 'Irish Dusk' were still too small for cutting, but my friend Stefani McRae-Dickey generously offered me access to her larger plants of 'Irish Dusk', which needed pruning in any case.

Stefani also offered *E. erigena* 'Brian Proudley' that I could use for the obligatory bridal "lucky white heather", because my plants of 'Brian Proudley' had been damaged in the freeze of early December 2009. Stefani's plants, growing less than a mile from mine but in a sheltered location, were undamaged.

So the heathers would be available, but a properly balanced bouquet required larger flowers to contrast with them. For Sabrina's, I'd used lilies and

roses. I had already decided that I would cannibalise a white supermarket *Phalaenopsis* orchid for Tasha's bouquet (and its flowers would also serve for the corsages), but what larger flower would match that difficult pure pink for the others? There was one possibility, a camellia in my own garden. But *Camellia x williamsii* 'Nicky Crisp' had started to bloom several weeks before the wedding date. Would it last? To be on the safe side, a week before the wedding I cut a bucketful of nearly open buds from the shrub and stored them in our garden shed. But nature came through for us: the rest of the week stayed cool, and on the morning of the wedding I was able to pick enough freshly opened flowers for the two attendants' bouquets.

Another shrub in my garden, *Osmanthus x burkwoodii*, supplied the branches of beautiful satiny oval leaves and tiny white but deliciously fragrant flowers that would form the framework of the bouquets along with fronds of leatherleaf fern (*Rumohra adiantiformis*) from the florist. I arranged these in florist foam bouquet forms, complete with handles, purchased at our local garden centre. When using these forms, all one needs do is thoroughly soak the forms in water until the foam is saturated, then allow it to drain overnight before the day you plan to make the bouquet. Cut stems the desired length, remove all leaves from the parts that will be in foam, and insert them an inch or more into the foam. If you don't change your mind and move them around too much, the stems will stay at the angle you've placed them. Just don't plan on the bride's throwing her bouquet if it's made in one of these foam forms instead of being properly wired together. Sabrina did that, and the flowers flew out of the form in all directions. (Makes it rather hard to tell who has actually caught the "bouquet".)

Once the shape of each bouquet had been established with foliage, it was time to add the heathers. I used only stems of 'Brian Proudley' for Tasha's bouquet, but for the other two, I used both the nearly white 'Brian Proudley' and the pink 'Irish Dusk', about twice as much pink as white. Only after most of the heather was inserted did I add the larger flowers. Then I checked for bare or unbalanced places and added more heather as necessary. A final touch was a small quantity of baby's breath (*Gypsophila* – also purchased from the florist) added to the bride's bouquet. (See pictures on centre pages).

When it came time for Tasha to throw her bouquet, we pulled a single orchid from the bouquet, and she tossed that over her shoulder to the waiting single women. As luck would have it, Maya caught the orchid, so all three bouquets came home with us in the boxes we'd transported them in to Tasha's house. Because the bouquets definitely were not flying on the airplane back to Virginia with Maya and Sabrina, I put them in the garden shed. And there they remain.

Although other flowers and foliage in the bouquets now look pretty awful and are destined for the compost pile, the heather flowers have dried beautifully, with the flowers of 'Irish Dusk' a darker pink than they were when fresh and the white 'Brian Proudley' still white. And they still have their fragrance. For Tasha and Nick's first anniversary, I'm going to make them an arrangement of the dried heather flowers from their wedding.

My plants of 'Irish Dusk' are still not quite large enough to raid for bouquets. All five plants of 'Brian Proudley' survived that horrible December 2009 cold

spell and seem to have survived this past winter, also. However, the north side of the *E. erigena* hedge has large dead spots, making it quite unsightly even as the south side is blooming rather well. What to do? Ideally, I should have pruned out those dead spots last spring, but I never got to it. But what happened at the Cottage Grove hospital heather garden can be my guide.

When the Oregon Heather Society arrived at the hospital on 6 March 2010, we were totally shocked at the winter destruction evident here (about 54 miles south of our garden and only about 50 metres higher in elevation), the first weather damage since the garden was planted in 2004. Although a slightly sheltered plant of 'Maxima' at the eastern end of the garden was totally unharmed, the three plants of 'Brian Proudley' at the totally exposed western end had only a "doughnut" of green foliage remaining at the base of each plant. Their tops were completely brown. We decided to test the ability of *E. erigena* to tolerate severe pruning, so we cut off all of the dead tops, leaving only those basal rings of living foliage.

We made the correct choice. When we returned in early November for the fall pruning of the hospital garden's *Calluna* plants, there were no longer holes in the doughnuts. All three plants of 'Brian Proudley' had excellent regrowth from the centres of the plants, covering all signs that the plants had been damaged. So in early March 2011, despite the fact that my plants are older than those at the hospital and have much more living material, I'm going to cut all their foliage evenly off below the lowest dead patch. As of now, when viewed from the house, they are pretty ugly. I'm betting that they will survive and make attractive new growth.

Wild Records

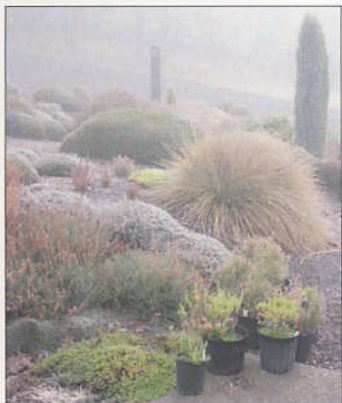
Keith Spurgin

(Numbers 1–13 in parentheses refer to the Notes at the end.)

What W.T. Stearn called 'inquisitive English tourism' (1) is thought to have begun around the time of Henry VII's accession in 1485 (2); yet nearly two hundred years were to pass before the extreme south west was included in a Grand Tour. The year was 1662. Charles II had just granted a charter to the Royal Society of London (3), and science was the rage. 'Many a perfumed dandy had his own laboratory in which he searched for the key to unlock nature's secrets' (4). By now London had a large network of carriers by road (5), opening up important trade routes. Cambridge botanist John Ray travelled to Cornwall with two former students, heir to a baronetcy Francis Willughby and Phillip Skippon, son of the Parliamentary general.

Their expeditions were 'heroic, slow and uncomfortable'. Ray had been a tutor at Cambridge University for 17 years and intended to travel abroad – but first needed to gain a better understanding of the natural history of his own land. It is interesting that they paid no attention to the Lizard on this first visit. On 17th August 1667 John Ray was again in Cornwall. He had escaped the Great Plague (1665–1666), large parts of London had been consumed by the Great Fire, and the Anglo-Dutch war had just ended (6). He met a young man,

continued on page 12



*Ella May Wulff's misty
Oregon heather garden,
December 2010.*



*Heather garden at The Bannut,
Herefordshire, December 2010.*



*Winter heathers along 'The
Long Walk' at The Bannut.*

*No, not the editor
wandering the garden in
her nightie, just a fleece
wrapped tree fern.*





*Camellia and heather bouquets for Tasha's wedding
(see Philomath Frolickings)*



from page 9

Mr. Borlase, who told him that—£4m of tin was produced annually in Cornwall (7). This must have been John Borlase, a wealthy mine owner, father of John, who became MP for St. Ives, and grandfather of the noted antiquarian and natural historian William Borlase (8). Again Ray's itinerary had taken him past the Lizard, but on 29th August 1667, he found what he (incorrectly) called Smooth Rupturewort *Herniaria glabra* and Wild Asparagus *Asparagus prostratus* at the southernmost point. The former turned out to be Hairy Rupturewort *H. ciliata* (for which it was a first record) (9) and the *Asparagus* waited until 1950 to be declared a first record (10). Of more interest to Heather specialists, Ray also recorded that 'on Goon Hilly Downs... is a kind of Heath, which I have not elsewhere seen in England.' This is the first published record for the well-known Cornish Heath '*Erica vagans*. As on the same day he had already visited Penzance (where he had seen a Tunny with a stomach full of pilchards), he had travelled at least 40km (25 miles) to reach the Lizard point (11), making three first records *en route*. It seems that Ray's connections were with Penwith, and that his brief spell of botanising on the Lizard came about rather by chance. In 1670 his *Synopsis Methodica Stirpium Britannicarum* was published. It has been described as the first Flora of the British Isles and Ireland, and surely it has been a basis for all later work on our flora. Linnaeus himself is said to have used Ray's work 'as a quarry'. My interest in the dates of discovery and publication was prompted by recent research carried out by botanist David Pearman. Updating W. A. Clarke's *First Records of British Flowering Plants* (1900) has led to some interesting finds, not in the field but in the literature. Until 1950 the first record for Cornish Heath was given as the date of publication (1670), but C. E. Raven noted that the actual date of discovery was 1667, as published by W. Derham (7 & 11). Pearman calls these prior dates 'wild records', which lends them a certain air of excitement, recalling the thrill of the chase. Not as exciting as fieldwork perhaps. Captain Bligh, a Cornishman (of Mutiny on the *Bounty* fame), must have been mortified to have been arrested while on the Lizard, as a suspected spy.

Another visitor named Salisbury, 'then of some fame as a botanist', was found searching for Cornish Heath on Goonhilly, and brought before the magistrates at Helston (12). If this was Richard Anthony Salisbury née Markham (1761–1829), then his 'fame' was perhaps partly notoriety, following accusations of plagiarism, disputes with Robert Brown and J.E. Smith, and alleged inefficiencies as Secretary of the Horticultural Society (13).

As more and more literature comes online, botanists (Heather enthusiasts included) are increasingly able to search the massive library of free literature available on the Internet. But, as Dr Charles Nelson has pointed out, there is also much to be discovered in the vast and largely unmined archive scattered in museums, herbaria and private collections: correspondence, notebooks and marginalia – some of which may turn out to yield further—'wild records'.

NOTES

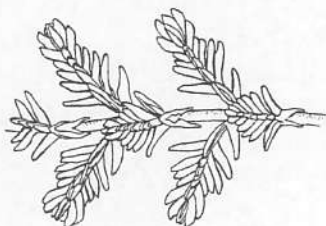
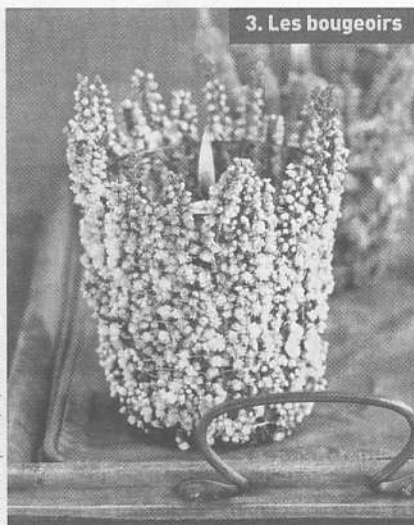
1. 'John Ray's Natural History Travels in Britain' in *The Scottish Naturalist* 44 (1986).

2. URL "<http://www.luminarium.org/renlit/>" 27th October 2010.

3. URL "http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Society" 18th October 2010.
4. Wolbarsht, M.L. & Sax, D.S. 'Charles II, royal martyr' in *Notes and records of the Royal Society of London* Vol. 16, No. 2, 154 (Nov., 1961).
5. Dorian Gerhold. *Road transport before the railways* (1993), p. 1.
6. URL "http://www.historyofwar.org/articles/wars_anglodutch2.html" 18th October 2010.
7. Derham, W. *Select remains of the learned John Ray*. London : George Scott (1760), p. 280.
8. Tregellas, W.T. *Cornish Worthies*. Vol. 1. London : Elliot Stock, 1884, 167–187.
9. First record' in this article means 'first record for Britain and Ireland'.
10. By C.E. Raven, see Pearman, D. *First Dates* database, 2009.
11. Derham, W. *Select remains of the learned John Ray*. London : George Scott (1760), p. 281.
12. Cummings, Alfred Hayman. *The churches and antiquities of Cury and Gunwalloe*. London: E. Marlborough & Co.; Truro: W. Lake (1875), p. 219.
13. There are many references to this colourful figure. See (e.g.) Maberley, D.J. 1985. *Jupiter botanicus. Robert Brown of the British Museum*. London: Cramer, Braunschweig & British Museum (Natural History), (1985).

Candle-holder decorated with double- flowered *Calluna*: from *Détente jardin*

Stick two strips of double-sided "Scotch" tape around the candle-holder – the one shown is like a small glass tumbler or jar. One by one, and side by side, stick the flowering shoots of heather, each a little taller than the holder, to the tape. Reinforce by carefully wrapping some thin brass wire around the heather, and apply lacquer (before lighting the candle!) if necessary.



Oh! Jane-Why November?

Mrs. J. M. Stow, Flackwell Heath, Bucks.

Most months of the year we have heaths and heathers in bloom in our garden, but November is not one of them. So when our daughter told us that she wanted to be married in November we had a problem. Jane wanted to have our heather in her bouquet, also we wanted some for floral arrangements.

I had thought of drying heather (indeed I had done some) but I don't particularly like it, so what to do? Then I thought of freezing it; most things freeze, so why not heather. I picked some *Calluna* 'Mairs Variety' and laid it in a plastic container, put the lid on and in the deep freeze it went. After three weeks I took out one spray, put it in the refrigerator for a few hours and then in a vase of water, it was as fresh as if it had just been picked.

Another container was then filled in layers with foil between each layer of *Calluna* 'H. E. Beale' and 'Peter Sparkes', both wonderful for arrangements, and into the freezer it went. After approximately eight weeks (four days before the wedding), this was transferred from the freezer to the refrigerator for a few hours before being placed in water in the cold garage until needed for the arrangements. The florist used 'Mairs Variety' for Jane's bouquet, and I used the rest for table decoration.

The heather lasted a good three weeks in a centrally heated house afterwards which I find is normal for freshly picked heathers, also the colours were perfect.

Heathers in the night sky

Charles Nelson

It is not often that there is any link between the celestial sphere and the terrestrial world of heathers, but a chance discovery in an issue of the *Medical Times* for 16 December 1848 has changed that. The heading and first few lines of an important article are as follows.

THE MEDICAL TIMES.

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ROYAL DUBLIN SOCIETY.

DISCOVERY OF NEW PLANETS.

The first sectional scientific meeting of this Society took place on the evening of the 8th inst.; Mr. Mackay, the author of the "*Flora Hibernica*," was moved to the chair. An interesting account was given by

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The rest of the article had rather little to do with celestial matters and a lot to do with gout! Perhaps that was why the *Medical Times* published this report.

The "interesting account" was given by William Henry Harvey (a Limerick man, the bicentenary of whose birth falls this year), who was then Professor of Botany to the Royal Dublin Society. He spoke about some new additions to the Irish flora, the first of which was *Erica ciliaris*, then called the ciliated heath but now known as the Dorset heath. Harvey's account of the finding of the heather in Connemara adds some personal details which, as far as I am aware, have not been remembered, although readers of the *Medical Times* in December 1848 knew them. Certainly they do not appear in recent account of this heather's presence in western Ireland.

Harvey commenced:

The first of these plants was discovered by Mr. Bergen, under curious circumstances. Shortly after the *Erica Mackaiana*, so named in honour of the Chairman by Sir W. J. Hooker, had been recognized by botanists as a distinct species, Dr. Harvey and some friends went down to the part of Connemara, where it had been discovered, to look for specimens. They found plenty of it, but did not observe any other species, except the ordinary heaths of the country. A couple of months afterwards, Mr. Bergen, accompanied by Mr. Clibburn and Mr. Jennings, went there for the same purpose; when Mr. Bergen being (unfortunately as he supposed) attacked with the gout, was obliged to remain on the car, while the other gentlemen set out on an exploring expedition across the bogs.

Let's pause a moment. It was actually Charles Babington who named *Erica mackayana*, but that's a small detail. The "car" would have been a pony-and-trap or a jaunting-car, of course. Mr "Bergen" was Thomas Fleming Bergin.

The professor finished the tale.

Tired with waiting for them, and the gout getting better, Mr. Bergen at last got off the car, and hobbled to the ditch on the road side, when he saw a fine bunch of heath, which he pulled; and soon after the other gentlemen returned, and all parties went on to Roundstone. There they met Mr. M'Calla, the discoverer of the *Erica Mackaiana*, who as soon as he saw the bunch of heath in Mr. Bergen's possession, instantly recognized it as a species new to Ireland.

So the discovery of Dorset heath in a ditch in Connemara was due to a medical condition; Mr Bergen was so crippled with gout he declined to go "bog-trotting".

I might never have come across this tale, because a casual glance at the report suggests that several new celestial orbs had been spotted in the night sky over Dublin. But the power of Google revealed it!

This must be one of the most misleading uncorrected printer's errors in the history of botany!

Questions and Answers

QI am a member of the Heather Society and have now established a good collection of cultivars of these wonderful plants. I have been particularly impressed with *Erica x griffithsii* 'Heaven Scent' and 'Jacqueline' but have had very little success in propagating them. A colleague tells me that cuttings can be taken in October for rooting next spring but I am not clear as to which part of the plant I should take the cutting from. I would be very grateful if you could advise me about this.

Brian Burling

A October is not the optimal time for taking cuttings, but it can still be done quite successfully. Probably the ideal month is July. The two



pictures show a sprig of *Erica x griffithsii* (actually 'Valerie Griffiths') and hopefully demonstrate the sort of cuttings you should be looking for. By October they shouldn't be too soft – but you don't want them too woody either. If you are using a propagator (or even a plastic bag over a pot) it is important to protect the cuttings from the direct sunlight. As your cuttings will

be in their trays or pots over the winter, make sure to use an open cutting medium so they don't get too wet. I have always used 50/50 peat and perlite. DON'T be in a hurry to pot the cuttings once they have rooted. Leave them alone until April or May. Or even later if you haven't used any heat and they haven't got a good root system by then. You will probably get several conflicting replies, but, don't worry, most growers have their own ways of doing things and they all seem to work.

Daphne Everett

A Rooting of this cultivar should be successful if undertaken with healthy, vigorous, young growth. It is important to bear in mind that young, healthy but mature material roots best when placed in the optimal environment. Avoid taking propagation material that has been subjected to drought or other stress. Cuttings of the current year's growth away from the base of the plant can be selected in August – October for optimal rooting. Young side-shoots with a heel from more mature growth of a length of approx 1ins (2.5cm) are suitable. Ensure that you do not use cutting material bearing flowers or flower buds. In some situations plants grown in the shade or semi-shade may provide less woody material that roots more easily.

Cuttings may be inserted in a compost consisting of 50% moistened peat / 50% perlite or coarse sand, just to a depth whereby they will stand up. When this process is undertaken on a small scale a pot, with compost kept moist, can be utilized, covered with a polythene bag and secured with an elastic band. Put in a well-lit position but not in direct bright sunlight, otherwise they will cook.

David Edge

A I am responding to a request for information regarding the propagation of *Erica x griffithsii*. We have to thank David Small for introducing us to this group of plants and encouraging us to grow them in our nursery. They are reliably winter-hardy here in the south-west corner of British Columbia where we may see brief cold spells to -12°C. The growth habit, fragrance (which attracts beneficial insects) and vigor make them ideal plants for contemporary gardens. We have the five varieties that are listed in the third edition of *Handy guide to heathers* but concentrate on two cultivars 'Jacqueline' and 'Heaven Scent' for production in the nursery. Because of the difficulty in marketing these plants – they flower when retail plant centers are quiet— we only grow 200 plants of each. Cuttings are taken in October from one- or two-year old pot-grown plants that have enjoyed care and attention to feeding, and are therefore vigorous, sturdy, and still displaying good flower color but with maturing wood throughout the mass of spent flowers on the middle parts of the plant. From this lower zone of maturing wood we take leafy cuttings that are approx. 5cm long, perhaps with a heel, branched but trimmed to 2cm across. With the base cut close to a node they are treated with rooting powder and inserted into a moist mixture of peat and perlite. The tray is placed on a sand bed with very gentle bottom heat and covered with a poly tent. This tent covers our entire bench, 15cm from the surface and so is not close to the cuttings but provides a very comfortable humid environment where they can rest comfortably until rooted. The medium is not allowed to dry out, but not kept soggy, and the cuttings are monitored for mould or any kinds of stress. It may be necessary to shade the tent if you are lucky enough to get some sunshine in late fall and early winter, something we do not always see much of. If you are propagating the yellow-foliage cultivars, I would advise more attention during sunny days as they would be more likely to scorch. Using this method we have rooted 100% of the cuttings which will be ready for potting on in April.

Good luck and please encourage others to grow these excellent plants in their gardens.

David Wilson



Nick Rogers's giant tree heather with his daughter, coincidentally named Heather, for scale; 1 November 2010.

Q We have a very tall heather plant (more than 10 feet tall, and 3 feet in diameter), and would like to trim it to a more manageable size, but we are worried that it would not get any green growth again from its trunk/main branches. It is growing in Lillington, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, and is about 30 years old. It has white flowers, like lots of small white bells with darkish insides, during late spring / early summer. It has always grown upwards rather than spreading out, with its new growth growing upwards.

The heather has rather taken us by surprise and grown on us over the years. It's in a narrow, poor border at the front of our south-ish facing driveway – we have a few heathers doing rather well in that border. I usually trim it once a year after it has flowered, in order to maintain access to our driveway, and to discourage our neighbour from taking more drastic action. But this year it hasn't been trimmed.

Nick Rogers

A This is undoubtedly a tree heath, probably *Erica arborea*, and it should resprout after severe pruning. It must be one of the largest and most shapely heathers in the country!

Charles Nelson

A I think it would stand cutting back hard, but it will take a couple of years to come back properly. What about cutting it hard back on the neighbour's side to see what happens. At least it will continue to look good on your side of the plant. Alternatively, thin the plant out – cutting back some of branches right back. When they begin to shoot your neighbour can do the rest.

Daphne Everett

A This appears to be *Erica arborea* which has been annually pruned into an attractive fastigate shape. I think this heather can be pruned into whatever size is needed. I have cut a tree heath to the ground, leaving 1 or 2 feet of stump and it has regenerated magnificently!

Bryon Roberts

Group News

Yorkshire

This small group of six members will meet at 2.30pm on Saturday, 12th March 2011 at Matchams House, Main Street, Askham Richard, York, YO23 3PT to view the

collection of winter heathers, which should be at its best by then. A discussion will take place on "How heathers have fared during this particularly cold winter". It will be interesting to see how other members *Erica manipuliflora* have survived. Those planted at two sites in York that I know about have done well as they had a good covering of snow for protection. It is hoped that those at RHS Harlow Carr have done equally well.

A programme for the remainder of the year will be drawn up at this meeting, including a visit to RHS Harlow Carr to view the further new plantings of heathers.

Any Heather Society members wishing to attend this meeting will be made welcome, but Jean, the secretary, would appreciate a telephone call to confirm your attendance (01904-707316).

Jean Preston - Secretary

North East

Nothing to report from Dorothy Warner this time. More news of the North East Group in the Summer *Bulletin*.

Home Counties

On March 19th there will be a meeting at RHS Wisley. An 11 am start outside the book shop, for a walk around the heather garden to see the winter flowering heaths.

Lunch will be at around 12-2pm, followed by a talk at the Hillside Centre. The speaker is yet to be arranged.

Wisley is also the venue for the next meeting on 1 October. Details will be in the Summer *Bulletin*.

Barry Sellers sellersbarry@aol.com

USEFUL ADDRESSES

Society's Website: www.heathersociety.org.uk

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