

**The Heather Society
Newsletter
Spring 2017**



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Diary 2017

18 March	Visit to Whitehall Nursery (see pg 5)
17-18 June	The Plant Society weekend RHS Wisley (see pg 5)
8-11 September	Annual Gathering, Somerset (see pg 4)
24 September	The Heather Society meeting -RHS Wisley



Find us on Facebook

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For contact details of the society's Officers,
Editors, Group Organizers, see page 11.

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Forewords

Hello everyone, Welcome to my first issue of the new format!
It was very daunting taking on the task after many years in the capable hands of Daphne Everett and Charles Nelson.
On behalf of the society and all its members, I would like to say a huge thank you to them both for all their efforts over the years. You will find some interesting stories/info ahead thanks to our members.
My contribution being an amusing conversation I had with a garden designer recently. She told me of how she had purchased a heather which she has kept indoors for two years and not needed to water it once! She said she must be green fingered as it was still alive!
I believe it was purchased from a very well know hardware store!!
Thank you to everyone who helped me on my way and I hope you enjoy what lies ahead.

Samantha Barnes



Chairman's Piece

David Edge

In this new format newsletter I have set out the future options for the continuity of the Society. Since its inception in 1963 thousands of words have been written, pictures, articles, bulletins and yearbooks published. Numerous members have enjoyed and given of their valued time to maintain the Society and an interest in heathers. The conferences have been attended as social and educational events by national and international visitors.
The year 2017 will be the time for consideration of the Society's future to be decided at the Conference AGM. Unlike many Societies ours has the benefit of good financial reserves but it suffers, as with many, of a lack of 'younger generation' helpers to enable the continuity of its functions, placing a greater burden on the 'older generation'.
The closure of the Society would be a great disappointment to me and I am sure, many others. As I have mentioned previously it enables 'one to meet with other members and extend ones knowledge of heathers in enjoyable and interesting locations'. Its continuation and aims could be the inheritance left to us by our past members.

David Edge

Options for the future of the Heather Society
This document has been written by the Chairman (David Edge) to clarify the subject of the Society's future.

Current situation.

Over the years 2016/2017 The Heather Society (THS) has lost the services of Dr Charles Nelson with his resignation as Society Registrar, membership secretary and society contact. Dr Nelson will shortly publish the 2017 THS Yearbook, his final publication for the Society.
There is no current replacement in hand to continue with future yearbooks or as Registrar.
In addition Conference organisation will cease after this year (2017) unless, in the unlikely event a replacement to Mrs Susie Kay comes forward.
Mrs Daphne Everett has resigned as bulletin editor and Mrs Samantha Barnes has taken this position as contact point for the Society and bulletin editor.
The Society has assets of circa £40,000.

Following the vote at the 2016 AGM the Treasurer and membership is now Mrs Allison Fitz-Earle.
Mr Richard Canovan (previous treasurer) continues with responsibility for the Society's investments.
Mr Dave Brown continues with the management of the Society's website.

The Outlook for the Society.

With the loss of our willing volunteers to undertake the responsibilities and facilities of the society the 'flesh' is being stripped, and will continue to be lost, from the Society and it will be left with the bare bones. A Society with a website and dependant on the remaining loyal members to continue as best as they can.

Council is in a healthy position regarding Council numbers (requiring 5 members to form a quorum) with the following;

- Chairman: David Edge**
Honorary Secretary: Phil Joyner
Honorary Treasurer: Allison Fitz-Earle
Councillors
- Dave Brown
 - Richard Canovan
 - Andy Collins
 - John Hall

- Susie Kay
- Barry Sellers

However, it is a fact that our membership has declined over the years from 1500 to its present 150 (figure to be ascertained) due to the declining popularity and interest in heathers, resignations and the passing on of members.

The Heather Society's position is not unique as many other Societies are in a similar position and face similar issues. The Heather Society has good financial reserves to maintain its viability and function for future years.

FACTS

Fact....there is minimal interest by the general population in current times in joining societies and even less in taking active participation.

Fact.... Whilst the Society has streamlined the payment of membership fees any view to increase income to offset expenditure results in a reduction in membership and return.

Fact...the move by the Society to encourage the distribution and take up of electronic bulletins has limited success with many members either failing to provide email contact addresses or to open notification/links to access the bulletins.

Fact.....many members prefer to receive bulletins via a hard copy

Fact....with members not accessing bulletins on line, or receiving a yearbook in the future, or attending a conference, they are gaining little or no benefit from their membership.

THE FUTURE

The Conference in Somerset this year (2017) may be the last opportunity to get an attendance to fulfil the quorum for an AGM. Therefore the future of the Society needs to be considered now.

Quote from my local church flier...If we are going to do what we have always done then we shall get what we have always got- and that means a gently declining church.

In essence we can proceed, using our financial reserves, into the future and maintaining the Society in 'one form or another'. The options therefore are to maintain the Society in 'one form or another' or to consider closing the Society at the 2017 AGM,

Maintaining the Society for the future.

Bearing in mind the aforementioned facts and likelihoods..... Council can continue with its function of directing and managing the finances and activities, aims and objectives of the Society. The annual number and necessity of Council meetings may be considered as will the number required to form a quorum at meetings.

This consideration is further dependent on the existing Councillors agreeing to, and continuing in their present position. It is likely that there will not be future yearbooks or annual conferences. The bulletin will continue, hopefully, with a greater input allowing for the absence of the yearbook.

I anticipate that John Hall will continue to be the main contact with the RHS, promoting heathers and funded by the Society at its events.

I (as Forest Edge Nurseries) will continue to promote heathers and the Society at RHS Hampton Court Shows.

The website will continue under the supervision and input of Dave Brown.

Consideration should be given to attending other events to promote the Society at the Society's expense (utilizing the funds to a 'good cause') assuming that members are available to man the event.

Rule 2

2.ObjectsoftheSociety.

The Society is instituted to assist the advancement of horticulture and in particular the improvement of and research into the growing of Heaths and Heathers and allied plants.

To fulfil the criteria of the above the Charity Commissioners will expect the Society to continue with its aims and objectives.

Closing the Society

21. Dissolution

The Society can only be dissolved at a General Meeting by a majority vote of members present. In the event of the Society being wound up, after payment of all debts and liabilities, the assets of the Society shall pass to a Charity with similar objects, or to be used for similar charitable purposes

This proposal would need to be presented to the members at the 2017 AGM and would require a vote of the majority of members present.

Even allowing for the vote to be in favour of continuation, the Society cannot continue to fulfil its function unless the existing Councillors (or replacements to be found) agree to continue in their positions.

The subject of the Society's remaining generous balances and investments would require consideration as to their disposal (especially bearing in mind the balance of the donation from Bob Rope and its intended use) as would continuity of the website, at least under the Heather Society name.

The destination of the Society records and paraphernalia would need to be considered.

The dissolution of the Society would leave a void in the 'heather world' and leave no contact point for assisting the public with enquiries, publicity, the RHS on the subject of heathers, the varieties or culture.

A proposal to join or link with another Society would, I believe, lead to a lingering death when priorities would be contested and interests being at opposite ends of the spectrum. The Heather Society would be forever looked upon as the poor neighbour!

Alternatives to Dissolution

Potentially a 'heather club/society' could be formed, either as a charity again or as a club arising from the ashes of the Heather Society. It would require the input of volunteers and rules, possibly being in parallel to the then defunct Heather Society.

Clarification would be required to ascertain whether the reserves of the Society could be transferred over, on the basis that the replacing 'club' continues as a charity with the same aims and the funds would be used for similar charitable purposes. **Charity funds are required to be transferred to another charitable body and cannot be transferred to a non-charitable institution. However the funds can be used for 'Any other charitable purposes' which includes the promotion of agriculture and horticulture.**

[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charitable-purposes/charitable-purposes#any-other-charitable-purposes.](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charitable-purposes/charitable-purposes#any-other-charitable-purposes)

Interpretation would be required to ascertain whether the setting up and financing of a non registered charity 'club' **continuing with charitable purposes by the THS would be allowed under charity Rules.**

See additionally below:

Before your charity can close

Consider if you can make effective use of the charity's remaining funds by transferring them to another charity with compatible purposes. Alternatively, you might find a community foundation or some other charity may offer to continue to run your trust in line with its objects.

Check if your charity has any restricted funds or 'linked charities' and what will happen to them if you close your charity.

If you do decide to close your charity, you'll need to clear all its debts and liabilities before you spend its remaining assets on your charity's purposes. This will include checking if you have any:

- unspent grant money - if so, check if there is any specific agreement with the grantmaker about what to do with it where you are closing the charity
 - money from fundraising appeals that haven't reached their target - if so, check the commission's guidance on failed appeals to see if you need to return any donations to donors
- You will then need to follow the right closure procedure for your charity; this depends on its structure.

It is questionable whether there is a valid reason to close one charitable institution only to open another with

the same aims and objectives. The question arises as to whether or not the existing Heather Society can, or cannot, continue to fulfil its aims and objectives as a registered charity; if it should continue with the same format and rules, or whether and changes would be required.

An annual Heather Society Show could be arranged at a site such as RHS Wisley (and other sites, possibly rotating regions) in conjunction with events at Wisley. This event would also serve as a meeting point to continue the required (Charity) functions of the Society e.g AGM

The website would continue under the supervision and input of Dave Brown.

Consideration should be given to attending other events to promote the Society, at the Society's expense (utilizing the funds to a 'good cause') assuming that members are available to man the event.

Proxy voting.

This option should be considered when members are unable to attend meetings

Please see back page for Heather Society rules.

Society events & news

46th Annual Gathering 2017

This year we are visiting North Somerset which has many attractions and gardens to enjoy.

A full programme has been assembled which will give a flavour of the area.

The visits will be to Cannington Walled Gardens, Hestercombe and R.H.S. Rosemoor.

The speakers are:

Roy Cheek – a horticulturalist involved in the development of Cannington Walled Gardens

Tim Parish – a ranger from Exmoor National Park

Lady Rosemary Fitzgerald – a gardener, plant hunter and botanical author

We still have a few rooms left and I would love for you to come and join us.

Date: 8th-11th September 2017.

Venue: The Walnut Tree Hotel, North Petherton, Somerset

Cost:	Single room	£375
	Double/twin room	£285
	(per person sharing)	

The price for attending includes:

3 nights dinner,

bed and breakfast

All entries and tours of each garden.

Lunches.

Coach and gratuities.

Yes, it is a little more expensive this year. There is a larger single room supplement and garden entry appears to have increased across the board. But still this represents very good value for a long weekend.

Hopefully we shall have our usual plant sale where it will be possible to find that rare exclusive heather. We have our A.G.M.

on the Sunday evening giving you the opportunity to take part in the workings of the Heather Society.

The photographic competition will also be running again and it would be wonderful to see more entries for 2017. Perhaps when you have read this article you will be tempted to rush out with your camera and photograph some wonderful winter heathers. An opportunity to share your garden with other members.

Cheques should be made payable to The Heather Society and sent to Allison Fitz-Earle at 125 Caroline Way, Eastbourne BN23 5AX or using the BACS System. English members are requested to use the Lloyds bank account.

If you have been thinking about joining us for this event, it is very easy to secure a place by sending £5 per person as a deposit. This is a non returnable deposit and is necessary to aid in assessing the numbers for available rooms.

The weekend is the greatest opportunity to talk with others who love heathers, to view famous gardens and hear excellent speakers

Please make a date in your diary to share in the experience.

If you have any questions regarding The Gathering, I am available to chat on 00 353 95 43575 or email at

susiek@gofree.indigo.ie.

Susie Kay

Heather Society Conference Photographic Competition.

For more information please see page 11

Heathers 14 2017 yearbook

Work is proceeding on the layout and design of the yearbook and I expect it will be in press next month (February) for distribution to all members early in the spring. It contains an interesting mixture of articles including Daphne Everett's review of the first 50 years of this *Bulletin*, naturalized heathers of Newfoundland, design for a heather-clad garage by Molly Hall, an exploration of Scottish clan badges with heather connections, and a heather-planted Peace Garden in Woking. There will be the regular supplement to the *International register of heather names* and reports from the annual gathering in Perth.

Charles Nelson (Yearbook Editor)

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 11 for contact details.

Group News

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

Home counties Group

Tour of the Winter flowering Erica Trial at Whitehall Nursery, Saturday 18th March – meet 11am

John Hall Plants, Whitehall Nursery, Red Lane, off Churt Road, Headley Down, Hampshire, GU35 8SR (Tel: 01428 715505 / 0771 4344327)

Tour of the Winter flowering Erica Trial (88 *Erica carnea*, *Erica x darleyensis* and *Erica erigena* cultivars) planted in eighty-eight raised beds.

Look at the propagation of the 1000 heather varieties for the NEW National Heather Collection to be planted at RHS Wisley Spring 2018.

Light refreshments will be provided.

The Plant Society weekend RHS Wisley Sat 17th & Sunday 18th June 10am – 5pm

We will be exhibiting at this event to promote The Heather Society. Do come along and help recruit new members, as well as enjoy the gardens.

To enter the gardens at Wisley you need to be an RHS member, or pay the daily entrance fee.

A discount was offered to Society members last year and we expect the RHS to do the same this year. We will inform you nearer the time

The Heather Society meeting- RHS Wisley Sunday 24th September 11am - 4pm

This event will be open to the RHS as well as The Heather Society members.

The final agenda has yet to be finalised but the day will include a guided tour of the National Heather Collection, Heather Workshops, a presentation on the changes being made at Wisley, a talk and slides on South African Heaths from Barry Sellers, and much, much more. Watch this space

North East Group

What an odd winter we have had, the Snowdrops and Daffodil bulbs poked through in November and are now about 2 inches above ground.

The winter heathers are all showing colour, particularly *Erica x darleyensis* 'Arthur Johnson'.

I remember we planted three together and now several years later they have a spread of about four feet. It looks really good when in full colour.

With no other news except to say happy new year to all our members and to wish all committee members a good term of office.

Dorothy Warner

Yorkshire Group

Two meetings to be held at RHS Harlow Carr this year. The few local members who attend these meetings plan to meet up once again at 2.30 pm on Saturday, 25th March 2017 and Saturday, 10th June 2017. We should certainly see some heather in bloom on the first Saturday but it is doubtful if there will be any on the second date.

We usually talk about heather and look at slides but if anyone wishes to learn about pruning heathers or heather cultivation then please come along to one of these meetings, you will be made welcome and we have experts on hand to guide you.

The third meeting in the year usually takes the form of a visit so that will be one of the topics discussed on 25th March.

Jean Preston

RHS Winter flowering Erica AGM

(Award of Garden Merit) Trial

The trial, planted up on two sites during the autumn of 2015, are soon to be assessed for the first time. The RHS have put together a forum of industry experts to carry out these assessments (see attached list). The trial will assess, compare and demonstrate a range of winter flowering cultivars submitted by UK nurserymen. They will be assessed for continuous flowering, disease resistance, quality of bloom, vigour and correct nomenclature.

The 88 cultivars being grown at Whitehall Nursery, Hampshire will be first to receive the forum, when those members designated for the south will visit on Thursday 16th February. The northern members of the forum will visit the planting at Threave Gardens, Dumfries and Galloway the following week on Thursday 23rd February. The assessments will be repeated again in the spring 2018 and 2019.

As well as these annual assessments, recordings are being carried out on the flowering performance of each cultivar, when they first start, in full bloom, and finish. Included in the trial are 26 cultivars that currently hold the AGM to act as a benchmark, such as *Erica carnea* 'Myretoun Ruby', *Erica x darleyensis* 'Kramer's Rote' and *Erica erigena* 'Irish Dusk'. At the end of the three year trial all the information will be collated and those of the 88 cultivars deemed to be worthy will receive the RHS Award of Garden Merit (AGM).

The Heather Society members can visit both trial sites, Whitehall Nursery is free (please call prior to visit) and Threave requires National Trust Scotland membership or the daily entrance fee.

John Hall

Planting of the New National Heather Collection RHS Wisley

The National Heather Collection at RHS Wisley is to be replanted in the spring of 2018 (as reported by Peter Jones RHS Woodland Manager, during The Heather Society Show September 2016). John Hall Plants has been given the task of providing the 1000 varieties, 20 plants of each. Cultivars not readily available will be produced from cuttings using material from the collection. By this summer over 600 varieties will have been propagated, fifty cuttings of each, to allow for the twenty strongest to be potted up and eventually planted into the new collection. As soon as all 20,000 plants have been produced and are ready for planting, the old collection will be bulldozed and the new area re-contoured, prepared and planted up - bigger and better.

John Hall

Bon Voyage!



Photographs from December 2015 to prove that heathers are addictive.

Even on an adventure to Norway, to see the Northern Lights, with the first stop to board my cruise ship at Bergen Harbour, what is the first thing I see but beautiful tubs planted with heathers and winter vegetables. So colourful even in December.

Thoroughly recommend a long weekend in Bergen, so much to see and do. Bergen is the capital of the county of Hordaland and is Norway's second largest city and it has a long history. It is known as the city of seven mountains, as it is surrounded by peaks. Sights include the Fish Market; Bryggen, an area of medieval merchants houses; Håkons Hall, a 13th century royal residence, the Fløibanen Funicular Railway that goes up Mount Fløyen for gorgeous views across Bergen to name but a few things to see and do.

Allison Fitz Earle

Congratulations Charles Nelson!

Royal Horticultural Society of Ireland

In celebration of its two hundredth anniversary, the RHSI board decided to revive the the awarding of medals, a practice that had lapsed, but which is consistent with the Society's aims in fostering excellence in horticulture.

At the beginning of 1939, the Society decided it would from time to time award a gold medal of honour, for distinguished services to horticulture in Ireland. There have been notable recipients over the years. Three of Ireland's most notable present-day horticulturists were awarded the Medal of

Honour on 3 December 2016: the RHSI's own Patron Helen Dillon, Thomas Pakenham and Charles Nelson.

The medal citation read

Charles Nelson

World-renowned botanist, and dedicated academic research scientist, Charles Nelson has made a very great contribution to our knowledge of Irish botany and Irish gardening.

While specializing in taxonomy, the depth of his researches, writings and lecturing on the history of Irish botany, Irish botanists and gardening in Ireland has been of immense interest and value. His research into hitherto unrecognized Irish botanical explorers and plant collectors, and the articles and books which followed, are of great relevance to many plantsmen, gardeners and modern-day travellers. Ireland's wild flowers and those garden plants unique to Irish gardens have all been recognized, described and brought to the attention of gardeners and others by his research and writing, thus helping ensure their conservation and preservation.

His high standards meant that many of his books have been beautifully illustrated and produced much sought after by botanists, gardeners and collectors and will not be surpassed. His collaboration with the artist Wendy Walsh was particularly productive.

Charles Nelson has raised considerably the profile of Ireland's plantsmen, plantswomen, plants and gardens. He generously represents, and has represented, Ireland on many international scientific societies. We thank him and wish him many happy years of retirement

Presentation of gold Medal of Honour to Dr Charles Nelson by the President of the RHSI, Robert Myerscough, 3 December 2016



Whilst looking through recently donated photographs at their local history society David came across the attached. Heather thatch was common in the area of the North Pennines because of its ready availability on the extensive moorland.

David Plumridge



A South African clothing company in Cape Town has taken a selection of beautiful botanical paintings by the local botanical artists, Vicki Thomas, and used them to produce two very attractive silk dresses in their Poetry range. One of the dresses has a Cape heath, *Erica perspicua*, which grows in marshes near Vicki's house at Betty's Bay. She is a renowned artist with many awards and exhibitions locally and abroad including some in Prince Charles' Highgrove Florilegium. The designer of the dresses was Nicola Oliver, daughter of Dr Ted Oliver of the HS. She works for the parent company Cape Union Mart.

Freshly planted August 2015
(A)

After first pruning,
2 weeks later (B)

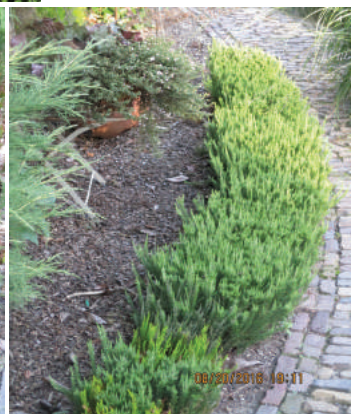


February 2016 'Zoe' and
snowdrops (C)



Below left:
Glomerella (Fungal
disease) sorted the
varieties (D)

Below right:
Only 'Zelia' survived
(E)



Calluna and Erica's for Hedges?

In the Summer of 2015 I planted a hedge with different varieties of Garden Girls from the Sunsetline-Group. This group consists of varieties without buds, but they often have a fantastic colored foliage.

These were planted in August 2015 (Photo A)

A seedling similar to 'Zelia' ('Zelia' is better, more upright!!)

'Zoe': yellow-green foliage in summer, in winter copper colors

'Zeta': yellow leaves in summer and winter.

A seedling similar to 'Zulu' ('Zulu' is more black).

I cut the hedge when the plants were too long and the hedge was not treated with pesticides. (Photo B)

You see the "red" 'Zoe' in February 2016 (Photo's C)

In August 2016 "Glomerella" a fungal disease sorted the varieties (photo D)

The result from this test is:

A colored hedge with different new varieties from the Sunsetline-group from Garden girls is impossible to make in a garden because most varieties are too sensitive,

But a hedge only planted with 'Zelia' can make a hedge for a few years!!! (Photo E)

The Flowering hedge with *Erica x veitchii* (original seedlings from Kurt Kramer) has no problems with diseases. I cut this hedge once a year, when the flowers are faded. (Photo F)

But I think, a hedge with rose *Erica australis* will be more beautiful!

Who will carry out a test with these plants?

For more information see www.gardengirls.de

Johannes Van Leaven



Left: *Erica x veitchii*
flowering hedge
(F)

The Backhouses are Back

Andrew WP Thomson
Backhouse at
Rossie Estate
Fife KY15 7UZ

As with all projects it started with a simple statement back in April 2016, from my wife, Caroline a Director of The Backhouse Heritage Centre located at our home Rossie Estate in Fife, "wouldn't it be good to grow a collection of Backhouse *Erica carnea* cultivars". Caroline, by the way, is a direct descendent through her mother's line of the Backhouse family, famed for their heathers, alpines and Rock Gardens. Research showed that there was a collection of twelve listed in the 1911 Backhouse Nursery Catalogue published to commemorate the Coronation of King George and Queen Mary. Over the past twelve years we have built up the largest collection of Heritage Backhouse daffodils in the world, recently awarded National Plant Status and now an RHS Partner Garden for the first time in 2017. So starting a collection of Backhouse *Erica carnea* cultivars seemed the right thing to do.

The first step was to research, contact and procure the twelve heathers detailed in the 1911 Backhouse catalogue with the help of David Edge of the Edge Nursery, Galloway Heathers and Bensons. To date we have sourced nine of the twelve, with David growing on one for us and two to find: *Erica carnea* 'Thomas Kingscote' & *Erica carnea* 'C J Backhouse', please do contact us if you know of a source.

Back to the project, it was in two phases, the first was to make eight long beds from the entrance down the sides of the walkway to the walled garden. To give you an idea of the scale of this, the total linear length of the beds was 235ft at an average width of 4ft. Given our soil is broadly Ph neutral, sometimes underlain by a clay/silt smear, we went about digging down 2 ft removing the lower foot and mixing with sustainably managed peat and 10 tonnes of a fine locally sourced sharp gravel along with 10 tonnes of very good garden top soil to back fill.

One last statistic, planting 6 plants per square metre meant we needed over 500 plants.

We also wanted an extended season of colour from the *Erica carnea*, so introduced *Calluna vulgaris*, *Daboecia cantabrica* and *Gentiana septemfida* along with a host of other plantings. These were all duly sourced in a mixture of 9cm & 1ltr pots, the beds fully prepared and isolated from the carpet of wild garlic before being metal edged.



When I was asked to write this article, I did not just want to fill it with a how to do it – to appease my engineering background - but also introduce some of the history behind the Backhouses and perhaps provide some insight into Mr Potter who worked with them. He was indeed instrumental in the collecting of the varieties for the 1911 catalogue, let me quote from it: *RICHARD POTTER'S SELECTION - Winter and Spring Flowering Varieties, selected by our Mr. Richard Potter during his Continental botanical rambles.*

The cost by the way, in Autumn 1912 was: *per dozen 30/-, per single plant 3/-.*

We have further research material on this – for a future article, watch this space.

Once the first phase was completed and the boarders planted out Caroline, who is also an artist, felt the Backhouse *Erica carnea* were not quite right in their position as they would suffer from shade and epimediums could better replace them. There was an unutilized south facing area to the right at the entrance by the Backhouse Café which prompted a second idea given the Backhouses were renowned for their Scree and Rock Gardens. With more research, a photograph of the Scree & Rock Garden at Elmet Hall, Roundhay, Leeds for Mr JH Kitson Esq, (John Hawthorn Kitson 1843 – 1899 was a Locomotive Engine Maker, whose father was the Mayor of Leeds) from the 1895 J. Backhouse & Son catalogue, which provided the inspiration for the area:



Although the site was on a slight slope it required extensive landscaping. The site is approximately 8m x 8m and step one was to clear it, take off the top soil and lay aside and then build up to the required levels. Working off the photograph we placed the some of the rocks first to get the overall look, and this proved helpful as it stimulated a debate which ended with a greater height being required, a low retaining wall being necessary and the generation of prominent mound for the Backhouse heathers. Rather than explain what we did, please go to our Facebook page www.facebook.com/backhouserossie and you will see two time lapsed videos of the 5 days hard graft in the Construction & Planting.

The key by the way to its' construction was the

forming of the good draining sub-soil which we then covered with a 50% soil: 25% grit: 12.5% sustainably managed peat & 12.5% of our best beech leaf mould, topped with a thick layer of locally sourced 6mm grit to a thickness of 3+ inches (a mere 10 tonnes). The planting out was interesting, as the Backhouse catalogues of the late 1800's and early 1900's showed the very extensive stock they carried of, for example, gentian, sedum and saxifrage along with some beautiful illustrations. We then set out to plant both rare and "good doers" along with varieties in the catalogues such as *Campanula pulla*. 255 plants later (and counting), many sourced from Rumbling Bridge Nursery, the Backhouse heathers now sit in prominent position on the front mound surrounded by alpines, all labelled up.



If you would like to visit us and see the Backhouse Heritage Centre, to learn more on the Backhouses, we have a café / shop and exhibition area along with the walled garden and nursery.

Please visit the website www.backhouserossie.co.uk

For opening times, plants and products and the Facebook page

www.facebook.com/backhouserossie for the time lapsed videos (please like our facebook page)

We look forward to welcoming you to Backhouse at Rossie and hearing if you know a source for the *Erica carnea* 'Thomas Kingscote' & *Erica carnea* 'C J Backhouse' the missing heathers to complete the heritage collection.

Andrew WP Thomson

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

When picking heather plants that you really like, the choice is very difficult as so many are appealing in their own way.



I came across *Erica terminalis* 'Thelma Woolner' at a small nursery in Corfe Mullen, Dorset about ten years ago and bought a couple of plants. I found out that the original plant was collected in central Sardinia by Mr. and Mrs. Woolner in 1967 and they noticed that its flowers are a shade darker red than the type. The original two plants are now about five feet high and are covered in bloom every year from about July to

December here in the Midlands. In fact with the changing weather patterns here last year one of the plants had a good deal of flower in January! The site where they are growing gets a fair amount of sun with very poor soil which doesn't seem to bother them. I understand that 'Thelma Woolner' is also lime tolerant. Both plants get a good trim with the shears every March and have never failed to produce a large amount of reddish purple flowers every year at the end of fresh green stems.

I have taken cuttings from this cultivar and found that it roots very easily in July and August. Several of my cuttings are now in the back garden and are doing well in different situations of soil and light. We have some quite severe frosts here in winter but none of them have damaged the plants. Bees love the flowers and our plants are visited by these and other insects during the summer months. Even the dead flowers can be attractive in the winter as they stay on the plant and have a russet brown colour.

You will have gathered that I think that 'Thelma Woolner' is a good garden plant and one of my favourites. I believe that it was The Heather Society's "Plant of the Month" in August 2016. The only problem is getting hold of it.

If you are interested, I can supply cutting material if you contact me at brian_b51@hotmail.co.uk

Brian Burling



Nursery Adverts



Retail division of Forest Edge Nurseries offering mail order and connoisseur's choice of over 400 varieties. Wholesale supplier to nurseries, garden centres and the landscape trades.

www.theheathergarden.co.uk
email...

info@theheathergarden.co.uk
Forest Edge Nurseries
Woodlands, Wimborne, Dorset, BH21 8LJ
Discount to Heather Society members

John Hall Plants Ltd

Specialist Heather Grower



John Hall Plants is a specialist heather retail nursery with over forty year experience.

This summer we'll have over 1000 varieties that we've propagated from the National Heather Collection held in the gardens at RHS Wisley.

Over 100,000 heathers are produced annually as one, two, and three year old plants.

As well as retail and mail order, we offer planting plans, landscaping and advice on planting and aftercare.

Opening Hours:

Mon – Fri 9am till 4pm Sat 9am till 1pm.

Visit the RHS Award of Garden Merit trial planted out on our nursery which showcases 88 of the best winter flowering Ericas.

The Heather Society receive a 10% discount

All are welcome, come and look round and take advantage of John's lifetime experience.

Please call John prior to your visit

info@johnhallplants.com

www.johnhallplants.com

www.facebook.com/john-hall-plants

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

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.



PERTSHIRE HEATHERS is a small family run horticultural nursery specialising in growing hardy Scottish grown heathers and heaths.

We sell mainly wholesale and deliver free within a 50 mile radius. Open for retail by prior appointment. We grow top quality plants in 8cm, 1 litre and 2 litre pots and can usually supply varieties for all year round colour.

If you would like to arrange a visit please give me a call 07734 175937 or email me at irene@perthshireheathers.com

Heather Society Conference Photographic Competition.

This photographic competition is open to all members of the Heather Society, excluding professional photographic members. Entries are invited, including name and address, for submission in hard copy form (postcard size) to be posted to Mrs Allison Fitz-Earle (address below) by the closing date of 31st August 2017, or brought to Conference.

There are 3 classes (one or more, to a max of 3 entries, welcomed in each class);

1) Close up photograph of single or group of heather flower spikes (may include visiting insect wildlife).

2) Photograph of a members heather garden.

3) Scenic photograph to include heathers in a natural environment.

Judging will take place at the Heather Society Conference at Somerset in September 2017 by those members attending. The winning photographs in each class will be awarded a monetary prize of £50.00 (see note below), in addition the same winning photographs will be judged for the award of the Silver Trophy presented in memory of Julian Fitz-Earle.

Copyright will stay with the owner of the photograph and anyone wishing to use it will be required to approach the owner of the photo for consent.

Postal entries should be sent to: Allison Fitz-Earle, 125 Caroline Way, Sovereign Harbour, Eastbourne. BN23 5AX

Note to members of Council.

Members of Council are not excluded from the competition, however as Charity Commission rules do not allow any benefit to be gained from their position, they will not qualify for any monetary prize or reward.

CONTACTS

Chairman	Mr David Edge Forest Edge Nurseries, Verwood Road, Woodlands, Wimborne, BH21 8LJ tel:01202 824387; fax: 01202 829564; email heathers@forestedgenurseries.co.uk
Hon. Secretary	Mr Phil Joyner 84 Kinross Road, Rushington, Totton, Southampton, SO40 9BN tel:02380 864336 email secretary@heathersociety.org
Hon. Treasurer & Membership Secretary	Mrs Allison Fitz-Earle 125 Caroline Way, Sovereign Harbour, Eastbourne, BN23 5AX tel: 07905825818 email membership@heathersociety.org
Newsletter Editor	Mrs Samantha Barnes c/o Forest Edge Nurseries, Verwood road, Woodlands, Wimborne, BH21 8LJ email admin@heathersociety.org
Conference Manager	Mrs Susie Kay Lettergesh East, Renvyle, County Galway, IRELAND tel:0035395 43575 email susiek@gofree.indigo.ie
Slide Librarian	Mrs Jean Preston 21 Church Street, Dunnington, York, YO19 9PP tel:01904489624 email preston.julian.j@gmail.com
Group Organizers	Everyone is very welcome to any local meeting or visit
Home Counties	Mr Barry Sellers 8 Croft Road, Norbury, London, SW16 3NF tel:07985 444266 email sellersbarry@aol.com
North East (UK)	Mrs Dorothy Warner Littlecroft, Click-em-in, Ponteland, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE20 9BQ tel:01661 823299
Yorkshire	Professor John Griffiths Preston Lodge, 60 Hall Road, Little Preston, Leeds, LS26 8UR tel:01132 863349 email J.Griffiths@leeds.ac.uk

THE HEATHER SOCIETY

Charity registered in England and Wales no. 261407

RULES

1. Name of the Society

The name of the Society shall be The Heather Society.

2. Objects of the Society.

The Society is instituted to assist the advancement of horticulture and in particular the improvement of and research into the growing of Heaths and Heathers and allied plants.

3. Membership

- a. The Society shall consist of Members and Honorary Members.
- b. Membership shall be open internationally to persons, societies and institutions interested in horticulture or botany.
- c. A Member who has given distinguished service to the Society over many years may, on recommendation of the Council, be elected President at an Annual General Meeting. The term of the President is not limited.

4. Officers

The Officers of the Society shall be the Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary.

5. Election of Officers

The Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary shall be elected at a General Meeting of the Society, and shall hold office until the end of the next Annual General Meeting when they shall retire, but be eligible for re-election.

6. Conduct of the Society's Affairs

- a. The management of the Society shall be the responsibility of a Council consisting of the Officers and not less than three elected Councillors.
- b. Councillors shall be elected for a term of three years, and on retirement shall be eligible for re-election.
- c. Nominations for election to the Council, with Proposer, Seconder and a statement of willingness to serve, must be submitted to the Secretary, to arrive at least 21 days before the date of the Annual General Meeting.
- d. The Council shall have the power to co-opt individual members to fill vacancies; a co-opted Councillor shall retire at the next Annual General Meeting and shall then be eligible for election.

7. Responsibilities of the Council

- a. The Council shall control the Society's administration and finances, determine what activities shall be undertaken, form local groups and appoint committees as may be necessary, to conduct the affairs of the Society.
- b. Council shall meet at least once a year to approve the annual report, and may also meet at other times and places convenient to its members.
- c. The President may attend Council meetings but may not vote.

8. Chairman

- a. The duty of the Chairman shall be to preside at meetings of the Society and of the Council.
- b. In the event of an equality of votes at a meeting of the Society or of the Council, the Chairman shall have a second or casting vote.
- c. A Deputy Chairman shall be elected by Council from among duly elected Councillors at the first meeting following the Annual General Meeting. In the absence of the Chairman, the Deputy Chairman shall preside at meetings of the Society or of the Council, and shall for the time being have all the authority, power and privilege of the Chairman.

9. Secretary

The Secretary shall be responsible for the organisation of Council meetings and General Meetings of the Society, for keeping minutes recording the business transacted at Council meetings and at General Meetings of the Society, and such minutes shall be signed, after adoption, by the Chairman of the appropriate meeting next following.

10. Treasurer

- a. The Treasurer shall be responsible to the Council for all matters relating to the financial affairs of the Society.
- b. At a convenient date toward the time of the Annual General Meeting the Treasurer shall prepare a statement of the Society's financial affairs, which will be subject to an appropriate form of independent financial assessment in line with the Charity Commission's guidance. The Treasurer shall furnish all facilities necessary for such an assessment.

11. General Meetings

- a. The Annual General Meeting shall be held before the end of September each year at such place and such time as the Council shall determine.
- b. Notice of the Annual General Meeting shall be sent to all Members not less than 21 days before the date of such a meeting, together with the Annual Report and the accounts for the preceding year.
- c. Council may, whenever it thinks fit, or within 90 days upon requisition signed by 20 members of the Society convene a Special General Meeting, giving 21 days notice, stating the exact nature of the business to be transacted.

12. Quorum

- a. The quorum for a Council Meeting shall be 5.
- b. The quorum for a General Meeting shall be 12.

13. Method of Voting

- a. Voting shall be by a show of hands unless the Chairman shall direct that a ballot shall be taken.
- b. No Member shall be entitled to vote at any meeting of the Society until his subscription for the current year has been paid.

14. Subscription

The annual subscription and privileges of Members shall be determined by Council. Such subscriptions shall become payable on the anniversary of joining, or on a date determined by Council.

15. The Society's Funds

- a. The Treasurer shall be responsible for all the Society's funds and for keeping the accounts thereof.
- b. All funds received on the Society's behalf shall be paid into the Society's banking account.
- c. Cheques drawn on the Society's account shall be signed by two of three persons appointed by the Council from among its members.
- d. The Council may authorise the Treasurer to sign cheques for day-to-day expenses up to such a limit as it may decide.
- e. In no circumstances shall any of the assets of the Society at any time be given or paid to any Member except:

- by way of reimbursement of expenses,
- as proper remuneration for services rendered to the Society as permitted under the law governing charities such as this Society, or
- with the prior written consent of the Commission.

16. Independent Financial Examiner

An independent financial examiner, in accord with the Charity Commission's guidance for charities such as this Society, shall be appointed at every Annual General Meeting and shall be eligible for re-appointment.

17. Resignation or death of Officers

If the Chairman, Secretary or Treasurer die or resign before the expiration of a term of office, the Council may fill the vacancy, but the person so appointed shall retire at the following Annual General Meeting and shall be eligible for re-election.

18. Election of Honorary Members

Persons who have achieved notable advances within the Society's objects, may be elected by the Council as Honorary Members and shall not be required to pay an annual subscription. The number of Honorary Member shall not exceed 8 at any time.

19. Election of Vice-Presidents

- a. Individuals who make, or have made, very significant contributions to the work of The Heather Society or its affiliated societies may, on the recommendation of Council, be elected Vice-Presidents at an Annual General Meeting of the Society.
- b. The number of Vice-Presidents shall not exceed six at any time.
- c. The privileges of Vice-Presidents shall be as determined by Council.

20. Rules

- a. These Rules may be amended only at a General Meeting of the Society and only if notice of the proposed deletion, or addition, has been sent to all members not less than 21 days before the meeting, provided always that no alteration will be made that will cause the Society to cease to be a Charity in Law.
- b. A copy of the Rules shall be sent to every Member.

21. Dissolution

The Society can only be dissolved at a General Meeting by a majority vote of members present. In the event of the Society being wound up, after payment of all debts and liabilities, the assets of the Society shall pass to a Charity with similar objects, or to be used for similar charitable purposes.

22. Prohibition on the use of the Society's name

The name of the Society shall not be used by any Member for any purpose of individual trade or profit.

NOTE: The word "Commission" within the above text means the "Charity Commission".

The above Rules were approved at the Annual General Meeting, on 11 September 2016, Perth, Scotland