Heathers 13

Yearbook of The Heather Society 2016

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ISSN 0440-5757

The Heather Society
c/o Tippitiwitchet Cottage, Hall Road, Outwell, Wisbech

Japanese "fireworks": new seedlings of Cape heaths by Takayuki Kobayashi (see p. 74)

Heathers **13**: 1–3

Wisley's paintings of award-winning heathers

Yvette Harvey and Louise O'Beirne
Herbarium, Royal Horticultural Society Garden Wisley, Woking, Surrey, GU23 6QB

A little known element of the herbarium at the Royal Horticultural Society Garden Wisley is the collection of paintings. These are by renowned artists who were commissioned to illustrate all certificated plants between 1922 and 1951 (Elliott 2004: 284), although the collection also includes portraits of Award plants from 1905 until 1956, with the exception of orchids that have been commissioned since 1897 until present day.

From 1905 until 1956, works by Alfred John Wise predominate in the collection, with the exception of a few years. Elsie Kohnlein illustrated many award-winning plants between 1922 and 1926 (latterly as Mrs Dykes after marrying). From 1926 until the start of the Second World War a number of artists were commissioned including Dorothy Martin, Eva Francis, Alfred John Wise, Winifred Walker and Stella Ross-Craig. It was only after the Second World War that photography became the main tool to record the award-winning plants, and we also curate (and add to) this collection of slides and prints.

The painting collection comprises 3,314 plant portraits. There are 396 paintings of members of the *Ericaceae*. Most of these are *Rhododendron* (377) although it includes three *Calluna* and eight *Erica* (McClintock 1991).

Calluna 'H. E. Beale' AM Floral Committee 10 September 1929 painted by Stella Ross-Craig (exhibited by Maxwell & Beale, Broadstone) (see p. 2).

Calluna 'H. E. Beale' FCC Floral Committee B 21 September 1943 painted by A. J. Wise(exhibited by R. D. Trotter Esq., Ockley).

Calluna 'Alba Plena' AM 13 September 1938 painted by Dorothy Martin (exhibited by Messrs Maxwell & Beale, Broadstone).

Erica australis f. *albiflora* 'Mr Robert' AGM 1993, AM 15 Jan 1929 painted by Eva Francis(exhibited by Messrs R. Veitch & Sons Ltd, Royal Nurseries, Alphington, near Exeter).

Erica australis 'Mount Stewart' AM 19 May 1936 painted by A. J. Wise (exhibited by Marchioness of Londonderry, Mountstewart [as it appears both in the address and on the actual watercolour]).

Calluna vulgaris flore pleno
' H.E.Beale '.

Shown by Messrs. Maxwell & Beale.

Address Broadstone,Dorset.

Date 10th September,1929.

Award Award of Merit.

Erica australis 'Riverslea' AGM 30 April 1946 (STANDARD*) AM Floral Committee B 30 April 1946 painted by A. J. Wise) (exhibited by Messrs M. Pritchard & Sons, Ltd, Christchurch).

Erica canaliculata 'Boscawen's Variety' AM 9 Feb. 1937 painted by A. J. Wise (exhibited by L. de Rothschild, Exbury).

Erica tetralix f. *alba* 'Alba Mollis' AM 8 June 1927 painted by Eva Francis (exhibited by D. Stewart & Sons, Ferndown).

Erica vagans f. *alba* 'Lyonesse' AGM 1993, AM 31 July 1928 painted by Eva Francis (exhibited by Messrs Maxwell & Beale, Broadstone).

Erica ventricosa 'Superba' AM 26 April 1938 painted by A. J.Wise (exhibited by L. de Rothschild, Exbury).

Erica verticillata 'Major' AM 31 August 1937 painted by Winifred Walker (exhibited L. de Rothschild, Exbury); reproduced in Cleevely 1997: 23).

AM = Award of Merit; FCC = First Class Certificate; AGM = Award of Garden Merit.

The Wisley team is currently digitizing the whole herbarium and nomenclatural standard* specimens and types are currently available to view on the JSTOR website (URL http://plants.jstor.org/). When an "advanced search" is attempted, our herbarium code is WSY. The paintings have yet to be digitized, but if you would like to see the collection, or a specific image please or by email. **

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* A nomenclatural standard is the herbarium specimen or illustration of a cultivar (cultivated variety) which forms a permanent record of the distinguishing characteristics of that cultivar. Using the standard specimen can help fix a name and act as a reference point when the application of a plant name has become confused.

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Heathers **13**: 4–8

Erica × *factitia*, a hand-made, winter-flowering, hardy heather

E. Charles Nelson
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The natural geographic ranges of *Erica lusitanica* Rudolphi (Portuguese heath) and *E. carnea* L. (winter, or mountain heath) do not overlap so there can be no wild-origin, natural hybrids. While both species have long been cultivated, at least in gardens in Britain, there are also no reports from gardeners of any spontaneous hybrids between these species even though each has produced such hybrids with other species (Nelson 1999, 2011: Table 2, p. 4). For example, *E.* × *darleyensis* Bean (Darley Dale heath) arose when the two rather similar winter- to spring-blooming heathers *E carnea* and *E. erigena* R. Ross (Irish heath) crossed in gardens (Nelson 2011: 316–319), and, likewise, *E* × *veitchii* Hort. R. T. Veitch ex Bean (Veitch's heath) is the offspring of *E. arborea* L. (tree heather) and the again rather similar *E. lusitanica* (Nelson 2011: 322–326). In the later

Figure 1. Young pot-grown plant of *E.* × *factitia* 'Johannes van Leuven' (photograph by courtesy of J. van Leuven).

decades of the last century, a concerted effort was made by several enthusiasts and nurserymen to create other novel heather hybrids (for a history see Nelson 2011: 327–329), partly out of sheer curiosity and partly in attempts to raise heathers possessing new and distinctive characters that would prove suitable for cultivation. *E.* × *oldenburgensis* D. C. McClint. (*E. arborea* × *carnea*), for example, was created by Kurt Kramer. The Oldenburg heath starts flowering in late autumn and continues into spring and in 'Ammerland', after the flowers have faded, the bright orange-red new shoots prolong that cultivar's interest (Nelson 2011: 346–348). *E.* × *krameri* D. C. McClint. (Kramer's heath) is another artificial hybrid, also created by Kurt Kramer, involving *E. carnea* and *E. spiculifolia* Salisb. (Balkan heath), but it is not common in cultivation (Nelson 2011: 343–345).

Figure 2. Young plant, in Outwell, of *E.* × *factitia* 'Johannes van Leuven' showing coloured young shoots (photograph by E. C. Nelson).

Hybrids involving *Erica lusitanica* have been raised by several growers, but apart from *E.* × *veitchii* none is yet widely established in cultivation. A single clone (named 'Lucy Gena' (registered name E.2009:03; see *Heathers* 7: 69; Nelson 2011: 349) was raised by Barry Sellers from seed produced when *E. lusitanica* was deliberately fertilized with pollen from *E. erigena*. It is not an easy plant to keep or to propagate and to date I have been unable to study sufficient fresh material to make detailed observations. The reverse cross was attempted by Kurt Kramer without any viable seed being produced, whereas Professor John Griffiths did obtain viable seed but his seedlings perished before they could be studied (Nelson 2011: 349).

As I noted in my *Curtis's botanical magazine* monograph *Hardy heathers from the northern hemisphere* (Nelson 2011: 349), Kramer also succeeded in obtaining viable seeds when he crossed *Erica lusitanica* and *E. carnea*. He had nine seedlings, five of which blossomed in 2008. However he did not keep these as they were not regarded by him as being of outstanding merit or interest, and as far as I can ascertain no plants from Kramer's breeding work with these species survive. Subsequently, Johannes van Leuven started to experiment with the same two species and late in 2014 several of his seedlings came into bloom.

In December 2010, van Leuven cross-pollinated an unnamed seedling of *Erica lusitanica* with pollen from *E. carnea* 'Winterrubin'. Of the resulting seedlings, two clones are still in cultivation (here designated nos 2010-1 and 2010-2) Only no. 2010-2 has been propagated; cuttings roots very easily (J. van Leuven, pers. comm., December 2014). Two years later, van Leuven repeated this interspecies cross using pollen from *E. carnea* 'Winterfreude'. At present, he has ten clones from these seedlings (herbarium voucher specimens in WSY: 0108367 (seedling no. 1); 0108368 (seedling no. 7); 0108369 (seedling no. 11); 0108370 (seedling no. 20); 0108371 (seedling no. 21); 0108372 (seedling no. 24). The seedlings are still being assessed for their possible merits as garden plants.

Figure 3. *E.* × *factitia* 'Johannes van Leuven' (photograph by courtesy of J. van Leuven).

Examination of van Leuven's seedlings (clones) indicates that the general overall floral morphology differs in significant ways from that of the two parents: for example, there are vestigial, hirsute spurs of various lengths at the base of the anthers (*Erica lusitanica* has two prominent hirsute spurs attached to each anther; there are no spurs in *E. carnea*). As I have come to expect with hybrids, some of the seedlings display irregular malformations or distortions including crumpled (malformed) styles.

The first clone I examined, van Leuven no. 2010-2, from which the holotype has been selected, is a floriferous plant with delicate, grass-green foliage and white flowers. In the spring of 2015 two young plants growing outdoors in Outwell produced salmon-pink new growth. While the corolla is smaller than in most named clones of *Erica carnea*, the abundance of blossom suggests this will prove to be a garden-worthy plant. Thus, I have also named

this clone after its raiser, Johannes van Leuven, of Geldern, Germany, who is an enthusiastic plantsman as well as successful nurseryman whose other heather selections include (for example) *Calluna vulgaris* 'Moulin Rouge' (reg. no. 193), *E. cinerea* 'Dave' (E.2010:09) , 'Mark' (E.2010:10) and 'Tobi' (E.2010:11) (named after his three sons), and *E. mammosa* 'Orange Beauty' (E.2005:05).

Recognizing that this hybrid was created by deliberate cross-pollination, the Latin epithet factitia is chosen for it; factitius is an adjective meaning "made by art" or, more prosaically, artificial (Stearn 1973).

Erica × *factitia* **E. C. Nelson**. Type: cultivated in Gartenbau Johannes van Leuven, Ilmenweg 39, Geldern, Germany: **holo.** 3 November 2014 ("Erica lusitanica × Erica carnea Nr. 2"), *J. van Leuven* **WSY**(0108359)!; **iso. WSY**(0108360)!

DESCRIPTION. *Variable evergreen shrub* represented in cultivation (in 2015) by about 10 seedling clones. *Shoots* appearing glabrous but with sparse, minute hairs on ridges between the leaves; young shoots discoloured, pale salmon pink. *Leaves* in 3s, linear, ±9mm long, ±0.7mm wide, glabrous or very sparsely hirsute; margins recurved and contiguous underneath, sulcus linear, closed; *petiole* flattened. *Inflorescence* comprising solitary flowers, or whorls of (2–)3 flowers, in terminal clusters on axillary shoots, crowded and appearing to form showy panicles. *Flowers* white when mature, but some clones have very slight pink tinge to the buds (due to red-brown anthers). *Pedicel* curving, ±3mm long, glabrous, with bract and bracteoles about the mid-point; bract less than 1mm long, margins with short, simple hairs, some with glandular tips; *bracteoles* similar to bract. *Calyx* white, waxy, thicker in texture than corolla, glabrous, ±2mm long, with 4 narrow, triangular lobes, fused at base, apex greenish around sulcus, with few very short hairs. *Corolla* ovate-campanulate, ±5(–6)mm long, with 4 erect, rounded lobes, ±1.5mm long. *Stamens* 8, to 6mm long, included or partly emergent from mouth of corolla; *filament* linear, narrow, white, straight, or rarely with slight sigmoid bend toward apex; *anther* thecae dark red-brown when immature, elongated, ±1.2mm long, pore lateral, narrowly elliptical, ±0.5mm long; usually with 2 minute (to 0.3mm long), vestigial spurs at junction with filament, irregularly hairy, or replaced by irregular tuft of hairs, or apparently absent. *Ovary* ±2mm long, ±1mm in diameter, usually green, glabrous, ± cylindrical to vase-shaped; *style* 4–7mm long, white, tinged pink or green at apex, included or emergent (in some clones very markedly so), terete, straight (except when malformed); *stigma* same width as style; nectary dark green.

FLOWERING PERIOD. (December–) January–April.

CULTIVARS.

'Johannes van Leuven' (reg. no. E-2015:01): clone no. 2010-2 (from which holotype was selected) (standard specimen WSY0108359; duplicate WSY0108359); flowers white; calyx white with greenish tips; style slightly emergent, tinged pink or green at apex; anthers with vestigial spurs reduced to a tuft of minute hairs.

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Heathers **13**: 9–13

Invasive heaths and heathers in Tasmania

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Tasmania, Australia's most southern and only island state has a climate and topography similar to parts of Great Britain and Ireland. However, Australia's flora is very different to that of other continents. Heathers and heaths familiar in Europe, western Asia and Africa – particularly *Erica* and *Calluna* species – do not naturally occur in Australia. So it is no wonder with their natural beauty and the European heritage of many Australians, we chose to import these plants for our gardens. Having said this, Australia does have native plant nurseries and Australians have a significant love of native plant species. Australia also has its own heaths. For example, there is common heath (*Epacris impressa*) from southeastern Australia (Figure 1). However, the mainstream nursery trade has a strong focus on exotic species. Unfortunately, a percentage of these exotics (including some *Erica* species and *Calluna*) become environmental and agricultural weeds.

Figure 1. Australian native common heath (*Epacris impressa*) grows naturally through much of Tasmania (photograph by M. Noble).

Heaths and heather (*Erica* species and *Calluna vulgaris*) have been recorded as weeds in places including Europe, North America, New Zealand and Australia. More than 30 species of *Erica* are recorded as being weedy and/or naturalized (outside their natural range) somewhere in the world (Nelson 2011, Randall 2012). Eighteen *Erica* species are recorded in Australia (naturalized referring to having established populations outside cultivation). Of these, six are naturalized in Tasmania (de Salas and Baker 2014): *Erica lusitanica*, *E. arborea*, *E. scoparia*, *E. baccans*, *E. caffra* and *E. holosericea*. The first three species originate from Europe and the other three species are from South Africa. In weed risk assessments, the *Erica* species of European origin consistently rate as of greater concern for Tasmania than those from South Africa. The reasons for this are not certain, but are probably linked to Tasmania's climate and landscape similarities to parts of Europe.

Erica species have been introduced to Australia almost exclusively as garden plants (Randall 2012). Being hardy in infertile soils and in environments characterized by low rainfall and extreme cold, *Erica* species readily adapt to Australian conditions. Portuguese heath (or Spanish heath) (*E. lusitanica*) and tree heath (*E. arborea*) are recognized globally as two most serious invasive species (Weber 2003). Portuguese heath is one of Tasmania's worst environmental weeds. Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) is also present in Tasmania and both are declared weeds under state legislation. Tree heath (*E. arborea*) is established in Tasmania and, if left uncontrolled, is expected to spread through the state.

Certain aspects of the biology of *Erica* species make them very effective invaders in new landscapes. They are prolific seeders with some species (for example, *E. cinerea* (bell heather) and *E. lusitanica*) recorded as producing between half a million and a million seeds per square metre (Turner and Conran 2004). The seeds are very fine and readily transported in soil that has stuck to things like shoes, tyres and machinery. *Erica* seed can also be long-lived with, for example, seed of *E. cinerea* remaining viable in the soil for three or four decades. Species of *Erica* readily tolerate low-fertility soils and are generally well adapted to acid soils: Tasmanian soils are naturally acidic and impoverished.

The drier parts of the Tasmanian landscape have evolved with fire as a regular feature. *Erica* species including the European natives, are well adapted to respond to fire and clearing, often having good capacity for vegetative regeneration, such as through re-sprouting (Canals and Sebastia 2002). Species like *E. scoparia* (besom heath) and *E. australis* (southern heath) can have massive

lignotubers (woody swelling of the root crown) that support the plant through fire, drought and clearing (Ojeda *et al.* 1996). When combined with their capacity to build in the soil a substantial, long-lasting seed-bank that survives fire relatively well (Turner and Conran 2004), in Tasmania invasive Erica species are advantaged by fire and tend to extend their distribution following fires.

Now widespread in Tasmania, *Erica lusitanica* typically first appears in new areas along sections of road. Its fine seed is readily transported by vehicles. From the roadside it easily advances into native vegetation or unimproved pastures. *E. lusitanica* often invades native vegetation where the native heath *Epacris impressa* grows. I recently photographed the two flowering together. It is a pretty picture (Figure 2) until you realize that one species is on a rapid advance in a place where it is not meant to be.

Figure 2. Native *Epacris impressa* with the invasive Portuguese heath (*Erica lusitanica*) in the background (photograph by M. Noble).

Erica species can produce changes in an environment which make a location more suitable for their own permanence (Canals and Sebastia 2002). These changes include their tendency to grow in dense thickets cutting out light and resources that other plant species might use. Perhaps most potent though is their capacity to modify soil chemistry to inhibit other plant species from establishing nearby (allelopathy). *Erica* plants contain chemical compounds that enter the soil around them (Rice 1984) and reduce competition from other

species. Where they are establishing as weeds, *Erica* plants use their biological features to their advantage and displace native vegetation or impede pasture grass establishment.

In their natural habitats and beyond, the European *Erica* species have a remarkable capacity to grow from lowlands to high altitude (*E. carnea*, for example, is recorded at about 2,400m altitude: see Nelson 2011). They can also exist in extreme cold. *Erica tetralix* and *E. carnea*, for example, have frost resistance for –20ºC or lower. *E. scoparia* has naturalized in the extreme conditions at La Possession in the sub-Antarctic Crozet Archipelago (Frenot *et al.* 2001, 2005).

The invasiveness of *Erica* species has proven, at least in the case of species originating from Europe, to be relatively rapid and severe in Tasmania. Besom heath (Figures 3 and 4) was first recorded as naturalized in Tasmania in 1983. It is thought to have been brought into one rural garden and now infests hundreds of hectares of the surrounding landscape. Weed risk assessment indicates that it has the potential to spread extensively through much of the State.

Figures 3 and 4. Besom heath (*Erica scoparia*), first recorded in Tasmania in 1983, has since infested hundreds of hectares (photographs by courtesy of Amanda Smith (DPIPWE Tasmania) and Matthew Baker (Tasmanian Herbarium) respectively).

There are good reasons for Tasmania to be concerned about the arrival of new weedy *Erica* species. The more *Erica* species present in one location, the greater the potential implications. Certain species have the capacity to invade in situations where other *Erica* species may not. For example, *E. tetralix* (cross-leaved heath) has an outstanding capacity to grow in waterlogged situations. In its natural environment it will grow in habitats that are too wet for most other *Erica* species (Nelson and Coker 1974). Likewise, yet another European species *E. cinerea* will out-compete related species in dry conditions and on mineral

soils (Nelson and Coker 1974). So with six *Erica* species already naturalized in Tasmania and many other species in our nurseries and gardens, there is a challenge to stem the tide of invasive species.

The approximately 820 *Erica* species (Nelson 2011) provide a broad starting point when considering whether additional Erica could become weed-risks in Tasmania. However, the species of immediate concern are those with both global recognition for weediness (the 30 or so species mentioned earlier). From a Tasmanian perspective we are particularly concerned with those that originate from Europe (being highly suited to Tasmania's climate).

Weed declaration under Tasmanian legislation provides a means to prevent entry and distribution of species that threaten to become invasive. Declaration also assists with the management of those species that have become established weeds and require management in the landscape. The Tasmanian Government is reviewing the situation with *Erica* to mitigate or manage invasive concerns.

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Heathers **13**: 14–17

Let's hear it for heathers

Jim McColl
[Edited reprint from *The Press and Journal* (Aberdeen), 11 August & 18 August 2015]

It is no secret, I love heathers and as the 'Scotch heather' season approaches, and I happen to be planning a wee heather garden, it seems an opportune moment to promote this group of plants. Firstly, a heather garden can have all-year-round appeal and secondly it requires minimal maintenance. If you include a few dwarf conifers, it becomes even more of a three dimensional picture.

I sense that such planting schemes have gone out of fashion of late, I certainly haven't seen any of the modern garden designers take up the theme at Chelsea, Gardening Scotland, et cetera. Yet, if we are to believe that gardens are getting smaller and people are getting busier, looking for low-maintenance plantings, surely the formula fits the bill? I would be the first to agree that a pukka rock garden might be even more attractive and intriguing but for the moment, let's concentrate on heaths and heathers.

Figure 1. A nostalgic look back at a stunning heather garden, Cherrybank, Perth, about 1998.

My own theory for the demise of this planting style relates to the availability of the plants themselves. I might well have mentioned this before in a slightly different context (bedding plants), I think the problem lies with garden centre selling. Basically, they limit choice. It is very noticeable that they are reluctant to sell flowering plants that are not actually in flower.

In other words, you are unlikely to see, at this moment in time, a heather plant offered for sale that would normally flower during the winter months. Of course I can be proved wrong but I've tried and on any given day go looking for a range of flowering heaths and heather to give you flowers almost every month of the year and the odds are you've had it!

Fortunately, there are specialist nurseries around the country who still provide such a service as well as online specialist suppliers but I know little about that option. The other alternative is to build up a collection over time as plants in flower become available but that is tedious and not likely to be acceptable. I certainly couldn't be bothered.

Now then, what about soil conditions for such a planting scheme?

As most people know this group of plants prefer acid soil, it is worth checking that before you start. Whilst the incorporation of organic matter will help to take the pH down it is a slow process and there is a quicker way.

For those of you unfamiliar with the term pH, it is a scale which measures soil acidity. The figure pH7 is in the middle of the scale indicating that the soil is neither acid nor alkaline. As the number declines, that indicates increasing acidity and conversely as it increases above pH7, the soil is becoming more alkaline. Not wishing to bamboozle you, I have to add that the scale is logarithmic!

I don't understand it either but it means that the difference between whole numbers is wide and we actually talk of changes of tenths. For example a soil as pH5.5 is slightly more acid that a soil at pH5.6. No matter, heaths and heathers thrive where the soil acidity is below pH6, even better if you get it down to pH5. How is it done? The product for this job is called Sulphur Soil (it used to be referred to as Sulphur Chips). Applied at 50gms per square metre, it will reduce the pH one whole number, for example, from pH6 to pH5, just like that.

If you are taken with the idea, do a wee bit of research before you begin. Within each species of *Erica* (heather) you will find a range of varieties exhibiting different flower colour, foliage colour, vigour and habit.

This is how the timing works:

Figure 2. *Erica carnea* 'Golden Starlight'.

Figure 3. *Erica cinerea* 'Atrosanguinea'.

Figure 4. *Erica vagans* 'Mrs Donaldson'.

- *Erica carnea* varieties (incidentally tolerant of alkaline conditions) flowering in the November to late April period.
- *Erica* × *darleyensis* varieties – taller, flowering in late winter into spring.
- *Erica erigena* (formerly *E. mediterranea*) varieties – taller, flowering March to May.
- *Erica cinerea* (bell heather) – flowering June to September.
- *Erica tetralix* (cross-leaved heath) – flowering June to October.
- *Erica vagans* (Cornish heath) – flowering July to October.

And then there is the bonnie purple heather of Scotland – *Calluna vulgaris*, with a whole range of foliage and flower colours to choose from. With the right selection, their season lasts from July to November.

There you have it, flower colour, evergreen and coloured foliage all year round. Feed young plants in the spring and clip off the dead flower heads, the best example of a low-maintenance garden for many situations.

A little heather garden can be improved by adding in a few wee conifers. They improve the picture because of their colour, shape and form and fortunately they enjoy the same growing conditions as heaths and heathers. I am inclined to suggest that they go together like tatties and mince!

The problem we have is that part of the definition refers to dwarf conifers. Over the years many people have complained to me that what they bought as a dwarf conifer turned out to be a monster and I can understand that because young, well-established conifers, just two or three years old quickly don the characteristic shape of an adult tree and as such they look petite and very desirable.

There is only one way to avoid being duped, albeit unintentionally, and that is to do your homework. You cannot always believe what you read on the label. I recently saw a young three-year-old golden Lawson cypress, about 60cm described as a dwarf conifer and I know that it will grow to at least 5m high!

Figure 5. *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana* 'Minima'.

Figure 6. *Picea glauca var. albertiana* 'Conica'.

Your research may be a little time-consuming and bothersome because some of these little beauties have very long unwieldy names. Prepare your plan and I reckon you will finish up with one or two of the following.

- *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana* 'Minima'. Dark-green foliage, ball shaped and reaching 60cm high in 10 years.
- *Chamaecyparis pisifera* 'Boulevard' forms a narrow column with steel blue foliage, reaching 2m high in 10 years.
- *Juniperus communis* 'Compressa', pencil-shaped, about 45cm tall after 10 years.
- *Picea glauca* var. *albertiana* 'Conica', about 1m high in 10 years with a neat pyramidal shape.
- *Thuya occidentalis* 'Rheingold', with a broad conical habit and a rich gold color, reaching 1m in 10 years.

All photographs by Jim McColl.

Heathers **13**: 18-21

Winter-flowering *Erica* AGM trials

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The Royal Horticultural Society has set up an Award of Garden Merit (AGM) trial on winter-flowering *Erica*. Last September (2015), 88 commercially available cultivars of *Erica carnea* (winter, or mountain heath), *E.* × *darleyensis* (Darley Dale heath) and *E. erigena* (Irish heath) were planted (five 9cm plants of each) on two sites, in the north at Threave Gardens (National Trust for Scotland), Dumfries and Galloway, and in the south at Whitehall Nursery, Hampshire. The list of cultivars can be found on the member's page of The Heather Society's website. The trial will have one year to establish and then will be assessed in the springs of 2017, 2018 and 2019.

The selection of winter-flowering cultivars was made from those grown and readily available from the most prominent specialist heather nurseries in the United Kingdom: Bensons Nurseries, Forest Edge Nurseries, John Hall Plants, John Richards Nurseries and Kingfisher Nurseries. These nurseries generously donated all the plants for this trial, 1,144 in total.

Figure 1. Part of the planting for the AGM trial at Threave (photograph of Brian McMillan).

Threave Gardens planted up the heathers across two island beds, on an open, sloping elevated site. The soil is shallow clay with pH 5.5, on rock bed. *Erica* cultivars were successfully grown here previously. Varieties have been planted depending on flower and foliage colour, eventual height and spread, habit, etc., as this will remain as a permanent display.

Figure 3. Whitehall Nursery trial beds (photograph by John Hall).

At Whitehall Nursery the planting has been laid out purely on a trial basis, alphabetically by cultivar name, five plants of each cultivar in separate 1 metre-square raised beds. The soil is limed sandy soil with pH 7.6. Also at Whitehall Nursery, three plants of each of the 88 cultivars have been potted up into 3-litre pots, using a proven peat-free growing medium supplied by Melcourt. Should the trial be successful in all three soil types it will prove the ability of these winter-flowering heaths to thrive in acidic, alkaline and peat-free soils.

The Heather Society's members and members of the Royal Horticultural Society can visit these trials at any time*, with the flowering period being at its best between February and March for the majority of the cultivars, but flowers will be evident from November through to May.

The AGM logo on a plant's nursery or sale label shows that it has earned the Award of Garden Merit – it is the RHS's seal of approval that the plant performs

Figure 4. One of the 1 × 1m raised beds at Whitehall Nursery (photograph by John Hall).

reliably in the garden. The AGM logo is used throughout the horticultural trade, by nurseries, garden centres and online plant and seed suppliers, as well as in catalogues, books and magazines. To achieve the AGM a plant must be

- Excellent for ordinary use in appropriate conditions
- Available
- Of good constitution
- Essentially stable in form and colour
- Reasonably resistant to pests and diseases

Awards are given at the end of the trial period and are judged by an expert horticultural forum. The forum assessing this particular trial will be made up of John Hall (chairman) with representatives from The Heather Society, the RHS Woody Committee, the National Trust for Scotland and specialist heather nurserymen.

The judging criteria will focus on hardiness, length of flowering, quality of flowers, foliage colour and resistance to pests and diseases. Records will be kept and photographs taken at first flowering, first reasonable flush of flower (one-third open), end of flowering (two-thirds of flowers spent), foliage colour, and changes in colour and tip-growth colour, as well as height and spread. Thirty of the cultivars in this trial already hold an Award of Garden Merit and will act as bench-marks by which to judge the others.

The primary aim of this trial is obviously to assess this range of *Erica* clones with the view to awarding the AGM to those worthy, but much, much more can, and should be gained from this three-year trial. The prospect of raising awareness of these varied and adaptable plants is endless. With the aid of good photographs the media can, and will be persuaded to promote these worthwhile garden plants, especially with the weight of the Royal Horticultural Society behind this trial. We owe it to ourselves to get the maximum publicity from this trial.

As a footnote, the RHS have promised to follow this trial with one on summer flowering heathers. I will hold them to this.

List of cultivars in AGM trial

Erica carnea

'Adrienne Duncan'
'Ann Sparkes'
'Antje' 'Atrorubra'
'Aurea'
'Aztec Gold'
'Bell's Extra Special'
'Branton Bamford'
'Challenger'
'Claribelle'
'Columbia'
'December Red'
'Diana Young'
'Dorset Sunshine'
'Eva'
'Foxhollow'
'Golden Starlet'
'Heathwood'
'Hilletje'
'Ice Princess'
'Isabell'
'John Pook'
'Kathy'
'King George'
'Lohses Rubin'
'Loughrigg'
'Margaret Benson'
'March Seedling'
'Memory'
'Myretoun Ruby'
'Nadja'
'Nathalie'
'Pink Spangles'
'Porter's Red'
'R.B. Cooke'
'Rosalie'
'Rubinette'
'Ruby Glow'
'Saskia'
'Schneekuppe'
'Springwood Pink'
'Springwood White'
'Tanja'
'Treasure Trove'
'Vivellii'
'Westwood Yellow'
'Whitehall'
'Winter Beauty'
'Winterfreude'
'Winter Rubin'
'Winter Snow'
'Wintersonne'

Erica × darleyensis

'Bert'
'Bing'
'Darley Dale'
'Epe'
'Eva Gold'
'Furzey'
'George Rendall'
'Ghost Hills'
'Golden Perfect'
'Jenny Porter'
'Jack H. Brummage'
'J. W. Porter'
'Katia'
'Kramers Rote'
'Lena'
'Lucie'
'Margaret Porter'
'Mary Helen'
'Moonshine'
'Phoebe' '
Rubina'
'Silberschmelze'
'Snow Surprise'
'Spring Surprise'
'Tweety'
'White Glow'
'White Perfection'
'White Spring
Surprise'
'Winter Surprise'
'Winter Treasure'

Erica erigena

'Brightness'
'Golden Lady'
'Irish Dusk'
'Irish Salmon'
'Thing Nee'
'W. T. Rackliff'

* Entry to Whitehall Nursery is free; please phone before visiting to ensure the nursery is open. Access to Threave is free to National Trust of Scotland members or at the standard entry charge.

Heathers **13**: 22–28

Who was St Dabeoc?

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Introduction

So much has been written on the naming of heathers that it is either brave or foolhardy to say more, particularly about St Dabeoc's heath, which has had more than its fair share of attention, mainly because of the error in the Latin binomial. Also, we do not know for sure who St Dabeoc was, why he was sainted, and especially why the plant bears his name. My excuse for venturing in this field is that oral or folk tradition as conveyed in place names may help us find an answer.

Professor William J. Watson (1865–1948) of Edinburgh University was a noted Celtic scholar and his research into origin of place names is highly regarded. He wrote a book, published in 1926, called *The history of the Celtic place-names of Scotland*[1], but it turns out that many of these names originated with the introduction of Christianity into Scotland by Irish monks. It gives another window into the time when Irish monks were the dominant receptacle of civilization after the collapse of the Roman Empire. Professor Watson was a firm believer in the power of oral tradition and its ability to get to the truth.

Figure 1. Professor William J. Watson.

Our knowledge of Irish saints comes almost entirely from church sources, and chief among these is a massive compendium entitled *Lives of the fathers, martyrs, and other principal saints* (commonly referred to as *Lives of the saints*), written in France by Alban Butler from 1756 to 1759. This work went through many editions until a complete twelve-volume version was published in 1926 by Herbert Thurston and further revised by Donald Attwater in 1956.[2] *Lives of the saints* is not so much historical as liturgical, and is a calendar of feast days to be observed in the Roman Catholic Church. There are many more saints than days in the year, so that several saints are celebrated on one day, and some saints of the same name can be celebrated on several days. Its accuracy has been attacked by the *Chambers biographical dictionary*, calling it less fact than fiction, but Wikipedia takes a kinder view.

The history of the botanical naming has been thoroughly investigated by Charles Nelson[3], who reached a somewhat different view from others as to the cause of the change from Dabeoc to Daboecia. There is still some divergence of opinion, whether it was an error by David Don or his printer, or due to Carl Linnaeus himself.

Alban Butler, the compiler of *Lives of the saints*, had an unusual career. Born a Catholic in Nottingham in England in 1710, he reached a high ecclesiastical position in France, which he held for many years. There is some irony in the fact that the Duke of Cumberland, the youngest son of George II, and well known for his brutal repression of the Scottish Highlanders after the Battle of Culloden in 1746, which ended the Jacobean hopes of restoring the Catholic monarchy to Britain, thought well enough of the Catholic priest who attended the English wounded after the Battle of Fontenoy (1745) that he engaged him as tutor for his sons. This tutor, Alban Butler, did well enough that two of them, grandsons of George II and nephews of George III, became bishops in France.[4]

Our other author, William Watson, had an equally distinguished career in Celtic studies. He knew Breton, Cornish, Manx, Welsh, Old Irish and its transitional forms into Modern Irish and Scottish Gaelic. He was familiar with the various forms of Latin script used by early Irish monks in copying and annotating church documents such as the Gospels. Early Irish script had no spaces between words, and the letters hung down from a line instead of standing on one, making it hard to decipher.

Charles Nelson kindly arranged for the Librarian of the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin, Alex Caccamo, to send me a copy of the section in Robert Lloyd Praeger's *A populous solitude*[4] that deals with St Dabeoc's heath. Praeger, too, wanted an explanation of "where did this lovely heath get its peculiar name." He noted that there are several Dabeocs in Irish martyrology and recounted information received from Dr Kathleen Mulchrone (Caitlín Ó Maolchroín) (1895–1973), another noted expert in Celtic studies, Professor of Old and Middle Irish and Celtic philology at University College Galway for 27 years, editor of *The book of Lecan* and translator of *The tripartite life of Patrick*.

She says the name, Dabeoc, occurs in Irish annals as a diminutive of an original name, such as Béoáed, Béogne or other name beginning with the adjective béo (alive or lively). The names Beóc, Béoan, Dabeóc and Mobeóc may all refer to one Béoáed or Aed. Dabheoc is another variant, as is Beoaedh.

A footnote adds that it is not always possible to establish the original béo-compounds since diminutive names are extremely common, being formed by adding the suffix -oc (borrowed from the Welsh -awc), but in this process the original name is lost. Ten different Mobeocs alone have been noted.

Figure 2. St Dabeoc's heath; two-thirds natural size. Pen and ink drawing by S. Rosamund Praeger (from R. Ll. Praeger, 1910. *Open-air studies in botany* ...).

Mulchrone says that a Connacht heath suggested a Connacht Dabeoc was the Dabeoc of the plant, and that there was a Beó-Aed, Bishop of Ard Carna in County Roscommon in AD523, renowned for his hospitality, who she felt is the Dabeoc we are seeking. Praeger has no suggestion of how the name got attached to the plant or for what reason. The rest of this section is devoted to the spelling inversion in the Latin binomial, which he considered was entirely due to Linnaeus, having latinized it as Dabeci and then Daboeci (an opinion confirmed by Charles Nelson).

In spite of the multiplicity of names, Mulchrone believes the Connacht saint, Dabeoc mac Luain, who she says was called Aed in the martyrologies, is the one associated with both the plant and the now-named St Patrick's Purgatory on an island in Lough Derg in County Donegal. The Purgatory is associated with the vision by Dabeoc of souls in terrible torment in a cave on this island, and is said to provide the scenario for Dante's *Inferno*, but we are still left in ignorance in how and why the plant got its name. Praeger ends by asking forgiveness of archaeobotanists, philologists, demonologists and bibliophiles for straying into their provinces, and so do I.

What I learned from Mulchrone's excellent account was that German linguistic studies of Kosenamen (pet names) established that the addition of the diminutive caused the loss of the immediately preceding syllable. This meant that any compound name like Béo-Aed became Beoc with the loss of the distinguishing name. Thus any compound name starting with Beo would become one of a myriad of Dabeocs, Mobeocs, et cetera. According to Mulchrone, the name of our Dabeoc, based upon geographic considerations, would be Aed, but it can

never be known for certain. Our Dabeoc was very probably the Dabeoc that had the vision, but not perhaps the one with connection to the heath.

Comparison of sources

If we use Mulchrone's information as typifying ecclesiastical sources and Watson's information as the result of Celtic scholarship wedded to oral tradition, we find agreement on many points on the meaning of Dabeoc. Ma, Mo, Da are prefixes that take the genitive case and mean My or Thy. The next element comes from either Beo or Bi meaning life and was a prefix to the name of many saints, and could have been spelt with an h after the b, but whether present or not it would have changed the b to a v sound. Most people were illiterate but would have pronounced the name with a v sound, whether they could see the h or not.

The suffix -oc is a common addition to the names of saints (and many other things, meaning young or little). Watson calls it the affectionate diminutive and translates Dabeoc as "thy little saint Bi". Thus St Dabeoc is a redundancy or a pleonasm.

On the shores of the Dornoch Firth in the far north of Scotland there is a tiny place called Portmahomack, where most of my relatives and ancestors are buried in what is now realized to be a Pictish churchyard. The Gaelic means "the haven or refuge of my little Saint Colman". There is no trace of naoimh, the Gaelic for saint, in this name, although it is certainly there in the English translation.

However, Colman, the most popular of all Irish names, says Watson, a name borne by 218 saints, is already a diminutive of columba, the Latin for dove. The Gaelic Port-mo-Cholmaig (my little Colman's haven) becomes Portmahomack in English as the genitive of Colman reduces to "Hom" because of aspiration and/or the Kosename effect. Portmagee in Kerry, opposite Valencia Island, sounds similarly constructed, but is named after a notorious smuggler, one Captain Theobald Magee. This means that the ma in Portmagee is for mac (son of) instead of for ma (my). This was confirmed by the typical Irish dual language road sign, since the road to Port Magee was also the road to PortmacAoidh. I took a photo, but the sign may no longer stand, since I understand the accepted Irish name is An Caladh, meaning simply 'The Harbour'.

Aed was a common name in early Gaeldom, meaning fire (though other translations exist). It is not used in Modern Irish and is found in only one

Scottish dialect, but it was a prestigious name used by Irish kings as late as the ninth century. In the genitive it becomes Aoidh after Mac (son of, pronounced mach-k) giving MacAoidh, the identical name in Gaelic for MacCoy, Magee, Mackay and perhaps MacHugh (and many other variants), the result of the transposed k.

Out of many saints Beo and Bi the name we seek is probably St Beo-Aedh, or St Beo-Aodh, becoming Dabeoc (pronounced Davoc) in common parlance. Attached to Scottish place names, as Professor Watson has described, we get Kildavie in Mull and in Skye and on Loch Tay. Watson declares this name a variant of Mo-Bhi or Mo-Bhiu, "two saints bearing this name being among the twelve apostles of Ireland", Mo-Bhi mac Natfraich and Mo-Bhi mac Beoain, who died in AD545. These saints are found in Gorman's *Martyrs of Donegal*. Mo-Bhiu was abbot of Inis Cuscraid. He also suggests Da-bhi and Do-bhi may be short forms of Berach, who was abbot of Cluain Coirphti. Watson makes references to several Aeds or Aods but without the tie-in to a name starting with Beo or Bi. Bishop Beo-Aed died in AD543, says Mulchrone. Abbot Mo-Bhi died in AD523 according to Watson.

There are only 18 letters in Gaelic, but many more sounds as the result of aspiration or lenition, changing or silencing the sound of nine consonants, and ellipsis which affects seven of them by the last letter of a preceding word swamping the sound of the initial letter of the following word. This makes it extremely difficult to trace a name in historical records (mainly church sources) written in Old Irish (a highly inflected language), probably the first vernacular language to be written down in the fourth or fifth century of the Christian era. Watson makes the point that the accent of a name rarely changes, and uses the emphasis in place names to reject names that are otherwise likely candidates.

The name, St Beo, or Daveoc with the missing Aed or Aod appended, can be fairly surely traced to a fifth century abbot of a Donegal monastery, making him a friar rather than a monk, and hence more likely to associate with people in forming folk associations with miraculous cures or forecasts.

Saint Dabeoc (as we must call him now) was mostly known for the vision of Purgatory he experienced in a cave in a small island on Lough Derg. St Dabeoc's purgatory was eventually renamed St Patrick's purgatory, probably to encourage pilgrims to make the long journey from Europe to the northwest of Ireland.

So we can be fairly sure of the original name, and how so many identical names arose, but the connection with the heather is still obscure. The present

occurrence of Irish *Daboecia cantabrica* is local to the Galway area, but judging by pollen records it could have been widespread in Britain as far north as the Shetlands, probably within the 5,000 year span of peat formation.

Conclusion

Watson's book is very thorough and detailed. As an example (p. 504);

> Tiobar is in E. Ir. tipra, gen. tiprat, dat. tiprait, and is anglicized as Tipper, Tibber, Tiber, Chipper; the genitive becomes -tibbert, -tibert. Tipperty is either for dat. pl. tipratib, later tiobartaibh, or a locative of tiobartach, 'well-place'.

Tobermory in Scotland is probably Mary's well, rather than "big well", and Tipperary in Ireland, which sounds like "well of the shieling or summer pasture" (in Scottish Gaelic, airidh), is, according to P. W. Joyce's *Irish names of places*[5], Tiobraid Arann in Modern Irish, meaning "well of Ara".

Watson indexes over 4,500 place names in Scotland with Celtic origins, many derived from Irish monks who brought Gaelic to Scotland. There are almost 400 saints indexed by their personal names, and another 60 or so used for places honoring saints. He has used 84 major references, including all that Mulchrone cites. They are in Irish, Latin, Scottish, English and German.

As mentioned earlier, he traces two saints called Bi who left place names in Scotland, notes the occurrence of several Mobeocs, Mabeocs and Dabeocs, but refers to Aed only as a name for kings and princes. Did he miss the report in the martyrologies referred to by Mulchrone in which a bishop called Dabeoc is also called Aed, "or perhaps Beogne?, etc." she adds in a footnote. All martyrs automatically became saints, but was Dabeoc a martyr? Probably not. But this offers our only link of a multitude of saints called Beo to a personal name.

Mulchrone came from Westmeath and undoubtedly knew her history. No doubt there was a Dabeoc who had the vision on Lough Derg, and perhaps 1,500 years ago *Daboecia cantabrica* once grew abundantly there. As the pilgrimage grew in importance we can imagine economic growth in the area, perhaps supplemented by the locals selling sprigs of St Dabeoc's heather to pilgrims as gypsies have sold "lucky white heather" for weddings in England since Victorian times.

It seems that the first and perhaps only mention of possible herbal efficacy was made by the Welsh naturalist, Edward Lhuyd, who first collected the plant. He died in 1709, but (as related by Nelson[3]) in a letter published three years later

he had written about a heath "so common that ye people have given it ye name of Frych Dabeog, and sometimes ye women carry sprigs of it about them as a Preservative against Incontinency."

At least that is somewhat consistent with uses of ericolin or arbutin, a urinary antiseptic provided by other members of the Ericaceae, like bearberry and the local strawberry tree, likely to be better sources of useful infusions, if not as decorative. Perhaps incontinence went with the rigors of being a pilgrim. Still we have no other input involving health or religious uses, the other likely reasons for naming. And importantly, we have no input from French or Spanish sources, or the Azores, where *Daboecia* grows, and no folk history or trivial names I know of. Much was written about him, but nothing from him.

The American humorist Robert Benchley, in his final history exam at Harvard, was asked to comment on the reasons for the Russo-Japanese conflict over fishing rights. His supposed answer was, "We have heard a lot from viewpoint of the Russians, and a lot from the viewpoint of the Japanese, but we have very little from the viewpoint of the fish."

It has been 30 years since Charles Nelson wrote in the 1984 yearbook what was known about the origins of St Dabeoc.[6] Alas, we do not seem to be much further ahead today.

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Erica terminalis naturalized in Warwickshire

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Figure 1. *Erica terminalis*, Corsican heath, in Warwickshire (J. Roberts).

On 3 August 2015 my wife and I were surveying the plants in a 1km square west of Napton-on-the-Hill, Warwickshire (vice-county 38*). We identified 183 species, with one mystery, a large, established heath in full bloom. It flourishes beside the Oxford Canal, inaccessibly opposite the towpath we were walking. The location is not near houses; boats do frequent this stretch in the season, but the shrub is not where they might moor; the soil is from calcareous clays, with brick/concrete rubble. Returning two days later, we found a way of reaching the plant from a disused quarry through thigh-high brambles. I took photographs and collected a specimen, which the BSBI Erica referee unhesitatingly named as Erica terminalis, Corsican heath, a first for Warwickshire.

* see p. 31.

Heathers **13**: 30–31

Daboecia cantabrica naturalized in Brecknock

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It was the County Recorder responsible for West Glamorgan (vice-county 41*), Barry Stewart, who first spotted this on 1 February 2015. The site is next to a busy road in Brynmawr – a market town in Blaenau Gwent, South Wales, sometimes claimed as the highest town in Wales at 1,250ft to 1,500ft above sea level. The landscape of the whole area is affected by the former Nantyglo Ironworks and the ground at the edge of the road in question could be described as man-made shale scree.

Figure 1. Habitat of the naturalized St Dabeoc's heath (Barry Stewart).

Pictures show the site when the plants were first noticed (Figure 1) and also the plants photographed in October when they flowered (Figure 2). I was visiting them as, after a brief discussion between three vice counties, we realized this was actually in the historic vice-county of Brecknock (vice-county 42), for which I am partly responsible.

Figure 2. St Dabeoc's heath in bloom, October 2015 (John Crellin).

We have no way of knowing how they got there – no gardens are particularly near and deliberate planting seems unlikely; but the traffic in the area is busy with many HGVs some of which will have travelled from Ireland via the Fishguard–Rosslare ferry. The site is just off a roundabout that is on the main "Heads of the Valley" road along the southern edge of the Brecon Beacons and is now protected by a fence erected by contractors upgrading the road. It is hoped that the area where plants grow will not be directly affected by this work.

* Hewitt Cottrell Watson introduced the vice-county system in 1852, based on the old counties of Britain. Vice-county boundaries were intended to remain unchanged, unlike political boundaries, and facilitated the collection and comparison of biological records within stable areas over time. There are 112 vice-counties in Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales) and 40 in Ireland.

Heathers **13**: 32–33

Anne Berry (*Erica cinerea* 'Anne Berry')

Helen Todd* and Brian Berry**
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Erica cinerea 'Anne Berry'
Amethyst (H1) flowers, July–October; yellow-green foliage throughout the year, young shoots with bronze tips in spring; height 10–15cm; spread 46–60cm.

The bell heather long called "Ann Berry" was found by Anne Berry when she was around 12 years old and was working at George Underwood & Son, a specialist nursery growing hardy heathers and brooms, in West End, Surrey.

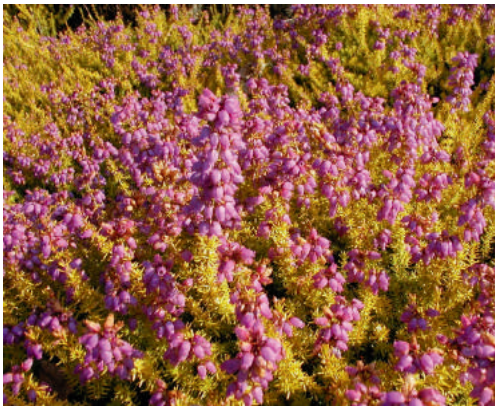

Figure 1. *Erica cinerea* 'Anne Berry' (by courtesy of GreenPlantSwap www.greenplantswap.co.uk).

Figure 2. Anne Berry (courtesy of the Berry family).

Anne was the niece of Constance Berry and George Underwood, and the granddaughter of George Berry, who himself had been a nurseryman at Heatherside, with Frederick Street. The youngest of four children, Anne always loved to be close to nature, living close to Cowshot Common in Bisley. The Underwood nursery was very much a family affair, with Anne's brothers, David and Brian, both having worked at the Nursery, which after the death of George Underwood in 1960, was run by his wife, Constance (Connie) and their son Ken. During the 1960s they would also have their plants displayed at Chelsea Flower Show.

The heather was described in The Heather Society's first yearbook published early in 1964 (although dated 1963) and named as "Ann Berry" – but the spelling of the name was wrong as she was "Anne", and this always caused such hilarity in the family. The flower colour amethyst was also Anne's favourite.

Other Underwood family members had heathers named after them, namely Constance, Daphne, George and Ken Underwood.

Not long after finding this beautiful amethyst heather, Anne started her apprenticeship with a local florists in West End, R. Felton & Sons, where she trained under Mr Feltons' watchful eye. Although she did not hold any qualifications, her experiences at the Underwood Nursery and Feltons gave her a love of plants and flowers which lasted throughout her life. Graduating as a florist some 30 years later at Merrist Wood, with distinctions, she was never far away from nature, and was so proud of her family history at the Underwood Nursery.

Sadly, Anne passed away in 2014, at the age of 64, but her family, Brian, Helen and Liam know that Anne would have been so delighted that another young heather enthusiast, John Hall's daughter Molly, who is 14, has managed to propagate this heather again, having taken samples from the National Collection of heathers at RHS Garden Wisley. We are most grateful to John Hall Plants for taking on this challenge, and succeeding.

The family are thrilled that in 2015 some 50 years after *Erica cinerea* 'Anne Berry' was found, the spelling has been corrected – a very proud moment!

Heathers **13**: 34–38

Growing *Erica erigena*, Irish heath

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For a number of reasons *Erica erigena* (Irish heath, long known as Mediterranean heath) cultivars are rarely seen today in garden centres or even heather nurseries. One of these is their supposed tenderness. However, in my experience, they are remarkably hardy even in severe weather and the species is perhaps getting the blame for a failure of the trade. I am usually associated with growing *E. vagans* (Cornish heath) and its hybrids, and some of the more unusual heaths, but the species I probably have most experience of is *E. erigena*. The cultivars have provided many of my most outstanding plants with fantastic bloom.

Figure 1. *Erica erigena* cultivars thriving 2015, in the "rain garden" created by the gentle slope, with 'Rosslare' (main plant), 'Irish Silver' (left), 'W. T. Rackliff' and the giant 'Glauca' beyond (R. Canovan).

Why *Erica erigena*?

Two of the first heaths I acquired through a rose catalogue were 'Brightness' and 'Superba'. They were beautiful plants. Unlike my other selections which were for ground-cover, these gave some height. I soon joined The Heather Society and that led to my receiving a copy of the report on the Harlow Carr trials – *Heather Trials 1971–75* and its supplement *Heather Trials 1976–81*. Given my heavy alkaline soil, it is not surprising that more *Erica erigena* cultivars figured prominently in my choices as so many of them had proved very good performers despite suffering some frost damage in the severe winter of 1979. Especially good for bloom were 'Alba Compacta', 'Glauca' and 'Hibernica' while 'W. T. Rackliff' was outstanding for overall garden-worthiness.

The main site: my rain garden

As Figure 1 illustrates well, there is a gentle slope below the drive towards the property. At the bottom the soil is usually waterlogged but excess water escapes round the corners. Mulching is not practical here but compost is forked into the soil from time to time. To retain these features I have added no edging but lightened the heavy soil so at the top of the slope it is suitable for heaths that need free drainage. The wall is essentially south-facing providing near ideal conditions for *Erica erigena*. 'Rosslare' is prominent in the foreground. This cultivar, of New Zealand origin, was only planted in 2004 after the very vigorous and floriferous 'Ewan Jones' was damaged in the 2003 drought. I had used coir fibre as a mulch away from the wall, but this dried to an impermeable mat. Fortunately, I had a few cuttings and established one in the London garden. Beyond 'Rosslare' are 'Irish Silver', 'W. T. Rackliff', and 'Glauca' which has been outstanding for bloom but is very vigorous: as with all the cultivars any stems that die back are cut away and that generates yet more growth.

The other side of the drive is similar but more of a swamp due to run-off from properties upslope which can only escape by overflowing. I tried to improve this in 2004 and got as far as adding the organic matter before leaving for the international conference. On my return it was flooded so adding grit sand was impractical. I call the area "Junk Corner" as there was no design, it providing a temporary home for some plants, several new, so I could propagate them. As it was more exposed to freezing winds it was a hostile bed for *Erica erigena*, in particular. Little was I to know what a success this was to become. Aware of the tenderness of 'Irish Salmon', having lost it twice, I planted it behind 'Brian Proudley' in this bed which faces north but gets morning sun (Figure 2).

Figure 2. 'Irish Salmon' (right) sheltered by 'Brian Proudley', 19 April 2015; note they are in shade in this late afternoon picture (R. Canovan).

Despite that, the heaths flower profusely; 'Irish Salmon' had flowered for over five months. Clearly 'Brian Proudley' is one of the hardiest cultivars. Also in that bed is 'Rosea' which exhibits very red foliage in cold weather (notably in 2010) but with little defoliation.

The preferences of these and other cultivars I grow

All these cultivars are clearly happy with very wet soil, but some prefer better drained soil. 'Thing Nee' was defoliated during 2012–2013 in water-logged soil in the London garden, but my own growing on better-drained soil in a south-west facing corner, has good colour and bloom (Figure 3). The latter is only one year older. Also in the Swindon garden with some shade for the roots, 'Superba' grew to over 7 feet tall over 20 years until severely damaged by snow in February 2009 (Canovan 2010). It made a partial recovery, but died. Fortunately, I have other plants. Another large plant of 'W. T. Rackliff' suffered the same fate. That in Figure 1 suffered no snow damage although was ravaged in a fox fight (see also Nelson 2014).

'Brightness' has survived for over 30 years on a dry, east-facing wall, only experiencing minor defoliation and then recovering. It still flowers well.

'Irish Dusk' is an outstanding plant and well known. More interesting is 'Irish Silver'. Some growers disliked it because the brownish buds in late summer made the plant look dirty. However, that made it an excellent contrast plant with a cultivar such as *Erica carnea* 'Gelber Findling' which had olive foliage but suffered from the 2003 drought and was replaced by *E.* × *darleyensis* 'Moonshine'. I value 'Irish Silver' for its late flowering, often continuing into June: the orange buds when first opening reveal deep lilac flowers which become a silvery shell-pink when fully open (Figure 4).

Others I grow are 'Golden Jubilee' and 'Maxima': these are recent acquisitions so not fully tested but I trialled the former. Both are most promising. 'Ivory'

Figure 3. 'Thing Nee': 19 April 2015 (photographed by R. Canovan).

Figure 4. 'Irish Silver': 19 April 2015 (photographed by R. Canovan).

flowers well, as does a Kurt Kramer clone believed to be "34/92". This has ruby buds that open to pure pink flowers. However, it has a weak constitution and defoliates repeatedly in dry conditions, though always recovers. But, when the buds first open, it is a sight to behold.

I grow a few unnamed seedlings that I find attractive, most probably having 'W. T. Rackliff' as the seed parent. But, one is almost certainly a seedling from 'Golden Lady', which I removed as it repeatedly scorched in hot summers, and it appears to be far better than its probable parent in this respect.

Two others I once grew were 'Nana Compacta' (as 'Alba Compacta') and 'Hibernica', both of which I would like to obtain again as they were good plants.

Sale and cultivation

Unlike today, the main retail sale of heaths and heathers when I acquired most of my cultivars was in September ready for planting. That recognized the value

of heaths and heathers being able to develop a good root run before winter set in with the soil usually moist and still warm.

I was soon to learn of the vulnerability of some cultivars to severe frost if in pots, even if given fresh compost in a larger container. Yet those I planted in the ground (in all gardens I have planted, not just Swindon) have all done very well. The main problem is not drought or cold but physical damage by sticky snow or animals due to their brittle stems, although 'Rosslare' appears stronger. They all do recover.

When growing my first cultivars I had a pruning conundrum. I pruned 'Brightness' removing the old flower spikes entirely, which ensured lots of new shoots but appeared to reduce its flowering, so I left 'Superba' unpruned. When the latter needed a tidy-up I used shears to carefully remove only the faded flowers, thereby retaining the previous year's growth, from each flower spike. This revealed lots of tiny, fresh green shoots. This became my technique with *Erica erigena*, only removing weak or damaged stems, plus faded flowers. It led to the plants acquiring a wider spread than the guides indicate but ensured prolific bloom. Although time-consuming, this method reveals the highly glaucous old foliage, in the case of 'Rosea' almost black, which I find attractive especially against the brightly coloured new growth of many hybrids.

Conclusion

My success with this species, despite the extreme weather conditions of the last 30 years, makes its disappearance from the retail trade hard to understand unless its vulnerability to the freezing of its roots in pots is taken into account. A small garden-centre near me lost all its *Erica erigena* one winter (thought to be 1996–1997). Clearly there are many excellent cultivars that should not just be available but worthy of awards as 'Brian Proudley' was. But it is vital they are sold and planted in the early autumn. They are so useful – many cultivars are ideal for rain gardens and wet spots; 'Brian Proudley' and 'Maxima' for hedges; most make good specimen plants and almost all provide a tremendous show of colour every spring for decades. The pictures, including those on the Society's website, vividly illustrate the accuracy of the Harlow Carr Trials report regarding 'Brightness', 'Glauca' and 'W. T. Rackliff'.

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Heathers **13**: 39–44

Compost trials

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This research project arose from comments received from members of the public at such venues as the Royal Horticultural Society's Hampton Court Palace shows.

A frequent one was that heathers had been purchased and planted, either in gardens or in containers, but subsequently died. Whilst one must consider the likelihood that lack of water after a spring planting was the main cause of death, it is conceivable that there were other causes, especially when it was stated that the plants have been regularly attended to after planting.

There is little doubt that there is a great deal of confusion when gardeners seek a suitable compost for their planting, especially when faced with the numerous formulations on offer at garden centres. It may be perceived that an "all purpose" compost is a suitable product to use for almost anything. Also, the term "ericaceous" may not be thought to relate to heathers if the gardener does not have substantial gardening knowledge. To add to the confusion, when gardeners know that "ericaceous" compost is required, do they purchase "John Innes ericaceous" compost or just any "ericaceous" one, bearing in mind that different manufacturers may stipulate "peat free", "with added iron", or with various water retaining products, etc?

Considering the deaths of plants in container plantings and the variety of composts marketed, I decided to undertake a trial of composts using a selection of popular heather cultivars known to have a tolerance, or otherwise, of acidic conditions and sensitivity to fertilizer using with our own "in house" formulation as a control.

Cultivars used, in established rooted-cutting plugs, were:

Calluna vulgaris 'Dark Beauty'
Erica carnea 'Myretoun Ruby'
Erica ciliaris 'Corfe Castle'
Erica cinerea 'Eden Valley'
Erica × *darleyensis* 'Kramers Rote'
Erica vagans 'Keira'

These were potted into the various trial composts in May 2015 and the growth monitored at regular intervals. By July, it was evident that there were varying rates of growth and even deaths relating to the different composts. The heather plants were given a subjective score, out of 60, according to the growth rate and health compared with a saleable sized healthy plant, in a 9cm pot, that we would market from our nursery.

July 2015 results

	Score out of 60	Dead plants
Erin™ Ericaceous Compost	58	0
Homebase Rhododendron, Azalea and Camellia	41	0
J. Arthur Bowers Ericaceous	54	0
J. Arthur Bowers John Innes Ericaceous	24	2
Levington® Ericaceous	38	0
Levington® John Innes Ericaceous	43	0
Verve (B&Q) Ericaceous	11	9
Violet Farm Ericaceous	49	1
Westland Gro-sure® All Purpose (with 4 month feed)	21	7
Westland Grosure® Ericaceous (with 4 month feed)	21	0
Own-mix compost	55	0

October 2015 results

	Score out of 60	Dead plants
Erin™ Ericaceous Compost	50	0
Homebase Rhododendron, Azalea and Camellia	34	3
J. Arthur Bowers Ericaceous	42	0
J. Arthur Bowers John Innes Ericaceous	25	3
Levington® Ericaceous	32	0
Levington® John Innes Ericaceous	47	0
Verve (B&Q) Ericaceous	3	20
Violet Farm Ericaceous	53	1
Westland Gro-sure® All Purpose (with 4 month feed)	15	13
Westland Gro-sure® Ericaceous (with 4 month feed)	28	5
Own-mix compost	57	1

Notes

Erica × *darleyensis* 'Kramers Rote' noticeably produced ample growth but no flower buds in both Homebase ... and Westland Gro-sure® Ericaceous ... composts.

Erica ciliaris 'Corfe Castle' produced good growth in some trials but lacked flowers, for example in Homebase ... compost.

Given the disparity of the results I decided to conduct a survey, by telephone, of a range of garden centres to find out their compost recommendation for planting of heathers in a container.

B&Q
They were "very busy" and recommended a personal visit to the store for advice.
Homebase
Suggested "ericaeous" for plants like rhododendrons but heathers do not need an acid soil; use "Miracle Gro".
Wyevale
Good knowledge of ericaceous plant requirements: recommended John Arthur Bowers (for plants such as *Acer*) or Levington's.
Haskins Garden Centre
Good knowledge of ericaceous plant requirements: recommended Westland Ericaceous or Levingtons and feed with iron
Dobbies
No answer.
Wickes
Told to try a garden centre, only sell multipurpose and not sure if compost stocked was ericaceous
Squires GC
Use John Innes or Grosure
Medina
Use John Arthur Bowers
Woodsford Nursery (local family business)
Good advice, looked in books. Best advice supplied!
RHS Garden Centre Wisley
Use John Innes

Conclusions

Of the proprietory brands Erin Ericaceous compost showed good early results and was the best in the early part of the growing season but the foliage showed evidence of lack of nutrients towards autumn. Levington John Innes Ericaceous is suitable for use and is widely available. Violet Farm Ericaceous proved an outright winner, albeit flowers were not so profuse on *Erica ciliaris* (when compared with the plant grown in our own-mix compost), and it is not widely stocked.

Erin Ericaceous

Homebase Rhododendron ... compost

John Arthur Bowers Ericaceous

John Arthur Bowers John Innes Ericaceous

Levington Ericaceous

Levington John Innes Ericaceous

Verve Ericaceous

Violet Farm Ericaceous

Westland Gro-sure All Purpose

Westland Gro-sure Ericaceous

Forest Edge own-mix

The composts vary greatly in texture and consistency from the light and fluffy to the dense sandy heavier product. Watering would have to be adjusted for the varying consistencies and moisture-retention capacities of the individual composts.

An interesting side-note was the overall success of *Erica ciliaris* 'Corfe Castle' in withstanding conditions that proved unsuitable for other heathers. Perhaps it is more robust that we have imagined, tolerant of higher soil pH or higher fertilizer concentration.

Appendix

Erin™ Ericaceous Compost
Does not mention peat as a constituent; good texture; **pH** 5.

Homebase Rhododendron, Azalea & Camellia Compost
Contains 50% peat; **pH** 5.

J. Arthur Bowers Ericaceous Compost
Medium texture with some fine sand; does not mention peat as a constituent; **pH** 5.

J. Arthur Bowers John Innes Ericaceous
"Contains moss peat"; very heavy compost, and looks like it contains sandy silt; **pH** 5

Levington® Ericaceous
Coarse lumpy texture, stringy, fibrous; does not mention peat as a constituent; **pH** 5

Levington® John Innes Ericaceous
Fine sandy texture with many small stones; does not mention peat as a constituent; **pH** 5.

Verve Ericaceous Compost (B&Q)
"Contains peat alternative"; **pH** 4

Violet Farm Ericaceous Compost
Peaty texture but does not mention peat as a constituent; looks attractive; **pH** 4.

Westland Gro-sure® All Purpose
Medium woolly texture, soft and fibrous; contains 50% peat; **pH** 6

Westland Gro-sure® Ericaceous (with 4 month feed)
Medium texture (with pine needles?), soft and fibrous; contains 50% peat; **pH** 4.

Own-mix compost.
90% moss-peat; 10% loam; with slow-release fertilizer; **pH** 5.

Heathers **13**: 45–48

Conrad Gessner's description and drawing of *Erica carnea* (mountain heath, Schneeheide) from the sixteenth century

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Conrad Gessner (1516–1565), a Swiss naturalist and town physician in Zurich, where he was born and died, is renowned (among others) for his monumental, four-volume *Historia animalium* (1551–1558). After completing his animal encyclopaedia he devoted himself to an equally ambitious one about plants, Gessner's passion since childhood. Gessner amassed a huge collection of botanical drawings and notes, yet due to his premature death from the "plague" this project was never realised. Fortunately, Gessner's botanical research has survived in two codices now housed in the library of the university in Erlangen-Nuremberg, Germany (see for example Kusukawa 2011, 2012).

Gessner's botanical archive contains more than 1,500 illustrations (annotated in Latin and German) on 490 folios. Among these is one that portrays *Erica carnea*, drawn by Gessner himself (he was a talented draftsman). Gessner introduces this plant using the vernacular name "Steinkraut", literally stone herb nowadays usually used for species of *Alyssum*, compares it to ancient descriptions from Pliny and Dioscorides that point to a small kind of pine or larch ("Picea") and then, obviously dissatisfied with those identifications, correctly suggests "Erica" as a name for his specimen, the ancient Greek and Latin term for heather which Gessner knew from classical literature. He also noted that he had grown the mountain heath in his own garden for at least three years, although the plant had not flowered as well for him as for his fellow physician, Jakob Baumann.

Besides the annotations in Gessner's hand there is also a short note by the English botanist and entomologist Thomas Penny (c. 1530–1588) (Raven 1947: 153–171; Potts and Fear 2000), who had been introduced to Gessner by William Turner (or his son Peter), a Marian exile in Germany and close friend of Gessner. Penny paid a visit to Gessner shortly before the latter's death. Later he inspected Gessner's botanical legacy for a planned edition, which however never came into being. Penny noted that the depicted plant was called "heath" and "ling" in English, thus clearly recognizing its true botanical status, while

Figure 1. Conrad Gessner's drawing of *Erica carnea* (A), with broad beans, *Vicia faba* (B) and (C) another seed (Leguminosae). For transcripts of numbered annotations, see opposite. Reproduced by courtesy of Universitätsbibliothek Erlangen-Nürnberg.

Transcription and translation of Latin annotations

1. Steinkraut, suffrutex in montium rupibus nascens Glaronae, et februario florens pulcherrimis flosculis roseis, foliolis picae. (ut forte sit chamaepeuce plinij, surculis tamen solum incuruis, non etiam folijs, ut plinius non recte uertit e Graeco.)
   Foliola pleraque ceu articulatim digesta uidetur, terna, quaterna aut quina, non omnino tamen in omnibus ordo et numerus certi uidentur. Foliola cum deciderunt apparent puncta quaedam aspera, ut in piceae quoque ramis puto. Flosculi caui quaternis infra foliolis eiusdem coloris ambiuntur florido et laetissimo aspectu; apices nigricantes ex eis eminent quini puto, inter quos medius unus roseus longiusculus capitulo caret. Astringit folio et flore.
   Chamapeuce Dioscoridis est ὁλόχλωρος[1], quod ramulis pulmonariae[2] muscosae optime et soli fere conuenit. rosei autem flores huic hic pictae, non illi.
   hanc malim Ericam montanam uel petraeam uocare; si quae tamen chamaepeuce roseis floribus olim dicta est, ab hac si discedam, non aliam inuenio, ut duplex olim fuerit chamaepeuce: alia Dioscoridis ὁλόχλωρος, alia uero ab alio adscripta, ut asterisci indicant, roseis floribus.
2. Florere incipit Februario.
3. Hi ramuli in obliquum tendant, ἐπικαμπεῖς, non recta eriguntur.
4. Ramulus hic separatim pictus est, quod flores plerique deorsum confercti in unum latus e ramulis, qui de saxo propendent, uergere soleant. V[ide] supra 188.
5. Vasculum semium intra florem aridum cum seminibus quaternis.
6. Viret in horto mihi iam 3°anno, sed non floruit mihi ut Bumanno.
7. Anglice ling dicitur uel heath, est et aliud genus eiusdem nominis apud Anglos. T.P.

1. Steinkraut, a subshrub that grows on the rocks of the Glarus Alps [central Switzerland] and blossoms in February with very beautiful rosy florets; the leaflets are like those of the pine. Thus perhaps it is the Chamaepeuce of Pliny [*Naturalis historia* 24.86.136], however only the shoots are bent, not the leaves, as Pliny might have translated incorrectly from Greek.
   Most leaflets seem to be arranged piecemeal, three, four or five each, but a fixed order and number apparently does not dominate everywhere. When the leaflets are fallen off certain rough points appear, just as on the pine, I think. The hollow florets [corollas] are surrounded underneath by four leaflets [calyx segments] each of the same colour, which look flowery and most resplendent; on top black points stand out, five per flower [4 anthers and 1 stigma], as I believe, one of them [stigma] being roseate in the middle and without a head. The plant is astringent in leaves and flowers.
   Chamaepeuce of Dioscorides [*Materia medica* 4.126] is entirely green, which applies very well and rather exclusively for sprigs of Mossy lungwort [a foliose lichen, *Lobularia pulmonaria*]; rosy flowers, by contrast, solely has the species depicted here, but not the former one.
   I would prefer to call this plant mountain or rock heather Erica montana. If I deviate in denomination from a plant with rosy flowers, which possibly once likewise was called Chamaepeuce, I nonetheless do not invent a new name but believe that at that time two kinds of Chamaepeuce existed, the entirely green species of Dioscorides and another one that was attributed by someone else, as the asterisks indicate, with rosy flowers.
2. Starts blossoming in February.
3. These sprigs bend sideways, curving, and do not stand up vertically.
4. This sprig is depicted separately because most flowers usually hang downwards, crowded together to one side by the shoots that protrude from the rocks.
5. The seed capsule inside of the withered flower, with four seeds each.
6. Flourishes in my garden for a third year, but did not blossom the way it did in Baumann's garden [Jakob Baumann (1520–1587), physician from Zurich].
7. [by Thomas Penny] In English called ling or heath; the English have another genus by the same name.

Gessner was distracted by the ancient authorities and consequently remained somewhat irresolute. Thus Gessner on the one side referred to "Erica" of Dioscorides, which in antiquity applied to *Erica arborea* (*Materia medica* 1.88), but on the other hand he relied on an obscure description of "Chamaepeuce", literally a ground-dwelling pine. Moreover and oddly enough, Gessner did not draw on the description and image of an "Erica" (*Calluna vulgaris*) by Fuchs (1542: 254; Nelson 2011: plate 3), although he was very familiar with Fuchs's works.

Gessner's drawing was recently reproduced in a facsimile edition (Zoller *et al.*, 1979: 10, plate 1) along with transcriptions and German translations of the annotations. The drawing was also included in another edition (Zoller and Steinmann 1991: 66), but this time only reduced and without transcriptions or translations. The original image is contained in the second codex preserved in Erlangen-Nuremberg under the folio number "352 verso" (also accessible on the website of Universitätsbibliothek Erlangen-Nürnberg).

Notes

[1]Dioscorides, *De materia medica* 4.126. The Greek words here and below (3) were taken by Gessner from a dubious interpolation that was excluded by Wellmann (1906: 273) in his standard edition of *De materia medica*.

[2]By "pulmonaria" Gessner – and Fuchs (1542: 636–637 with illustration) before him – referred to the foliose lichen, *Lobaria pulmonaria*, not to *Pulmonaria officinalis* (the flowering plant, called lungwort, familiar to gardeners).

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Heathers **13**: 49–56

H. E. Beale

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Henry Edward Beale was born on 12 August 1890 at 30 Sisters Avenue, Battersea, London, where his parents Clara (née Byrd) and Frederick Hanway Beale, a Professor of Music according to the register of births, then lived. Thus, when the 1891 Census was made on 5 April, Harry (as he was also known) Beale was just seven months old, and the youngest of seven children: his siblings were Annie (13 years old), Eleanor (11), Agnes (10), Cecilia (9), Arthur (8) and Rose (5). The 1891 Census recorded their father's occupation in a somewhat different way, as an organ builder and choirmaster.

According to the only obituary traced (Cartwright 1959), Harry was educated privately and then worked for a time, probably as an apprentice, in the nursery of Messrs Kelway & Son Ltd at Langport, Somerset. At the age of 19, he became a student at the RHS Garden Wisley, and spent two years there. Fellow students during his time at Wisley included Douglas Fyfe Maxwell and Paul Spurgeon Patrick, who, like Beale, are both familiar to heather growers. In 1911, Beale entered for the RHS Diploma and was ranked first in the list of qualifiers also gaining a prize. After this, Harry Beale moved to Messrs M. Prichard & Sons Ltd in Christchurch. (In the Census of 1911, he was recorded living with his widowed mother and one of his sisters, Cecilia Mary (then 29 years old), at The Laurels in Woodham Lane, Woking, and W. D. Cartwright (1959) recalled "with gratitude the kindly hospitality" which he and the other students "so often received there".)

Douglas Maxwell entered Wisley the year after Harry Beale – he was a year younger that Beale and had been educated at Oundle School (Cartwright 1963). Instead of completing the two-year diploma course, he left Wisley at the end of 1911 and took over the management of a lavender farm at Broadstone in Dorset. In 1914, Beale joined Maxwell at Broadstone.

The First World War interrupted the lives of every young man in Britain, and Beale and Maxwell were not exceptions. According to the published "Roll of Honour" in the *Journal of the R. H. S. Gardens Club*, Beale "joined the colours at their country's call" serving in the Public Schools Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers. Maxwell served in the R. A. M. C. Both survived the war and

returned to Broadstone – Jones (1978) stated that Beale was invalided out of the army in 1917 but I have been unable to confirm this – to re-establish their nursery business, and so the firm of Maxwell & Beale came about, specializing in heathers, azaleas and dwarf conifers. Maxwell relinquished the partnership in 1932, but Beale continued trading under the now familiar name. Beale was joined by J. H. Hamilton, and Maxwell & Beale became a limited company. P. S. Patrick also worked with Maxwell & Beale on two separate occasions, and much later was co-author with Maxwell of *The English heather garden* (1966). (Francis John ("Steve") Stevens subsequently owned Maxwell & Beale Ltd, and continued to operate as "Maxwell & Beale" into the 1980s, after the limited company was wound up in 1966.)

Harry Beale married Dorothy Whittingham in April 1936. They lived at Spurstow, 15 Harbour View Road, Parkstone. Harry died, after a long illness, in Poole General Hospital on 27 October 1959. Dorothy survived him by almost ten years, dying at Parkstone on 28 August 1969. They had no children. Local information suggests Dorothy was a nurse, but she is also recorded as having a Diploma of Education from the famous Physical Training College at Silkeborg in Denmark.

Calluna vulgaris **'H. E. Beale'**

The first inkling of this plant is the rather cryptic comment on p. 65 of *The low road* (1927) by D. F. Maxwell. He was describing varieties of double-flowered ling:

> Occasionally this may be found growing wild ... and this year I had a piece sent to me that had been collected from a plant in the New Forest, Hampshire. Several cuttings of this were put in as it appeared to have flowers of a better pink, and to come into bloom a little later, than the one now in cultivation.

P. S. Patrick elaborated on this story in the 1964 yearbook, commenting that the "piece" was

> a dried up cutting [which] came to us in the morning post, with a covering letter from a lady who said the previous day when picknicking in the New Forest she had found a double-pink heather, and would we please tell her if it was anything out of the ordinary. We saw it was indeed "out of the ordinary", and carefully took off the three side shoots, each ... about half-an-inch long, and put them in the propagating

> frame. Two out of the three rooted and from them the whole stock of this lovely variety has sprung.

The low road, published by Sweet & Maxwell Ltd, a publishing company owned by D. F. Maxwell's family, was issued in May 1927, so "this year" should probably be interpreted as the autumn of 1926, allowing the lady to find this plant while in bloom and Maxwell to write the book (in the *International register of heather names* the date given is 1925). By September 1929, 'H. E. Beale' had been propagated and was shown at the Royal Horticultural Society's fortnightly show at Westminster on 10 September, when it gained an award of merit and because of this was painted by Stella Ross Craig (Harvey and O'Beirne 2016: 2 (this issue)). According to the following day's issue of *The Times* newspaper (issue 45305, p. 15),

> Messrs Maxwell and Beale [showed] a collection of hardy heaths including an excellent double form of the common ling. *Calluna vulgaris*, called "H. E. Beale," which received an award of merit.

The evidence of the contemporary painting in the collection at the RHS Garden Wisley ((Harvey and O'Beirne 2016) and of the article in *The Times*, as well as other published reports of awards given at the 10 September 1929 show, make it irrefutable that the name of the double *Calluna* was 'H. E. Beale'. And that was also the name used in the 1929 catalogue issued by Maxwell & Beale, as recorded in *International register of heather names*. Jones (1978) noted that the heather was introduced in Maxwell & Beale's 1928 catalogue so the name was already established before the September 1929 show.

Calluna vulgaris **'Mrs H. E. Beale'**

In a pair of articles published recently in *Heather notes*, the newsletter of the Northeast Heather Society, Donald Mackay (2013, 2015) provided a valuable but incomplete summary of 'H. E. Beale' and associated names, using as his sources many well-known books by heather experts, enthusiasts and nurserymen; but he makes no reference to having consulted the *International register of heather names* (Nelson and Small 2000), which is the standard account of cultivar nomenclature in *Calluna*, *Daboecia* and *Erica* (including *Bruckenthalia*), as well as *Andromeda*. If he consulted any contemporary periodicals or catalogues, including those of Maxwell & Beale, he does not cite them.

In his articles Donald alludes to the "Real Mrs Beale" – that is, to the name *Calluna vulgaris* 'Mrs H. E. Beale'. Noting that "names can be dropped", he pointed out that in the last edition of *The Heather Society's handy guide to heathers* (Small and Small 2001), " ... 'Mrs Beale' [*sic*] gets an entry as an error for 'H. E. Beale'." McClintock (1980) in the second edition of *A guide to the naming of plants* stated that 'H. E. Beale' was the recommended name, whereas the name with "Mrs" tagged in front was not recommended (see also below).

Mackay (2013: 5) also makes the unsubstantiated comment that "Mrs. Beale has long been divorced ...", implying that that may have caused a name to be dropped or amended. As just pointed out, Harry Beale did not marry Dorothy Whittingham until 1936, so when the double-flowered *Calluna* clone was named in 1928–1929, such a moniker prefaced by "Mrs", for a Maxwell & Beale heather would have been illogical.

Let's look at the verifiable history of this dubious name. "Mrs H. E. Beale" was never used by Maxwell & Beale in their catalogues. It appeared in a different form in Beijerinck's paper on "forms" of *Calluna* published in 1937 in *Recueil des travaux botaniques néerlandais*. Beijerinck described and named *Calluna vulgaris* f. *bealeae* – "Planta divaricata, parce pilosa. Flores pleni petalis numerosis, dilute violaceo-rosei, dense conferti in paniculas. Serotina, ab Octobri ad Decembrem florens." – based on "*C*[*alluna*] *v*[*ulgaris*] *Mrs. Beale* hort." (Beijerinck 1937: 462). Note he did not use any initials within the cultivar name, and his use of the feminine ending evidently arose because he believed the cultivar was named after a married woman. In his subsequent, much larger monograph, Beijerinck repeated this (1940: 146; see also 19) and included as plate XVIII a photograph captioned "Var. *hirsuta*, f[orm]a. *Bealeae* ...", and also made a direct equation between *C. vulgaris* f. *bealeae* and 'H. E. Beale' (Beijerinck 1940:143), quoting an extract from Maxwell & Beale's "new" catalogue.

Beijerinck was not the first to use "Mrs". An internet search using Google turned up an entry in Maud Evelyn Stebbing's *Colour in the garden: plants and shrubs, their uses, culture and colour-grouping; a book for amateurs*, published in 1934 wherein (p. 79) she listed "... "Mrs. H. E. Beale," clear pink, showy, 18 in. [t] all, July to November." This was not known to us when the *International register of heather names* was compiled in the late 1990s, where the earliest dated occurrence was given as the 1966 catalogue from Mayfair Nurseries, Nichols, New York. (Indeed, Mackay's second article was prompted by his finding an auction notice for this nursery, owned by Walter Kolaga, issued in 1974.) The *International register* database, which is continually updated, has an earlier

American catalogue containing "Mrs H. E. Beale": 1939 retail catalog of Wm Borsch & Son, Maplewood, Oregon. (As an aside, a writer in the *Journal of the Scottish Rock Garden Club* 1970: 19, commented regarding American gardens: "Dwarf conifers are very popular in the usually unfenced front gardens, and great quantities of *Calluna* 'H. E. Beale' (which they call Mrs Beale [*sic*].")

Discussion

There is a confusing plethora of names associated with Harry Beale, including some that escaped the formidable detective work of the late David McClintock, whose enormous card index was the basis of the *International register of heather names*. However, he was not infallible, and between the first edition of his booklet *A guide to the naming of plants* and the second, between 1969 and 1980, David changed his opinion about the status of the name "Mrs. H. E. Beale". In the nineteen sixties, he believed it was the original form of the name, but as demonstrated here, that is incorrect. The original name for the late-flowering double-flowered heather from the New Forest was 'H. E. Beale'. (In all these discussions, no-one has questioned why Harry Beale's name was attached to a plant he did not discover!)

Sometime in the early 1930s, the variant name prefixed with "Mrs" appeared in print, without any evidence that a new plant had been propagated. Indeed, in 1934 when Maud Stebbing published her book, Harry Beale was not married – there was no one called Mrs H. E. Beale connected with heathers.

'H. E. Beale' is a provoking plant for one important reason: its instability. We are informed by P. S. Patrick that two cuttings were successfully rooted in the late 1920s and that from these all the stock of this heather originated. However, it soon began to demonstrate variability, and its different progeny are numerous. A unpublished "family tree" of the offspring of 'H. E. Beale' drawn by David McClintock before 1990 has 29 cultivars, including 'Peter Sparkes' from which 13 of these arose (Figure 1 p. 54).

What was the original plant like? The painting by Stella Ross-Craig shows its overall characteristics, and the early reports emphasized its lateness in flowering. However, there is no substitute for actual specimens. In the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, is one sheet of pressed specimens of 'H. E. Beale' prepared on 13 September 1935, presumably from a plant acquired soon after its introduction. I have examined the specimens and can confirm that the mature foliage is not densely hirsute – 'H. E. Beale' has short cilia on the leaf margins and a sparse scattering of short hairs on the stems. There is no

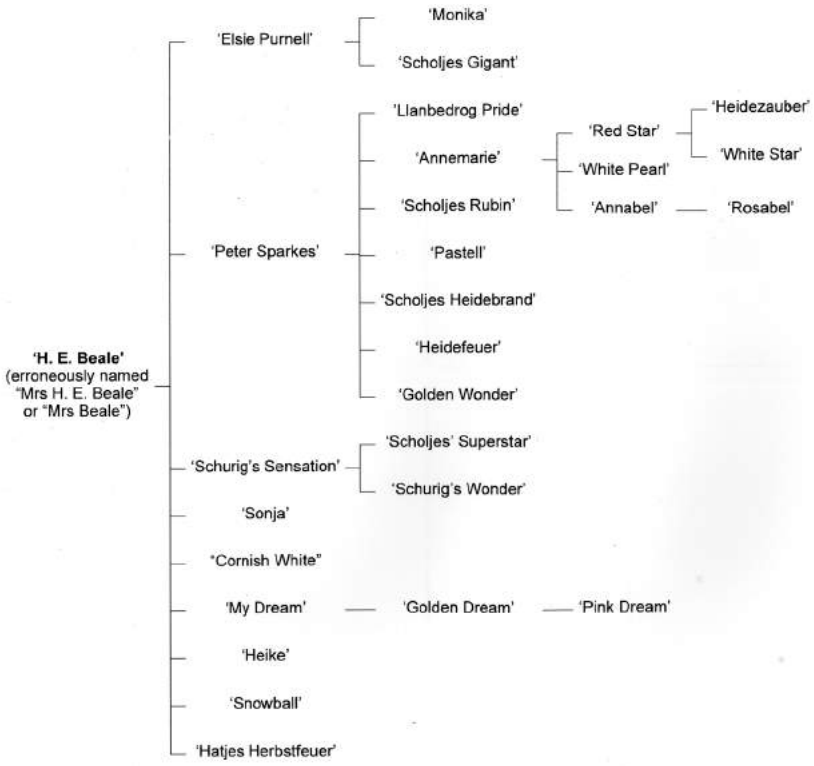

Figure 1. "Family tree" showing 'H. E. Beale' and its primary and secondary "sports" up to about 1990; based on an unpublished manuscript by the late David McClintock.

likelihood that it appeared silver, and the early descriptions made no mention of such a character. Beijerinck's obsessive study of *Calluna* led to a highly artificial scheme for classifying innumerable minor variants from Dutch moorlands and gardens, and his scheme needs to be applied circumspectly. He qualified his description of *C. vulgaris* f. *bealeae*: "parce pilosa", sparingly or moderately hairy. "Sparingly" is the better adjective, but he also wrote this caution regarding *C. vulgaris* var. *hirsuta*:

> Foliage leaves either densely haired, like felt, or less densely haired.
> (For this test it is advisable to use young leaves as the hairs of older and perennial leaves often have been rubbed off by the wind.)

As represented by the specimens at Kew, true 'H. E. Beale' should have marginal cilia on the foliage even when mature, but you must use a microscope or hand lens to verify this. It is not now known where the somewhat hairier plant sometimes sold as 'H. E. Beale' originated, but it does not match the Kew voucher.

A secondary issue is the name 'Mrs H. E. Beale'. It contravenes the *International code of nomenclature for cultivated plants* on several counts. It was not the original name, which was not altered by Maxwell & Beale, and certainly was not amended because of unspecified "marital troubles" or divorce

It is probable that the hairier plant is one of the several recorded sports from 'H. E. Beale', but determining which one, and so which name belongs to it, will require painstaking research using historic herbarium specimens as well as living plants.

Afterwords

Trying to make sense of the Beale problem has revealed a number of names, variants of 'H. E. Beale', not previously recorded. None of these names should be used in gardens or nurseries, but they are listed here (see *Supplement to the International register of heather names*, p. 64 (this issue)) for the record. If they are applied to true 'H. E. Beale', that name should be used.

It is indeed also extraordinary that the *International register* did not take into account Dr Gerd Krüssmann's × *Ericalluna bealeae* – the plants placed in this supposed hybrid between *Erica cinerea* and *Calluna vulgaris* are all just variants of *E. cinerea*. As one of the editors, I am at a loss to explain why it was not included.

Acknowledgements

Biographical information about Henry Edward Beale and his wife was verified from copies of birth and death certificates obtained from the General Register Office England. Facsimiles of the original census documents were obtained using www.findmypast.co.uk. I am grateful to Vicky Graham, RHS Lindley Libraries, Wisley, for details of Beale's, Maxwell's and Patrick's careers from the *Journal of the R. H. S. Gardens Club*, and to Yvette Harvey, Keeper of the Herbarium RHS Garden Wisley and Alexandra Caccamo, Librarian, National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, for their assistance. I have also availed of copies of unpublished notes made by the late David McClintock in his capacity as Cultivar Registrar for The Heather Society, particularly his "family tree" for the sports from 'H. E. Beale'.

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Heathers **13**: 57–58

Pure curiosity

Sten-Börje Sörensson
Almvägen 7, 430 91 Hönö, Sweden

I enjoy sowing seeds from heathers, because you never know what they will produce! To see the first flower is exciting: what colour is it?

I started with seeds from various cultivars of *Calluna vulgaris*. When it comes to *Calluna*, there are so many cultivars already but I am not sure that we will ever reach the end of that species capacity to surprise! Over the years, I have raised many plants, and some of them are still growing here today.

Many of my seedling plants have extremely small leaves (they might be termed "Microphylla"). At first seeds from *C. vulgaris* 'Peggy' gave no plants of value, but later on some small-leaved plants appeared in the seed bed. Funny, because 'Peggy' has rather coarse foliage. This kind of *Calluna* may not be commercial, but they fit very well in small gardens and rock gardens. It would be nice, to have a collection of these plants with good foliage and flower colour!

Figure 1. *Calluna vulgaris* 'Troy', one of Börje Sörensson's small-leaved seedlings named by Ann-Marie and Sonny Magnusson after their dog.

One year I tried sowing seeds from *Erica vagans* (Cornish heath), but the resulting plants were not different from existing cultivars.

Figures 2 and 3. 'Eko' (left) and 'Tegel' (right): Borje Sorensson's small-leaved *Calluna* seedlings.

On the other hand, my 2013 sowing of open-pollinated seeds from *Erica tetralix* (cross-leaved heath) resulted in many plants with coloured foliage and shoot tips. Most of them revert to plain green, but some keep their yellow variegated foliage and new growth. I will continue to sow seeds, collecting from the new plants. There is no end when you work with heathers!

Figure 4. Unnamed seedling of *Erica tetralix*.

Many thanks to my heathers friends in Vargön, Brita Johansson and Ann-Marie and Sonny Magnusson. Without their help and support, many of the new clones would have been lost.

Supplement XVI (2016) to the *International register of heather names*

Registered names

Key to symbols: ®: registration details. ❊: description of clone. ⊕: history of clone. §: derivation of name. ✍: published information. ❖: published images.

Calluna vulgaris

'Eko'

® C.2015.10 registered 21 September 2015 by Sten-Börje Sörensson, Almvägen 7, 475 51 Hönö, Sweden.

❊ Flowers purple (H10), single, small, August–early October; foliage in summer green tinged bronze, bronze more pronounced in young growth; individual leaves very small, and congested on stems; shoots very neatly 4-sided; habit upright, bushy; after 4 years to 22cm tall, and 22cm across not pruned.

⊕ Selected from mixed seedlings, raised from open-pollinated plants. "No other cultivar has this combination of foliage and flower colour."

§ Means echo in England: "once seen one will recall it".

✍ *Heather news quarterly* **37** (4: Fall 2014): 11 (name only); *Heathers* **13** (this issue): 58; URL www.heathersociety.org/new-heathers (posted October 2015).

❖ *Heather news quarterly* **37** (4: Fall 2014): 11; URL www.heathersociety.org/new-heathers.

'Judy Wiksten'

® C.2015.08 registered 21 September 2015 by Brita Johansson, Musselvägen 3, 46834 Vargön, Sweden.

❊ Flowers heliotrope (H12), single, September–October; foliage bright yellow in summer, with bright yellow young growth; habit upright, bushy; after 4 years to 30cm tall, and 30cm across.

⊕ Selected from mixed seedlings, raised from open-pollinated plants. "No other *Calluna* cultivar as this combination of heliotrope flowers and soft yellow foliage."

§ "Judy loved heather and she loved Sweden. She deserved to be commemorated by a beautiful Swedish plant."

Calluna vulgaris 'Judy Wiksten'

✍ *Bulletin of The Heather Society* **8** (6: Autumn 2015): 10–11; URL www.heathersociety.org/new-heathers (posted October 2015).
❖ *Bulletin of The Heather Society* **8** (6: Autumn 2015): cover; URL www.heathersociety.org/new-heathers.

'Kuliss'
® C.2015.07 registered 21 September 2015 by Sten-Börje Sörensson, Almvägen 7, 475 51 Hönö, Sweden.
❊ Flowers lavender (H3) with crimson (H13), single, September–November; new shoots pink and cream, turning greyish green in summer, foliage and shoots with prominent tomentum of long, somewhat shaggy hairs; stem appearing white; habit upright, bushy; after 5 years to 50cm tall, and 50cm across.
⊕ Selected from seedlings raised from open-pollinated plant of 'Tallboy', possibly pollinated by 'Kerstin'. "It looks like a vigorous mixture of the two presumed parents."
§ Fantasy name.
✍ URL www.heathersociety.org/new-heathers (posted October 2015).
❖ URL www.heathersociety.org/new-heathers.

'Lisann'
® C.2015.02: registered 23 March 2015 by Johannes van Leuven, Ilmenweg 39, D-47608 Geldern-Lüllingen, Germany.
❊ Bud-flowering (Knospenblüher), violet, mid August–October; foliage silver-green; habit upright, to 45cm tall × 35cm across after 5 years. Later to bloom than 'Loki' and more upright.
⊕ Deliberately raised before 2010, selected in September 2013. EU-Sortenschutz VL-13-7 (Lisann)

'Lore'
® C.2015.01: registered 23 March 2015 by Johannes van Leuven,, Ilmenweg 39, D-47608 Geldern-Lüllingen, Germany.
❊ Bud-flowering (Knospenblüher), buds red, small, August–October; foliage green; habit upright, to 45cm tall × 35cm across after 5 years (not pruned). Later to bloom than 'Loki' and more upright.
⊕ Deliberately raised before 2010, selected in September 2013. EU-Sortenschutz VL-13-5 (Lore).

'Tegel'
® C.2015.09 registered 21 October 2015 by Sten-Börje Sörensson, Almvägen 7, 475 51 Hönö, Sweden.
❊ Flowers pale lavender (H3), single, late July–August; foliage yellow-green tinted with bronze in summer, with brick-coloured young shoots in spring and early summer; habit bushy, upright, broad; after 4 years to 30cm tall, and 45cm across (pruned).
⊕ Selected from mixed seedlings, raised from open-pollinated plants.
§ Tegel is Swedish for brick and this alludes to the colour of the springtime foliage.
✍ *Heathers* **13** (this issue): 58; URL www.heathersociety.org/new-heathers (posted October 2015).

❖ URL www.heathersociety.org/new-heathers

'Troy'

® C.2015.11 registered 28 September 2015 by Sten-Börje Sörensson, Almvägen 7, 475 51 Hönö, Sweden.

❊ Flowers mauve (H2), single, September–October; foliage yellow-green in summer; individual leaves minute; habit erect; after 4 years to 25cm tall, and 35cm across (pruned).

⊕ Seedling raised in 2011 by Sten-Börje Sörensson.

§ Named by Ann-Marie and Sonny Magnusson after their dog.

✍ *Heather news quarterly* **37** (4: Fall 2014): 11 (name only); *Heathers* **13** (this issue): 57; URL www.heathersociety.org/new-heathers (posted October 2015).

❖ *Heather news quarterly* **37** (4: Fall 2014): 11; URL www.heathersociety.org/new-heathers.

'Zalina'

® C.2015.03: registered 1 April 2015 by Kurt Kramer, Edewecht-Süddorf, Germany.

❊ Bud-flowering (Knospenblüher); small buds only after a warm autumn (perhaps in November); buds RHS 74 B (purple H10); foliage black-green in summer; new growth dark green; habit broad, upright; after 3 years 25 cm tall × 30 cm across; pruned.

⊕ Deliberately raised; cross made in Autumn 2007; selected Autumn 2008, by Kurt Kramer; plant breeders' rights granted.

✍ URL http://gardengirls.de/sortiment/sunset-line.html.

❖ URL http://gardengirls.de/sortiment/sunset-line.html

'Zelia'

® C.2015.04: registered 1 April 2015 by Kurt Kramer, Edewecht-Süddorf, Germany.

❊ Lacks flowers; light green foliage; habit upright; to 30cm tall, to 25cm across, in 3 years, pruned.

⊕ Deliberately raised; cross made in Autumn 2007; selected Autumn 2010, by Kurt Kramer; plant breeders' rights granted.

✍ URL http://gardengirls.de/sortiment/sunset-line.html.

❖ URL http://gardengirls.de/sortiment/sunset-line.html

'Zoe'

® C.2015.05: registered 1 April 2015 by Kurt Kramer, Edewecht-Süddorf, Germany.

❊ Lacks flowers; mature foliage black-green, young foliage dark green; habit upright; to 30cm tall, to 25cm across, in 3 years, pruned.

⊕ Deliberately raised; cross made in Autumn 2007; selected Autumn 2008, by Kurt Kramer; plant breeders' rights granted.

✍ URL http://gardengirls.de/sortiment/sunset-line.html [name only].

'Zulu'

® C.2015.06: registered 1 April 2015 by Kurt Kramer, Edammer Straße 26, 26188 Edewecht-Süddorf, Germany.

⊕ Deliberately raised; cross made in Autumn 2007; selected Autumn 2008, by Kurt Kramer; plant breeder's rights granted.

Daboecia cantabrica



J. van Leuven's new cultivars of *Daboecia* (from left): 'Annika', 'Ramona', 'Tina'.

'Annika'

® D.2015-02 registered 15 August 2015 by Johannes van Leuven, Geldern-Lüllingen, Germany.
❊ Flowers pink, July–October; foliage light green; habit broadly upright, to 50cm tall, to 50cm spread after 4 years (pruned). More vigorous than 'Rosella' with flowers in loose spike.
⊕ Deliberately raised seedling from an unnamed seedling × 'Maja'; selected by Johannes van Leuven in September 2013: DAB16, code name VL-B when submitted for plant breeders' rights.
✍ *Blatt für Sortenwesen* **48** heft 08: 162 (August 2015); __ 09: 191 (September 2015).
❖ URL www.heathersociety.org/new-heathers.

'Ramona'

® D.2015-03 registered 15 August 2015 by Johannes van Leuven, Geldern-Lüllingen, Germany.
❊ Flowers violet, July–October; foliage light green; habit broadly upright, to 50cm tall, to 50cm spread after 4 years (pruned). More vigorous than 'Vanessa' with flowers in loose spike.
⊕ Deliberately raised seedling selected by Johannes van Leuven in September 2013: DAB15, code name VL-A when submitted for plant breeders' rights.
✍ *Blatt für Sortenwesen* **48** heft 08: 162 (August 2015); __ 09: 191 (September 2015).
❖ URL www.heathersociety.org/new-heathers.

'Tina'

® D.2015.01 registered 15 August 2015 by Johannes van Leuven, Geldern-Lüllingen, Germany.
❊ Flowers red, July–October; foliage light green; habit broadly upright, to 50cm tall, 50cm spread after 4 years (pruned), so grows broader than 'Andrea'.
⊕ Deliberately raised seedling selected by Johannes van Leuven in September 2013: DAB17, code name VL-C when submitted for plant breeders' rights.
§ Named after his future daughter-in-law, Christina Schönmakers.
✍ *Blatt für Sortenwesen* **48** heft 08: 162 (August 2015); __ 09: 191 (September 2015).
❖ URL www.heathersociety.org/new-heathers.

E. cinerea 'Creepy Crawly' (David Edge)

E. x *darleyensis* 'Torero' (J. van Leuven)

Erica

E. cinerea 'Creepy Crawly'

® E.2015.03 registered 21 October 2015 by David Edge, Forest Edge Nurseries, Wimborne, Dorset.

❊ Flowers purple, single, June–September; foliage mid-green; habit trailing, creeping or weeping with stems grow flat on ground or descending; after 3 years to 3cm tall, and 35cm across forming a mat on level ground.

⊕ Wild-collected on Lundy in Bristol Channel in July 2007 by David Edge: has "novel habit with its green foliage and trailing, weeping" stems.

✍ URL www.heathersociety.org/new-heathers.

❖ URL www.heathersociety.org/new-heathers.

E. × *darleyensis* 'Torero'

® E.2015:02: registered 23 March 2015 by Johannes van Leuven, Geldern-Lüllingen, Germany.

❊ Corolla mauve to heliotrope (H2/H12); urn-shaped, to 7mm long, maximum width 5mm, calyx dark mauve, to 4mm long; anthers very dark red, fully emergent; flowers in spikes to 8 cm long, February–April. Leaves dark green above, pale green below, to 9mm long, linear. Habit upright, to 45cm tall × 35cm across after 5 years (not pruned).

⊕ Deliberately raised cross made in February 2008; selected February 2010; EU-Sortenschutz SR-2 (Torero).

E. × *factitia* 'Johannes van Leuven'
® E.2015.01: registered on 4 March 2015 by Registrar, The Heather Society.
⊕ *E. lusitanica* × *carnea* clone 2 raised by Johannes van Leuven; from this clone the holotype of *E.* × *factitia* was selected (clone 2).
✍ *Heathers* **13**: 4–7 (this issue).
❖ *Heathers* **13**: 4, 5, 6 (this issue).

Other names new to the *International register of heather names*

Calluna vulgaris
'6-5-66-Goldie': CLL 498; *Blatt für Sortenwesen* **48** heft 05: 85 (May 2015).
'Bubu': CPVO online Gazette 2014_6.
'Fynd': *Heather news quarterly* **37** (4) [no 148]: 11.
'Jüli': CLL 526: *Blatt fur Sortenwesen* **48** heft 08: 162 (August 2015); __ heft 10: 245 (October 2015).
'KJU': CLL 529; *Blatt fur Sortenwesen* **48** heft 11: 304, 306 (November 2015).
'QX 1': CLL 526; *Blatt fur Sortenwesen* **48** heft 10: 245 (October 2015).
'Triniti': CLL 527: *Blatt fur Sortenwesen* **48** heft 08: 162 (August 2015); __ heft 09: 191 (September 2015).
'Zelena': URL http://gardengirls.de/sortiment/sunset-line.html.

Names related to H. E. Beale
"baleana Adams" [*sic*]: error for *bealeana*, but the significance of "Adams" is obscure.
D. Böhlmann, 2012. *Hybriden: bei Bäumen und Sträuchern*: unpaginated.
bealeae: X *Ericalluna* G. Krüssmann, *Deutsche Baumschule* **12**: 153–156 (1960); __ 1960 *Handbuch der Laubgehölze* 1: 419; *Gardeners chronicle* **148**: 362.
The plants included in this supposed bi-generic hybrid were all *Erica cinerea* cultivars with split corollas, 'Winifred Whitley', 'W. G. Notley', and 'Schizopetala'.
'Mrs Beale': error for 'H. E. Beale'.
W. Beijerinck, 1937. *Recueil des travaux botaniques néerlandais* **34** (2): 463; __1940. *Calluna a monograph* ...: 146.

Erica × *darleyensis*
'Lea'
❊ Flowers brighter pink than 'Spring Surprise', February–May, contrasting with its dark green foliage; dense, of medium growth, 'Lea' can be planted in the garden or in pots.
✍ Sapho website (accessed 2 December 2015).

'Spring Sunrise': error for 'Spring Surprise': Sapho website (accessed 2 December 2015).

Erica gracilis
'AW 1019': ERG 192: *Blatt für Sortenwesen* **48** heft 06: 108 (June 2015).
'Beau.Queen we.Manten': ERG 195: *Blatt für Sortenwesen* **48** heft 05: 79 (May 2015).
'Janosch': ERG 194: *Blatt für Sortenwesen* **48** heft 10: 245 (October 2015).
'Pepe': ERG 193: *Blatt für Sortenwesen* **48** heft 10: 245 (October 2015).

Proceedings of The Heather Society 2015
44th Annual Gathering 10–14 September 2015

Céad Míle Fáilte: this was our greeting to the Annual Gathering in 2015, literally a hundred thousand welcomes. We appreciated them very much.

We were fortunate to have a four-night gathering this year as most people had travelled a long distance to get to the Leenane Hotel in Connemara. Mike and I came over the top from Louisburgh so we saw the hotel from a distance and then had to drive at least a third of the way round the fjord, the only one in Ireland, to reach our destination. The weather for the past few days had been superb but it was clouding over a little as we arrived. We had been in Ireland for several days so had missed Susie's emails to us and were amazed at how stressed she was on greeting us. We soon learned why!

Leenane (An Lionán) is situated on Killary Harbour in the heart of Connemara, believed to be one of the most beautiful natural harbours in the world. It is nine miles from the open Atlantic to the mouth of the River Erriff with its superb waterfall. The hotel boasts the only saltwater seaweed baths to rejuvenate the body.

Arrivals were most interesting, out of the 26 attendees, two lived locally, eight had come on a long journey by minibus, bravely driven by our chairman, four had come by the northern short crossing, three had come by air to Knock, two by bus from Dublin, which involved Alan in trips to the airport and Maam Cross, and four had left their caravans locally.

The hotel is in a wonderful location but it left a bit to be desired. It is advertised as a two-hundred-year old inn, which offers a friendly atmosphere, every comfort and locally produced food. The rooms, whilst en-suite, retain the character of bygone days but all had spectacular views of Killary Harbour and the Connemara mountains.

Well, light rain started during dinner and steadily got heavier through the night, and all day Friday, by which time local roads had flooded and according to Susie's weather gauge we had had 5 inches. We always knew it's a green country in western Ireland but we did not expect quite that much.

Our speaker on Thursday evening was Michael Gibbons, one of Ireland's leading field archaeologists, a man proud of his Irish roots. He was local to the area having lived in Connemara all his life, except for specific periods. His talk

was entitled "Conamara, Fianaise na Staire", that is the history of Connemara, with him commenting on the Celtic languages and in particular Bede, one of the most famous men in British history.

He took in the natural flora and fauna as part of the history, told us that sheep numbers are dropping so the blanket bog is improving but peat is still being cut and the Irish government is not enforcing the rules. Landscape Archaeology, the study of the ways in which people in the past constructed and used the environment around them, had shown that a large population cut the peat (turf) in order to burn kelp for export. Currently the locals still cut peat for burning in their homes, but in fact it had rained so much in 2015 that the turves could not be cut and dried.

One of the major topics of the weekend was the Irish Potato Famine of 1845–1852, when although wheat and other crops were grown alongside potatoes, the former had to be sent to England to pay taxes and the latter was used as the staple diet. When blight rampaged through the potato crop there was nothing for the locals to eat. Michael spoke about —

- the dark sons of the sea
- Culfin – the dog whelk site
- the islands, where the peat has been eroded
- the blanket bog on the high levels, which has eroded
- the megalithic tombs, including Court Tomb
- the field systems, which drowned with the dynamic sea level rise
- the ancient landscape emerging as the peat is cut
- the very low numbers of grouse
- standing stones marking cremations underneath them
- the cursing stone used by witches (wise women)
- how the population lived in stone forts in the 7th century
- the lake dwellings which were built on stone not trees
- the fact that only one Viking burial has been found in western Ireland
- the Normans who lived in the country from 1169
- the17 ships from the Armada wrecked on the coast
- the fact that the Cromwellians did a lot of damage
- and that three quarters of the population around Dublin was English at one time, Connemara being the last place the English tried to rule.

The next morning, Friday, we got up to persistent rain but chirpy as ever we put on our wellies and Barbours and got into the coach by 9.00am prompt. We

rode through the mist and the wet to Kylemore Abbey, a wonderful Victorian structure, we should have been able to see from the bridge at the far side of the lake. We did see it the following day but not the day we visited. We spent our time under golf umbrellas looking at the six-acre walled garden in detail. All the plants growing in the walled garden are old "Victorian" varieties, introduced to Ireland before 1901. Many are rare and some commercially unavailable today. We were guided round by the head gardener, a German girl with a lovely accent and she studies the heritage varieties and the gardeners save seed and propagate them. The herbaceous borders consist of a north and a south border running either side of the main avenue. The plants have been planted on a grid system and the trust has produced an excellent leaflet showing the name and position of each plant.

Having spent well over an hour in the rain apart from dodging into the one restored greenhouse, the gardener's bothy and the former head-gardener's house, we were glad to have a coffee and then make our way into the abbey itself to look around this typically Victorian building. I don't think any of our party made their way to the little Gothic church and mausoleum at the far side.

Kylemore Castle was built as a private home for the family of Mitchell Henry, a wealthy doctor from London whose family was involved in textile manufacturing in Manchester. He moved to Ireland when he and his wife, Margaret, purchased the land at Kylemore. He became a politician, serving as MP for County Galway from 1871 to 1885. Construction began in 1867, and took four years to complete. It is made of granite brought from Dalkey by sea to Letterfrack, and from limestone brought from Ballinasloe.

The castle remained in Henry's estate after he returned to England. It was sold to the Duke and Duchess of Manchester in 1909, who resided there for several years before being forced to sell the house and grounds because of gambling debts. In 1920, the Irish Benedictine Nuns purchased the castle and lands after they were forced to flee Ypres, Belgium, during World War I. The nuns, who had been based there for several hundred years, had been bombed out of their abbey during the war. The nuns continued to offer education to Catholic girls, opening an international boarding school and establishing a day school for local girls. They closed Kylemore Abbey school in June 2010.

Since the 1970s, the Abbey's gardens have been open for public tours and 'nature' walks. The Benedictine community has restored the Abbey's gardens and Gothic chapel with donations, and employed local artisans in order to be a self-sustaining estate.

It was as well that we had set off early on our day trip as by the time we had lunch in the cafe the place was heaving with tourists. The afternoon we spent inside the Connemara Smokehouse watching a Frenchman fillet a salmon and then slice it into the thinnest leaves possible. It took me back to the days when I did Zoology A-level and had to write a 40-page essay on the life of a salmon. Mine died of old age after spawning, not being sliced into leaves before being smoked. The Smokehouse is perched on the edge of the wild Atlantic Way at Bunowen Pier. It has won many awards, featured on TV and numbers Rick Stein amongst its many visitors. Of course we had the normal sales talk about making sure we buy wild or at the very least organic salmon and not the farmed stuff. Okay, if you can afford it!

We all went back to the hotel hoping for salmon or even honey-roast smoked tuna for dinner, but after a quick cup of tea and a hot shower it was back downstairs for a talk on the Irish peatlands. This was given by Dr Micheline Sheehy Skeffington, who had recently retired from her position as lecturer in plant ecology in NUI Galway. She has published papers with her students on peatland ecology of rare species and habitats in the west of Ireland.

She spoke about the fens, which are minerotrophic (the wet comes from rising ground-water). They always occur in a depression, they are an anaerobic accumulation of plant material, which at the bottom of the dip can be as much as 10,000 years old. These fens made of sphagnum peat build up to form a dome, which grows faster in the middle due to the less alkaline effect. They form hummocks easily seen in the fields and *Calluna* grows on the top of the hummock, with *Erica tetralix* growing in the pools around the dome.

The major part of the west of Ireland is made up of bogs, of sphagnum peat, which are ombrotrophic – the wet comes from the clouds as rainwater. They need acid and form basins particularly in the centre of the country, even raised bogs grow in basins. The blanket bogs have a grassy carpet landscape, arising due to the presence of more than 200 days rain per year. It is interesting to note that sedge peat is made up of a web of roots whilst peat heathland is made up of plant material not fully decomposed and as such it requires a constant water supply. The sedge peat from the fens and blanket bogs usually has a pH of 5.5 with the raised bogs pH being lower at pH 4.5.

The bedrock can be acid, this occurs due to the leaching of soil and the orange colouration is due to water logging on the iron pan. The burning for charcoal depleted the area of vegetation producing heathland with less than 50cm of peat, so being drier heather is able to grow. Here *Daboecia* grows taller than the western gorse. *Erica mackayana* also prefers the drier ground, whilst on the wet heath the sphagnum is soft and typically grows bog plants such as bog bean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*).

We were off early again on Saturday morning but the day was fresh and bright so it was a delight to be out visiting Connemara National Park. The only hazard was the innumerable cloud of midges venturing out after the rain. Thank goodness Susie had thought to bring a spray along – it passed down the

line frequently. The park has been formed from part of the Kylemore Abbey Estate and the Letterfrack Industrial School, whilst the southern part of the park belonged to the founder of the RSPCA. Our group took a walk to see the views and flora and spent quite a while petting the white Connemara ponies. The park covers almost 3,000 hectares of mountains, bogs, heaths, grasslands and woodlands including some of the Twelve Bens and Diamond Hill, so called because of the sparkle of the quartzite. The remains of human activities can be seen in the megalithic tombs and standing stones found in the area. The two plants of special interest were meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*) used in the treatment of arthritis, and the so-called giant rhubarb, *Gunnera tinctoria*, which is a serious weed in this part of Ireland.

Lunch was taken in the former hunting lodge, Ballynahinch Castle Hotel. This house was the home of "Humanity" Dick Martin, founder of the RSPCA, and then of Maharaja Jam Salub of Nawanager, better known as Ranjitsinhji or Ranji, prince of cricketers, before becoming a hotel. We all had a good look around and the view from the main dining room alone is divine. Heather enthusiasts had great fun walking on a heather lawn across from the entrance.

We spent the afternoon in The Heather Society's favourite spot in Connemara, Roundstone Bog. For members who have not yet visited, this is a lowland blanket bog, full of golden (in autumn) purple moor grass and heather in full bloom. The coach stopped for us on several occasions so that

our enthusiasts could lie prone on the damp bog with their lenses to examine the hairs on the ovaries of *Erica*. The first occasion was specifically for *Erica mackayana*. The second to view *E. ciliaris* and members were able to bring back a double *E. mackayana* to the hotel. Unfortunately there was not time to visit the quaint village of Roundstone with its picturesque fishing harbour and cottages.

It was back to the hotel once again for a quick change and drink before listening to the lecture given by Dr Michael Pirie, who had come all the way from Mainz, Germany, to join us. Dr Pirie has spent many years in botanical research and has worked with Ted Oliver investigating phylogenetics and evolution of *Erica*. The topic of this lecture was very detailed, giving us information on the various *Erica* species before going on to DNA breakdown shown as ancestral charts. Unfortunately these were difficult to see on screen due to the amount of information on each slide. He has used a polymerized chain reaction to focus on primers, to sort a part of a genome and build up a marker of interest. He then lined up the various characters to check the matches. This can be as low as one because everything has a phylogena, which can be used. Dr Pirie spoke about the flora in South Africa with its immense diversity of species, particularly of *Erica*. These vary due to the change in climate from the Mediterranean-type, close to the Cape, with its majority rain in winter, to the northern region with summer rainfall. So the various species are caused by topographical changes, ecological changes, climatic variations and biotic change such as pollinator shifts, the pollinators being birds, long-tongued flying insects, bees, moths and wind. There is evidence over the past 10 million years only; the diversity happening after several species arrived and its speed slowing down.

Sunday was not typical of the annual gathering, although it started in the normal fashion. The annual general meeting was fortunately short and straightforward as we had a deadline to board a coach once again for a very short journey to the pier. Here we formed a single file to climb aboard the *Connemara Lady*, a catamaran cruising up and down the fjord on regular tours. The initial event once seated was to devour coffee and scones to keep us going until lunchtime. Fortunately, once again the weather was kind to us, so we were able to go out on deck to view this glacially excavated inlet, formed along a fault zone. The name Killary, from the Irish Caolsháile Rua, means reddish salt inlet, due to the pink/purple colour of the rocks. It took about 45 minutes to sail most of the 14km to its mouth and the small island there. There were information boards around the boat explaining the geology; why the herring disappeared; who lived there; the local writers and artists; and, the history of the British Atlantic fleet which sheltered there prior to independence. We were able to see Mweelrea, the highest mountain in Connacht, the aquaculture including the ropes of mussels and salmon farms present in the fjord but not lucky enough to view the local dolphin. For the whole 90-minute trip to the ocean, it was as calm as a mill pond, but on our return the drizzle started once again.

Three brave souls in our party walked the green road from part way down the fjord to its mouth. They went equipped with mackintoshes and wellington boots and marched for two hours, mostly in dry atmosphere but very wet underfoot. It gave them a good opportunity to view the flora, however.

Sunday lunch was taken at Paddy Coyne's Bar, a typical Irish pub in the village near Susie and Alan Kay's home. Most of us had the local mussels, of course. The pub itself was made famous in an Irish television programme, when a policeman was shot in the bar. To commemorate this event, the landlord has put a gravestone made of beautiful black marble, with an inscription to Gerard Driscoll, in the tiny backyard. Fortunately his body is not in the grave.

Our afternoon was spent wandering around Susie and Alan's 0.6-hectare heather garden under umbrellas. Even in the pouring rain this was a sight to behold and all present were envious of the result of their hard work. Townacarra was originally a rough field covered in scrub but Susie put in a tremendous effort to remove stones and clear land in order to plant heather beds. The under-gardener has done a lot of work too using his engineering skills. He had a great pile of turves waiting to be moved whilst we were there, but no one volunteered. The garden is made up of 15 various beds and rockeries with

grass or moss between. The river at the side of the house was making a great noise rushing over the stones due to the heavy rain. In fact it was not long before all and sundry had ventured into the conservatory or the kitchen to gorge themselves once again on tea and cake. I can recommend Susie's baking!

The final event of the conference, before dinner, was a dramatic play presented by the Curlew Theatre Company. It was a play for two voices acted by Sean Coyne and Tegolin Knowland. "Hunger" or "An Gorta Mór" uses a wide variety of songs, speeches and political texts to compose an "audio collage" of the greatest catastrophe in Irish history, the potato famine or Great Hunger, "An Gorta Mór", of 1845–1850.

Slán go fóill.

Jean Preston

photographs by John Plowman
group photograph by courtesy of Barry Sellers

Key to Japanese "fireworks" by Takayuki Kobayashi.
A selection of some of the new seedlings raised by (and photographed by) Takayuki Kobayashi.

Erica hibbertii x *vestita* (red form)	*Erica vestita:* red form x purple form
Erica 'May Queen Ina' x unknown	*Erica cerinthoides* x *sparmannii*
Erica vestita: red form x purple form	