

The Heather Society Newsletter Summer 2017



Inside this issue

Foreword	2
Chairmans Piece	2
Society events and news	3
Group News	4-7
Marketplace	14
Adverts	12
Contacts	14
World news	8-11

Diary 2017

- 29th August RHS Harlow Carr (pg 5)
- 8th-11th September Annual Gathering, Somerset (pg 3)
- 24th September The Heather Society meeting
-RHS Wisley (pg 4)



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For contact details of the society's Officers,
 Editors, Group Organizers, see page 14
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Foreword

Well I'm pleased to say that the first edition of the newsletter was a success! It gave us all a great deal to think about I'm sure.

My aim for this summer newsletter is to focus as much as possible on heathers, that's what we are here for after all!

I want to share my love for heathers and yours too. Find out your favorites and where they grow best so we can encourage others to try them too.

Samantha Barnes

Chairman's Piece

The June Council meeting was an important occasion for attendees to review the future of the Society for consideration at the AGM. Like a well-oiled engine the Society has been fortunate in since it's inception to have the input of knowledgeable and capable Council and other volunteer members for its continuation and fulfilment of its prescribed duties.

However the time has arrived when the Society must consider managing without the same volume of 'oil' and consider its governance and structure to enable continuation or any such alternative.

I was intrigued and encouraged to note that in a survey of the best selling plants, Ericaceae came 22 in the list which was headed by bedding pelargoniums, primula and cyclamen. Peak sales period being the second week of May. Of course the family Ericaceae includes many other genera of plants within this classification but encouragingly our heathers must form a major percentage.

Bearing in mind that May is a 'bleak' flowering period for heathers it is not surprising that their sales at this time of year are outclassed. In this commercial world retailers aim to present in front of shoppers what looks biggest and brightest when they are in the garden centre or shop for monetary return. One only has to look at the example of the RHS Chelsea Flower Show to appreciate that if a family of plants is not in flower and has no other instant visual appeal it will not be exhibited. Commercialisation has its drawbacks when a grower's choice of plants, varieties and availability to the public are primarily governed by monetary return!

David Edge



David Edge your Chairman, at Furzey Gardens in the New Forest, Hampshire this Spring by a very mature *Erica arborea* 'Alpina' tree heather in full flower.

Society events & news

Annual Gathering and A.G.M. 2017

The time is getting closer for the above event. As you are aware, this is the last time the Gathering will be held in its present form. It is proving to be a popular weekend with 31 people having signed up. There is one room still available, which could be for either single or double occupancy.

Applications can be made to myself, Susie Kay at susiek@gofree.indigo.ie or telephone me at 00353 95 43575. A deposit of £5 is necessary to secure a place. Should anyone wish to come along for part of the programme, please contact me and I shall be able to advise you of the cost.

In case there is somebody out there who is interested, here is a brief résumé of our activities for the weekend.

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

The speakers are:

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

Tim Parish – a ranger from Exmoor National Park.

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

Date: 8th-11th September 2017.

Venue: The Walnut Tree Hotel, North Petherton, Somerset

Cost: Single room £375

Double/twin room £285 (per person sharing)

The price for attending includes:

3 nights dinner, bed and breakfast.

All entries and tours of each garden.

Lunches.

Coach and gratuities.

The only piece of bad news is that it is time to make your final payments.

PAYMENT MUST BE MADE BY SATURDAY 15TH JULY.

If you are resident in the UK or wish to pay with a sterling cheque, please send your cheque to Allison Fitz-Earle at Sea Haven, 2 Northcarse, Carsethorn, DG2 8EN, Scotland

Payment can also be made directly in to the Society's Lloyds Bank account:

Lloyds Bank Plc

Sort code: 30-13-35

Account no.: 60971568

BIC: LOYDGB21238

IBAN: GB03 LOYD 3013 3560 9715 68

Or you can use PayPal from the drop-down menu option "Donations and other Payments" reached by selecting "About us" from the Home Page of the website.

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

As stated before, the photographic competition will be taking place at the Gathering and judging will happen after the A.G.M. on Sunday evening. Please get clicking away as you may win the Julian Fitz-Earle Cup plus a monetary award.

We shall be having a plant sale, as usual, as long as participants bring along rooted cuttings or full grown plants. This is a very important part of our weekend as there is the opportunity to bring along a rare or unusual plant which is no longer available on a nurseryman's list.

But the main aim of our weekend is to share your life and experiences of the last year with other members of THS and then depart knowing you have played an active part in the affairs of The Heather Society.

Council is looking forward to greeting you all again on 8th September in Somerset.

If you have any questions regarding The Gathering, I am available to chat on the above telephone number or by email.

Susie Kay

Heather Society Conference Photographic Competition.

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

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

- 1) Close up photograph of single or group of heather flower spikes (may include visiting insect wildlife).
- 2) Photograph of a member's heather garden.
- 3) Scenic photograph to include heathers in a natural environment.

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

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

Postal entries should be sent to: Allison Fitz-Earle, Sea Haven, 2 Northcarse, Carsethorn, Scotland. DG2 8EN

Note to members of Council.

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

Important

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

See the website or page 14 for contact details.

Cuttings Exchange Scheme

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

For more details - you can phone me on 01885 482206, email me at dandmeverett@gmail.com

or fill in the form in the 'members' section of the website.

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

Daphne Everett

Group News

Home Counties Group

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

Visit to Whitehall Nursery

On Saturday 18th March around 10 THS members gathered at John Hall's Whitehall Nursery in Churt, Hampshire. The weather was a little breezy but pleasant. We were greeted by John and Molly who had kindly prepared some coffee and biscuits. John talked about the process that involved establishing a Heather Trials collection at his nursery. The RHS were keen to establish trials both in the south and Scotland to compare plants under different climatic conditions. Mark Heath at the RHS was in charge of the trials and we were pleased that Karen Robbirt of the RHS was able to join us to discuss the trials at the nursery.

Altogether 88 cultivars were being trialled representing *Erica carnea*, *Erica erigena* and *Erica x darleyensis*. The plants were grouped into square box shape planters, which John had made himself and arranged as 5 plants within. (See photo). The same compost was used for each planter and no fertiliser was added. One outstanding plant was *Erica carnea* 'Nadja' (see photo). This was due to a combination of compactness, contrast of deep cerise coloured plants with green foliage and orange yellow new growth as well as the floriferous nature of the plant. Others performing well included *Erica carnea* 'Columbia', *Erica x darleyensis* 'Kramer's Rote', *Erica x darleyensis* 'Katia' and *Erica carnea* 'Rosalie'. It will be interesting to see how the plants perform over the next year.

Sunday 24th September: RHS Wisley

The next meeting of the Home Counties Group has been arranged for Sunday 24th September at RHS Wisley.

We will meet at 10.30-10.45 am by the café at the front of Wisley. We will have a walk around the National Heather Collection between 11 am and 12.30 pm then we will break for lunch. There will be another Heather Show performed by John Hall in the afternoon. It is hoped to include propagation of heathers.

Those left will be sold by auction the proceeds going to the memorial hall fund.

Hoping you all have a good gardening summer.

Dorothy M. Warner

Yorkshire Group

The few members of the Yorkshire local group met at RHS Harlow Carr on Saturday, 25th March 2017. It was a beautifully warm sunny day which caused us problems.

The traffic was so heavy that one of our members turned back and returned home as he would have been very late arriving. Four of us ended up in car park number 3, which is a long walk from the entrance, which made me twenty minutes late arriving as I am not as fit as I would like to be.

Following a discussion we have decided that we will not meet on a Saturday afternoon again as RHS Harlow Carr is very busy, which is good for them but difficult for us. We have consequently postponed the meeting on Saturday, 10th June until Tuesday, 29th August at 2.30 pm in the Jubilee Room of the Bramall Learning Centre.

We chose instead that a few of us would meet up at Castle Howard and have a walk around the garden there. Unfortunately, the day chosen teemed with rain so this also was postponed.

The meetings at RHS Harlow Carr are advertised by their staff and there is a permanent display in the Exhibition Centre offering advice on heathers but no one has contacted me for a very long time.

Having said all that the winter heathers are in excellent condition. There are plenty of them and they look very good. Fortunately winter heathers cope well without pruning and last a good few years. It will be interesting in August to see what the summer flowering heathers look like. Sadly it is not cost effective to pay gardeners to prune heathers and so this is missed, an essential task really with the *Calluna vulgaris* as they soon become "leggy". Also they do not grow well in the main garden as the soil is heavy and of neutral pH. They would be better planting more *Erica x watsonii* or *Erica x williamsii*, even *Erica vagans* and others, which will cope better with the soil conditions.

I used to prune the heathers for them and even give



Barry Sellers

North east Group

Heathers; which other plant can stand up to the elements and still put on a colourful show. Rain, sun and wind are all taken in their stride; they are a good ground cover and, apart from pruning, need little attention except weeding and mulching.

Our winter heathers have been most rewarding and their vibrant colours have had people stopping to admire them.

Sadly, Geoff and I are unable to do gardening now but we are lucky and have 2 gardeners who come on a regular basis and keep it tidy.

The Ponteland Flower Show will be held in the memorial hall on Saturday September 9th 2017, staging from 9.00-11.00am when judging commences. Doors open from 1.00-4.30pm when all exhibits are to be removed.

advice on planting but I am no longer fit enough to do the former given the size of the beds and the staff change regularly so I know very few of them now and they no longer ask me about planting.

Jean Preston

Nature's Gifts

We all find seedlings in the garden, usually of weeds but occasionally self-sown from the plants we cherish. In my garden I'm pleased to see seedlings of some of my snowdrops as they are plants notorious for growing where they want to grow and often deliberate plantings fail. Cyclamen are prolific at seeding themselves and often sprout up at a fair distance from the original plants, possibly due to ants picking up the sticky seed and wandering off and depositing the seed in a remote location.

Now, what about heathers, do they seed themselves? In my garden the answer is yes with some of the species being quite good at it and others a little shy. *Calluna vulgaris* seeds itself well and presumably because I have a collection of different foliage and flower colours then the seedlings are of varying colours in both foliage and flower and have different habits of growth some being prostrate others being erect and all habits in between.

Daboecia cantabrica produces seedlings, with variation in flower colour, flower shape and habit of growth. For many years my *D. cantabrica* collection was represented by one cultivar, 'Atropurpurea' and no seedlings were ever present, however after the introduction of two other cultivars of *D. cantabrica*, in the vicinity of 'Atropurpurea', the seedlings started to appear. It may, of course, be that it was the two most recent introductions that were responsible and 'Atropurpurea' wasn't involved at all but given that most of the seedlings were initially in the vicinity of 'Atropurpurea' suggests it was a parent.

Amongst the genus *Erica* there are several species that have self-sown. Those that have, apparently with ease, are *Erica carnea*, *E. erigena*, *E. terminalis* and *E. vagans*. I have found one seedling of what I believe was *E. manipuliflora*, but possibly could have been the hybrid *E. x griffithsii* and the hybrid *E. x darleyensis* has also been discovered. One of

my early plantings was *E. lusitanica* but eventually the plant failed for reasons unknown but then I found a handful of seedlings of *Erica lusitanica*, several of which have grown to fine plants. The other *Erica* species I grow are *E. arborea*, *E. australis*, *E. ciliaris*, *E. cinerea*, *E. mackayana* and *E. tetralix* but, as yet, I have not found any seedlings of those species.

As for taking advantage of nature's gifts then if a seedling shows potential then dig it up carefully and pot it up, remembering to label with the genus and species (if known), the date collected and its location. Before rushing off to name the plant and possibly register it then grow the plant on for a couple of years to verify what you feel is its unique qualities and try propagating the plant from cuttings to see if the qualities are retained. I prefer to leave the seedlings where they are for a while to see if there is any potential in the plant or even allow them to fill a gap, remembering to make sure that they don't take over from known cultivars and aren't accidentally propagated as an existing cultivar.

So, off you go, out into the garden and spot those seedlings, you may have never noticed before.

Phil Joyner

Heather/conifer gardens were the 'in-thing' in the seventies when I moved into my present house and The Heather Society was inundated with members anxious to learn more about these versatile plants. Recently I had two of my once 'dwarf' conifers removed and was delighted at the amount of extra ground this provided. What a chance to fill the two - well separated - spaces with young heathers to rejuvenate my mature garden! Some of my tree heathers have been cut down to four feet, several times, and have regrown magnificently - the others have filled out to fill every space available.

Fortunately I had a pile of composted wood chippings kept from clearances in the garden and I used these to build up the depleted areas, before purchasing a big collection of young plants from our member nurseryman, John Hall. I filled one area with winter-flowering *Erica x darleyensis* and the other with summer-flowering *E. cinereas*, in groups of three for each species. The result is very pleasing and of course young plants do flower so much better.

Pamela Lee

Heather Thatch

A SEVENTEENTH century farmhouse has been severely damaged after a fire ripped through its thatched roof.

It is the second time a fire has broken out at Levy Pool Farm House near Bowes in rural Teesdale in recent years, with the owners having to re-thatch the roof following a blaze in 2005.

No-one was hurt in the latest incident on Thursday night but the house suffered extensive damage, especially the roof, which was one of the last remaining heather thatched roofs in County Durham

From the Northern Echo, 19th May 2017



David Plumridge

Elsie Ide 1921 -2017

Elsie Ide, widow of the late Dick Ide, has sadly passed away. She was a very loving, kind and generous person, who loved life and all it had to offer. Elsie and Dick spent much of their holidays in the wilds of the West Country looking for new heathers. Their finds were such cultivars as *Calluna vulgaris* 'Ide's Double', 'Mickle-Dickle' (named after their Son Mike), 'Penny Bun' (named after their Daughter Penny), 'Trinklet' (formerly named 'Maiden's Blush', finally named 'Trinklet' after Trink Hill where it was found) and *Erica cinerea* 'Rock Ruth'.

Both Dick and Elsie are sadly gone, but not forgotten. They live on in the plants they lovingly found together, as much-admired heathers in the National Heather Collection at RHS Wisley.

The funeral service is being held at Easthampstead Park Cemetery and Crematorium on Friday 7th July 2017 at 1.30pm. The family have requested that in

place of floral tributes then donations to The Heather Society be made. John & Molly Hall will be representing The Heather Society at Elsie's funeral.



Above Molly Hall and Elsie Ide 28.11.15

Peace Garden at the Muslim Burial Ground in Woking, Surrey

On page 50 of THS 2017 Heathers 14 yearbook is an article written by Lizzie Judson on the peace garden at the muslim burial ground. This article was accompanied by photos of the heather planting. However the heathers were not looking their best at the time so here are some shots of them a couple of months later. Looking very colourful and healthy.



World News

The south and east coasts of Vancouver Island have a gentle marine climate averaging the mildest winter temperatures in Canada and being in the rain shadow of the Olympic Mountains experience less rainfall than the rest of coastal British Columbia. This allows gardeners and nurseries to indulge in growing not only *Calluna*, but a wide range of *Erica* and *Daboecia* species. It is not unusual to see mature specimens of *Erica aborea*, *E. x veitchii* and other Tree Heaths in parks and gardens.

Since it's beginning in 1977 membership in the North American Heather Society (NAHS) has been strong from 'The Island' resulting in the creation of the Victoria Heather Society and a few years later it's transition into the very active Vancouver Island Heather Society (VIHS). Members meet monthly traveling from Nanaimo in the north and from Victoria in the south, arriving in the picturesque seaside village of Mill Bay. Over the years Island members have hosted three NAHS annual gatherings and one International Heather Conference. During the past few months the group has visited local gardens and specialty nurseries while supporting three public heather gardens, not just with funds, but working hands as well. A speakers evening and Christmas Lunch are late season hilites, while joining other garden club springtime events are part of the early season pleasures.

March 25th brought the return of the annual heather sale after a one year absence, 2016 was the first miss in nearly twenty years. Planning began months in advance and clearly the enthusiasm displayed by members during preparations was noticed by gardeners throughout the area. Reports of nearly 1000 heather plants sold in less than thirty minutes were not exaggerated. A popular feature which enhances sales is offering plants in a themed 'Kit'. "Focus on Foliage", "Spring Tips" and "Winter Glory" kits each contain 10 plants, a planting plan and cultural advise. After all the planning meetings and publicity visits, caring for the plants, set up and take down and warm hospitality, the group had enough strength to walk to a local pub for a well deserved lunch. On top of that, five new members were added to the roster!

Meetings and events are planned for the first

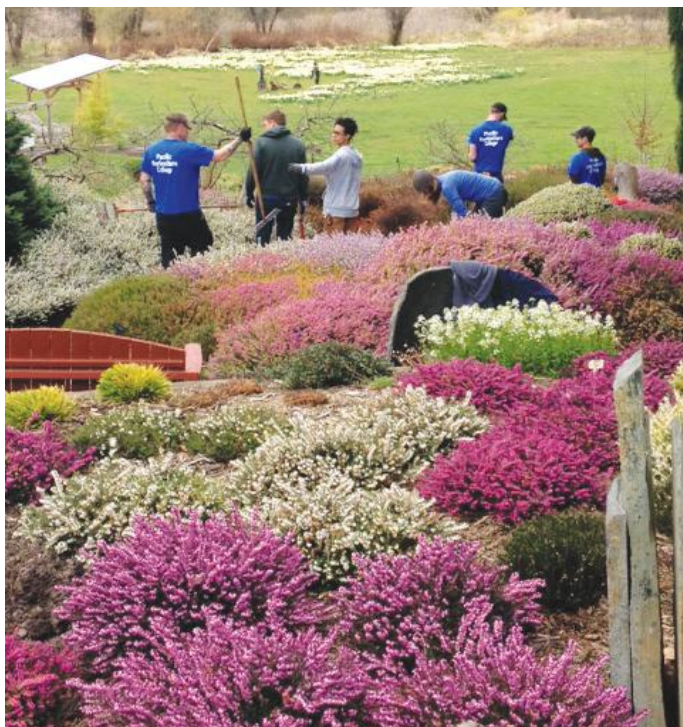
Wednesday of the month and the autumn schedule looks full with a special "Bee Day" set for October which should draw visitors from the community. Also, in regards to visitors, THS members from all lands can visit our website www.bcheathersociety.org and we hope that travellers to south west British Columbia will check in and say "Hello".

Dave Wilson

A heather garden was established in the mid 80's at the Horticulture Centre of the Pacific in Victoria. Partly funded by the NAHS and the VIHS. The school offers a 10 month program and generally targets those interested in garden maintenance or landscaping as a career. I do a heather day with the classroom and work in the garden and a container planting session too. I usually go over every month when i'm not too busy.

Here are a few pictures of the students at work.





Dave Wilson

Philomath Frolickings 2017

Ella May T. Wulff
2299 Wooded Knolls Drive
Philomath, OR 97370 USA
ewulff@peak.org

If I were revising the garden design chapter of *Gardening with Hardy Heathers* (not going to happen), I would make one major change: a greater emphasis on the importance of working paths. Working paths, or wide spaces between planting beds are absolutely necessary in any sizeable heather garden. If you design with great swathes of colour

from a single cultivar or grouping of several cultivars of like colour in either flowers or foliage, you'd better figure out a way to get close enough to all those plants to prune them once a year.

I'm particularly sensitive right now to the optimum width of working paths, because I've just tried—belatedly, but no helping that—to finish pruning the heathers that either can not safely be pruned in the fall or that were not pruned because I ran out of time last fall before I'd finished pruning. That I'm perpetually running out of time and so have taken pruning shortcuts for the last several years (using electric hedge trimmers to prune most of a planting but leaving the detail work of finishing the edges by hand for "later") hasn't helped the path situation. "Later" often never arrives, and the uncut stems at the base of the plants grow longer and longer. This year, the inevitable happened: the uncut stems on one side of a working path met the uncut stems from the other side of the path. Gridlock!

There are two working paths on the long berm that separates heather garden from roadside ditch. One path runs atop the length of the berm. The other branches off from it partway along the berm and heads down slope diagonally before levelling off about halfway to the ditch and then paralleling the upper path. I designed the top path to be wide enough for a wheelbarrow, in order to make it easy to spread mulch on the upper part of the berm. The branch path is narrower, for pruning access only, so it only had to be wide enough for me to be able to walk on it and rake up the prunings.

My goal in this design was that when the heathers matured, neither working path would be visible from the road or the house. Consequently, I selected tall heather cultivars for the top of the berm and also to plant below the branch path. This part of the plan worked. The paths are concealed from view on either side. However, by selecting tall cultivars, I also inadvertently selected very vigorous cultivars, e.g., *Calluna vulgaris* 'Kerstin', *C. vulgaris* 'Oxshott Common', and *Erica* × *griffithsii* 'Jacqueline'. Although I was diligent in pruning them very severely during the garden's early years, it was impossible to keep them from gradually gaining in girth with age. Couple this inevitable expansion with my neglecting the detail basal pruning, and what greeted me this spring when I could finally get into the garden was a solid mass of heather—no path visible at all in some

areas.

I should have made the working paths wider. My “details later” procrastination wasn’t confined to heathers along the working paths, but only there did it create a serious problem. The five-foot-wide main garden path is barely troubled by a couple years of my detail neglect. The three-foot-wide subsidiary paths soon may become questionable (maybe they should have been four feet wide?), but the working paths no longer allow space for working!

Even the deer have stopped frolicking in this part of my Philomath garden. They used to walk gracefully along the top path, take a flying leap over the dip that accommodates the electrical box, and land on the opposite bank before heading across the driveway into the meadow and forest. Now they take other routes through the garden. Deer will walk through any part of the garden not covered with shrubby vegetation—say, a newly planted section with lots of bare or bark-mulched ground between the young plants. Once the plants have met, the deer either jump over them or go around them on the permanent paths.

Thank goodness for ‘Jacqueline’! Three plants of *E. x griffithsii* ‘Jacqueline’ fill the triangle formed by the intersection of working paths, and despite my earlier comment about this cultivar’s vigour, it also has the highly desirable trait of accepting very hard pruning with barely a whimper. Year after year, I have cut the sides of *E. x griffithsii* ‘Jacqueline’ down to bare wood without noticeable damage to the plants. They soon cover the bare patches with new foliage, and this cultivar’s growth habit is so upright that in comparison with its *Calluna* companions, its width seems hardly to have changed. Had I chosen another large *Calluna* cultivar for this crucial location, both working paths would have been blocked years ago.

This spring, no matter how many other chores are demanding my attention, once I’ve finished all the pruning that can be done with my trusty electrical assistant, I’m going to get down on my knees and cut off all the overgrown basal branches along all my garden paths. Where cultivars have sprawling growth, I’ll reach underneath as far as I can to remove the lowest branches and hope that new upper growth will lean over and cover the cut stem ends. Because I expect nobody but me to use the working paths, I don’t even need to worry about how the cut edges there look.

What matters is that when the work is finished, properly, I’ll once again have real working path.



The working path (beginning centre foreground) on top of the berm in the Wulff garden, September, 2012. The path curves left around *E. x griffithsii* ‘Jacqueline’ (centre), and a bit of it may be seen nearer the top of the photo to the left of the pine. The branch path begins its diagonal descent between the unknown pink *Calluna* (right foreground) and *E. x griffithsii* ‘Jacqueline’. *C. vulgaris* ‘Oxshott Common’ is in foreground left, *C. vulgaris* ‘Silver Knight’ in foreground right. *C. vulgaris* ‘Reini’ (centre right) effectively hides the branch path.

Ella May T. Wulff

Bruckenthalia Hybrids

In 1987, I made first trials crossing *Erica spiculifolia* (Balkan heath) with other *Erica* species. The Balkan heaths name then was *Bruckenthalia spiculifolia*. *Bruckenthalia* is still used here in the company and amongst colleagues.

That year I pollinated *Erica spiculifolia* with pollen from nine other species. Only the crosses with *Erica cinerea* (bell heather) and *Erica bergiana* (a Cape heath) resulted in seeds and young plants. The seedlings of *Erica cinerea x spiculifolia* unfortunately were killed by frost in the first winter. The seedlings of the hybrid with the Cape heath were more frost tolerant and survived. This was named *Erica x gaudificans*, and two clones were selected and named ‘Edewecht Belle’ and ‘Edewecht Blush’.

In subsequent years I tried several more crosses. In 2004 I succeeded with pollen of *Erica vagans*, *E. sicula*, *E. terminalis* and *E. manipuliflora*. From all of these I obtained seeds. The seedlings of *Erica spiculifolia* x *vagans* all died. The others were propagated so I was able to compare them and test them for suitability of production and garden use.

Two clones of the hybrid *Erica spiculifolia* x *manipuliflora* received cultivar names.

'Lisette' (reg. no. E.2012:03. Heathers 10: 84). When registered the flowers were described as lilac-pink (H11) and 'Pamela' (reg. no. E.2012:01. Heathers 10: 83). When registered the flowers were described as heliotrope (H12).

In Germany both cultivars are significantly more valuable for the garden than those of *E. x gaudiflora*. The flowers are slightly larger. The flowering time starts early June and lasts into late autumn. As pot plants, they need sufficient water and fertilizer, and the faded flowers need to be removed. As a side note, *Erica spiculifolia* will flower a second time, if faded flowers are removed.

Both 'Lisette' and 'Pamela' are produced in larger quantities in Germany and sold as flowering pot plants. I hope you will try these varieties in your garden.



Above 'Pamela'



Above 'Lisette'



Kurt Kramer, Edeweicht/ Germany

Nursery Adverts



Retail division of Forest Edge Nurseries offering mail order and connoisseur's choice of over 400 varieties.
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email...

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Woodlands. Wimborne. Dorset. BH21 8LJ
Discount to Heather Society members

Perthshire Heathers
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PERTSHIRE HEATHERS is a small family run horticultural nursery specialising in growing hardy Scottish grown heathers and heaths.
We sell mainly wholesale and deliver free within a 50 mile radius. Open for retail by prior appointment. We grow top quality plants in 8cm, 1 litre and 2 litre pots and can usually supply varieties for all year round colour.

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

John Hall Plants

Specialist Heather Grower for over 40 years



We can supply over 1000 heather varieties, *Calluna vulgaris*, *Daboecia* and *Erica*, as large plugs, as well as finished plants in 9cm, 13cm and 19cm diameter pots. We are open 9am – 4pm each day Monday – Saturday (please call 0771 4344327 prior to your visit). We also do mail order and are pleased to quote for this service. The Heather Society members receive a 10% discount.

Whitehall Nursery, Red Lane, off Churt Road, Headley Down, Hampshire, GU35 8SR.

Tel: 01428 715505 Mob: 0771 4344327

Email: info@johnhallplants.com

web: www.johnhallplants.com

Members Choice

In this section we would like to encourage members to tell us all about their favorite heather. If you would like to be included in the next issue please send your article to admin@heathersociety.org

Two favourite Spring heathers

David and Goliath

I was faced with a virtually unanswerable question when I was asked to write a short illustrated note on my favourite heather, as like all true heather lovers I have many favourites and homing in on just one was an impossible task. So I decided to dodge the question, firstly by choosing two candidates instead of one, and secondly, by choosing two favourites based on their performance and the garden value that they have already demonstrated this year. By coincidence, one candidate turned out to be the smallest heather that I grow and the other one of the largest.

The smaller of the two is the little known *Daboecia azorica* 'Don Richards'. Normally *D. azorica* is considered to be rather tender for most gardens

in the UK, but this particular variety has turned out to be surprisingly hardy, and I have been growing it unprotected outdoors in Yorkshire for more than 30 years with no problems. The plant was collected by eminent Society member Don Richards in the Azores more than 30 years ago, and as it was found at a high altitude it was expected to be fairly hardy. Although it never became available commercially, I was fortunate enough to acquire a small plant from Geoff Yates back in the 80's which appeared to be the only surviving example. Luckily it proved not too difficult to propagate and I was able to increase the stock and distribute a few plants over the years. In 2012 it was decided that the plant should be registered and was given the name 'Don Richards' in recognition of its original finder, who died in 2009.

The plant is slow growing and very compact, never reaching more than about 15cm in height, and is very floriferous. Like all true *azoricas* it only flowers for a single period in the year, namely May to early June, and as such is useful for bridging the heather gap between late spring and early summer. The flowers are bright pink and completely cover the plant. It is relatively easy to grow outdoors in full sun or partial shade, but does prefer the protection of a rock, or of other plants, provided these are not too vigorous. Because of its rather dainty disposition it is ideally suited to growing in a container or trough. The illustration shows some of my second year potted plants that flowered profusely in late May earlier this year.



Above *Daboecia azorica* 'Don Richards'

My second offering could not be more different size-wise, and is the well known tree heath hybrid *Erica x veitchii* 'Exeter'. Although said to be the least hardy of the *veitchii* hybrids, I have found it to be perfectly hardy in Yorkshire and have grown it successfully for more than 30 years with no problems.

It is one of my favourites because it is so reliably floriferous, giving plumes of white flowers over several weeks from March-May, which have the added advantage of providing a delightful perfume. The height, which is easily controlled by judicious pruning after flowering, makes it ideal for planting as a specimen at the back of a mixed border, and provides a perfect foil for smaller spring flowering plants. Such a use is illustrated in the picture below, which was taken in mid-March this year. I have also found it to be an ideal plant for providing an informal hedge by planting it in groups.

Below *Erica x veitchii* 'Exeter'



Professor John Griffiths

Members market Place



Exclusive 2017 offer to Heather Society Members

Erica australis 'Polar Express'

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



Description.

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

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

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

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

info@theheathergarden.co.uk

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

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