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A Tribute to Harry Bowen



It is fitting that the Northeast Heather Society acknowledges the passing of our dear friend and supporter, Harry Bowen. Harry was an avid gardener and in its prime, his heather garden was recognized as one of the most distinguished heather display gardens on the east coast.

Although Harry's name was not mentioned as one of the founders of the NEHS his influence and expertise in heather culture was recognized and respected early on. In the Heather Notes newsletter, Vol1 No.1, 1991, Harry wrote a common sense article on Heather propagation for the inexperienced home gardener using his personal experience as his guide. Harry, a medical doctor by profession, often filled in as the Heather doctor answering questions on heather culture for the 'Dear Doctor' articles of the Heather Notes. Two Calluna vulgaris cultivars have their origins in Harry's heather garden. The 1st and most outstanding is 'Chase White' and the 2nd, still to be proven predictable, is 'Harry's Grace'. This was a sport taken from Harry's garden, grown on by Bill Dowley and registered by Paul and Jane Murphy.

Harry and several other Cape Cod heather enthusiasts were instrumental in designing and planting the Heather garden at The Heritage Museum and Gardens in Sandwich MA. They tended this garden for several years. But time passes, garden staff priorities change, NEHS members get older and the garden became neglected. I can remember the NEHS conference held on the Cape in 2006. We joined Harry for breakfast at the hotel and he was lamenting the fact that he was recommending the Heather garden at the Heritage be removed from the list of NEHS supported heather gardens. In 2010, Judy Doyle, past president of the NEHS, had taken a trip with her garden club to The Heritage and found that many of the heather plantings in the Heather garden were still surviving. This got the ball rolling and in 2011 the reinvigorating of this garden began. Heritage garden staff have changed since then but the commitment of a few NEHS members to see this heather garden thrive remains. I hope Harry was aware of these efforts to restore the heathers at The Heritage and I also hope that more New England members of the NEHS will step forward and commit to keeping Harry's dream of a heather garden at Heritage alive and well.

Mark Your Calendar!

*The NEHS Conference
is scheduled for
August 16-18
in Waitsfield, Vermont*

***Don't Delay—
Send Your Registration
In Today!***

*Details—Page 3
Registration Form - Insert*

HAIR By Mary Matwey

The H.E.Beale in my Binghamton, NY heather garden has hair. I didn't think that my small microscope used to look at bugs would be any help in seeing hairs on the H.E.Beale's leaves but there they were. These plants were purchased from Hickory Hill Heath & Heather nursery in 2011. We had H.E.Beale in Cutler's Heather bed but unfortunately all the original ones have died. They would have been over 20 years old and would have been ideal subjects to check for hair. If you have old H.E.Beale plantings take a look. A 10x lense would suffice. I was able to hook up my microscope to the digital projector and then take the picture seen on page 1. If you can't examine your H.E. Beale for hairs send a specimen to me and I'll check them out. My address is on the opposite page of this issue. - Mary Matwey, Recording Sec./Content Editor



Photo by Mary Matwey
Hair on 'H.E. Beale'

NEHS Heather Conference & Annual Meeting August 16-18, Waitsfield, Vermont *Wondering what fun things there are to do this summer? Wonder no longer!*

The Northeast Heather Society is having a Heather conference and Annual Meeting centered on Waitsfield, Vermont. Events include:

- Renew Friendships & Make New Friends**
- Heather Garden Tour (Little Siberia)**
- Tour of Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream Factory**
- Visit to the VonTrapp Display Gardens with Heather**
- BBQ at Mackay Homestead (Heather Gardens)**
- Heather Parlor Show voting and awards**
- Native Plant presentation by Donald Mackay**
- Sunday Brunch at Mackay Homestead**

Plan on checking in at the ski lodge of your choice (see registration form) in Sugarbush, VT between 4pm and 7 pm Friday, August 16. On Friday evening, wine, cheese and hors d'oeuvres will be served at Mackay Homestead, 5pm - 7:30pm. You can turn in the Heather entries for the Parlor Show at this time and there will be a Board meeting to attend to business and car-pooling arrangements can be made for Saturday's events. If you are still hungry, you are on your own for dinner Friday evening but Ake's Den restaurant and Sport Tavern is our recommendation which is near the ski lodges. On Saturday we will meet at the ski lodges to begin our travels for the day. On Saturday a BBQ will be served by local caterers at Donald's place. We will have the Heather Parlor Show voting and awards on Saturday evening along with the annual meeting after which we will be treated to a presentation by Donald Mackay called 'From Heath to Garden' which he gave to the Maryland Native Plant Society. Sunday brunch, 10 am, will send us off to home. A travel directions package will be provided upon registration.

See insert for Registration Form

If anyone is making this weekend the start of a long, over-due vacation, Burlington, VT offers the Shelbourne Museum, Church St. Marketplace, Lake Champlain Waterfront, Ethan Allen Homestead. Fort Ticonderoga, south of Burlington is a great historical site to visit as well.

Don't Forget!
Pull Out the
NEHS Conference
Registration Form
inserted in the
middle of this issue
of Heather Notes

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DON'T BE PRUNED! WE WOULD MISS YOU!

Check the expiration date on the address page of this newsletter.

Send your renewal to Treasurer Peter Matway, 7 Heights Court, Binghamton, NY 13905

What's All This Fuss About *Calluna vulgaris* 'H. E. Beale'?

As background to the article "Will the Real Mrs. Beale Please Stand Up? Following here in Heather Notes - and maybe Heather News - you should know that THS (The Heather Society) believes that we in North America may be harboring an imposter in our gardens.

It seems that there are two kinds of *Calluna vulgaris* 'H.E. Beale' producing their long beautiful spires of pink flowers. One is hairy, one isn't. Ours is, theirs isn't. Theirs is genuine, ours must be a misbegotten by-blow.

At least that's the opinion of Charles Nelson, THS Administrator, Year Book Editor, and Taxonomist and Registrar of all heathers. He quotes Geoffrey Yates, heather book author and architect and overseer of the Heather Collection at Harlow Carr in Yorkshire as saying 'H.E. Beale' has no hairs, so if it's hairy, it's not.

Well mine are, and so do those of Ella May Wulf on the other side of this continent. Admittedly, they are not so obvious as to cause the greyish foliage of 'Silver Knight', etc., and you'll probably need a magnifying glass to see them if they're there.

As you'll see, there has been plenty of opportunity for 'H.E. Beale' to lose his hair - if he had any to start with.

Will the Real Mrs. Beale Please Stand Up by Donald Mackay

You have probably noticed the large number of cultivars with nursery names. Among heathers in particular we find family members honored, not so much I believe for being involved with the cultivar as for keeping the nursery name in front of the heather-buying public. All the big heather nurseries did this, on top of using the Latinized nursery name as the cultivar name, on top of sometimes using the words Variety or Improved as extenders of the name. *Calluna vulgaris* 'Minima' and 'Minima Smith's Variety' come to mind.

For example, we have *C. vulgaris* 'Underwoodii' - one of the first bud bloomers - and *C. vulgaris* 'Underwood's Variety' which is equated with *C. vulgaris* 'H.E. Beale Underwood's Variety'. Underwood also produced *C. vulgaris* 'Rosalind', Underwood's Variety' as an improvement on 'Rosalind', a golden foliage plant.

Darthuizen, a Dutch nursery, produced eleven *C. vulgaris* cultivars with the Dart name prefix in nine years. Other nurseries have also been notably active in finding, or introducing findings that have been brought to them. Nurseries are also likely to spot strange seedlings, especially if hybrids, and consider growing them on. The erica cultivar 'Darley Dale' arose in this way.

But confusion can also arise as when two people bring similar if not identical plants to a nursery for their commercial potential. It is said *C. vulgaris* 'Camla' and *C. vulgaris* 'County Wicklow' arose in this way from the same nursery, the finders being unknown to each other. Most texts now treat 'Camla' and 'Camla Variety' as synonyms for the preferred 'County Wicklow', though Underhill sees a difference in flower color and suspects clonal alteration during propagation of this double-flowered heather.

The double-flowered heathers seem to have a history of instability giving rise to cultivars and cultivar names with slight or variable differences. No doubt seedlings between named varieties will show greater differences, but only the best seedlings will be chosen for further commercial clonal propagation. The double *C. vulgaris* 'Mick Jamieson' arose from crossing a single flower on 'Tib' with 'Darkness' in this way to reward David Wilson's breeding efforts.

When A.T. Johnson wrote **The Hardy Heaths** in 1928 (the first popular heather book) there was no mention of *C. vulgaris* 'H.E. Beale' (discovered 1925) nor any other double save that of the long known pink-flowered 'Flore Pleno' which was discovered in Cornwall in the 18th century, according to Maxwell and Patrick (**The English Heather Garden** 1966), and known since the early 19th century according to the Smalls' **Handy Guide to Heathers** (2001, 3rd Ed.). Small notes "various clones have been given this name...so it is possible there are still several clones being sold." He lists the progeny as BEJ, whatever that means. Underhill (1990, 2nd Ed.) says 'Flore Pleno' (awarded AM in 1929) "was the name used for all the double-flowered callunas until the appearance of 'H.E. Beale' in 1926." He thinks 'Pleno' and 'Multiplex' are possible synonyms, and even 'Peter Sparkes' (of which more anon).

A white-flowered double arose in a marsh in 1934 and was given to a German nursery to propagate, who sold stock to Maxwell & Beale who introduced it to the UK in 1938 under the name 'Alba Plena'. Underhill also notes that Chapple believed it was found by a climber in the Black Forest, and says it is "almost identical to 'Else Frye'". Small says "found near Oldenburg, Germany", which is in northwest Germany and 300 miles from the Black Forest. These three doubles ('Flore Pleno' 'Alba Plena' and 'H.E. Beale') plus 'J.H. Hamilton' (found in Yorkshire in 1935), and to a lesser degree 'County Wicklow' and 'Tib', are the major source materials for all the double-flowered plants in commerce.

Calluna vulgaris 'Alba Plena' is the parent of the sports 'Joan Sparkes' and 'Ruth Sparkes' and as mentioned synonymous with 'Plena' and 'Alba Flore Pleno' (Underhill 1990). 'Flore Pleno' gave rise to 'Pleno', 'Multiplex' and 'Peter Sparkes'. Underhill says of 'Multiflora' "an old name for double-flowered heathers" and of 'Multiplex', "an American cultivar apparently identical to 'Flore Pleno'". The name is very old "given as a general name to old double-flowered heathers." Small gives no

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space to 'Multiplex' and to 'Plena' only as a double-flowered cultivar of *Erica mackayana*.

The J.W. Sparkes nursery gave rise to several doubles: 'Joan Sparkes' from 'Alba Plena', 'Ruth Sparkes' from 'Alba Plena', 'Peter Sparkes' and 'Peter Sparkes Improved' from 'H.E. Beale'. Note that 'Joan Sparkes' has mauve flowers; 'Ruth Sparkes' has white and that 'Ruth Sparkes' gave rise to a single white-flowered cultivar with bright yellow foliage called 'Dart's Gold' (Small 2001). Obviously, flower and foliage color and double flowers are not entirely stable.

Underhill (1990, 2nd Ed.) also lists 'Pink Beale', "an introduction by W.G. Ticknor of Hookstone Green Nurseries, Woking." He says, "probably synonymous with 'H.E. Beale Underwood Variety'... 'Pink Beale' has dark green leaves whereas 'H.E. Beale' has brown-green foliage" and "so many enthusiasts find it cleaner and fresher-looking." However, eleven years later it is not to be found in Small (2001) though 'Mrs. Beale' gets an entry as an error for 'H.E. Beale'.

Many of these names were still around when Munson (the first President of the Northeast Heather Society) compiled a list of synonyms (PhD thesis, Cornell 1981) based on Yates' 1978 book **Pocket Guide to Heather Gardening**, published by The Heather Society, supplemented by nursery catalogs. Among the doubles we find 'Alba Flore Pleno', 'Alba Plena', 'County Limerick', 'County Wicklow', 'Else Frye', 'Else Foye', 'Flora Duple', 'Flora Plena', 'Flore Pleno', 'Floribus Plenis', 'Grimond', 'Cramond', 'H.E. Beale', 'H.G. Beale', 'H.E. Beale Underwood's Variety', 'James Hamilton', 'J.H. Hamilton', 'Radnor', and 'Miss Appleby' (discovered in the Radnor Forest 1954) with bright green foliage "so similar to 'H.E. Beale' that it may in many people's gardens oust the old-established cultivar" (Underhill 1990). Also listed are 'Mrs. H.E. Beale', 'Mrs. J.H. Hamilton', 'Multiplex', 'Peter Sparkes Improved', 'Pink Beale', 'Plena', 'Plena Flore', 'Plena Multiplex', 'Polypetala', 'Prolifera', 'Ruth Sparkes Improved', 'Sparkes Variety' and 'Underwood's Variety'.

Many are spelling mistakes, many if not most do not show up in Small (2001) but at least indicate the number of double-flowered heathers evaluated in 1980. The names Improved, Variety, probably indicate only slight changes. Munson did not list 'Camla'. Yates' book (1985 **The Gardener's Book of Heathers**) does indeed include many of these old or now discarded names including 'Pink Beale' and 'Underwood's Variety'.

Underhill lists 'Elsie Purnell' as introduced by J.W. Sparkes in 1964, describing it with grayish-green foliage and "very similar to 'Peter Sparkes' and 'H.E. Beale'". Small lists it along with 'Hatje's Herbstfeuer', 'Haika', 'My Dream', 'Schurig's Sensation', 'Snowball' and 'Sonja' as progeny of 'H.E. Beale', and itself as the source of 'Golden Wonder', 'Monika', 'Schotje's Gigant', and 'Sophia'. Reference to the "The Beale Family Tree" (Heather News, 1996, 19(1), No. 73, p.21) will show even further diversification, suggesting after several generations the apple might return very close to its original tree.

In Vermont old apple trees walk downhill as drooping branches take root before the tree dies, and old homesites can be inferred from wild apples growing many yards away and usually downhill. The apples, alas, are usually small, insect-ridden and of poor quality and not worth preserving. The UK Heather authorities take the same view and to prevent confusion weed out old and names deemed invalid, perhaps by the rules used for Latin binomials.

However, names can be dropped, but that does not mean the genetic stock that went with the name has also been eradicated. Which brings us to the question whether name simplification has led to genetically different plants being given the same name. So what is 'H.E. Beale'? As late as 2007 Mikolajski was describing 'H.E. Beale' and 'Pink Beale' as synonyms. (We can note that David Small was a consultant to Mikolajski.) Mrs. Beale has long been divorced, and 'Pink Beale' and 'Underwood's Variety' dropped from the books, and now various sports of 'H.E. Beale' can be seen reverting and re-reverting to show that neither color nor doubling is a sufficient descriptor.

I have noted where I can find it what authorities have had to say about foliage color, since greyness can indicate the presence of indumentation or hairs upon the leaves. Only Beijerinck (1940) described 'H.E. Beale' as being hairy-leaved, but not so completely as to include it with the grey-foliaged heathers like 'Silver Knight'. He proposed the subclassification of *bealea*, feminine in Latin, because it was 'Mrs. H.E. Beale' he examined, undoubtedly the earliest clone from the original plant discovered by some unknown hiker in the New Forest in 1926.

Today, when the heather world seems to be gripped by the possibility that there are at least two kinds of 'H.E. Beale' in commerce, one hairless in the UK, the other with hairy leaves in North America, we have to wonder if the situation is even that simple. Prothero in **Hardy Heather Cultivars Originating in North America** describes few double-flowered plants, most of which are derived from 'Tib' or 'County Wicklow'. There were none from 'H.E. Beale'. 'Else Frye' (sport on a pink-flowered plant, found 1940) in a nursery catalog by 1965, is the only possibility. 'Multiplex', surprisingly, is not listed. Perhaps there is a swarm of H.E. Beales out there widely dispersed on both continents. We don't even know how many Beale variants there may be in Germany, France, Holland, etc. And if you are confused, don't worry about it. You are meant to be.

Go out in the garden now and take samples of your 'H.E. Beale' and its relatives. Look closely at the leaf margins and surfaces, and report your findings. Perhaps we can make a map of the two kinds, if they're there. If you can, give when and where you got it.

It is clear from the excerpts quoted from our heather texts that our authorities and nurseries have often been confused in their naming and description and that not all agree on what I call the best composite picture of 'H.E. Beale'. The key points are pink double flowers packed on long sprays, well adorned with flowering side branches. The foliage is mid-green darkening in win-

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amous Dutch botanist W. Beijerinck is to be believed) is the presence of hairs, perhaps not enough to give the silky gray appearance of the obviously hairy cultivars, but certainly clear enough, especially on leaf margins, under a lens.

We know Beijerinck examined the earliest sample of 'H.E. Beale' to be propagated because it then had the name 'Mrs. H. E. Beale', probably sometime in the early 1930's. H.E. Beale was a director of the nursery, Maxwell and Beale. The nursery was given the job of propagating this new double-flowered calluna and first introduced it into trade as 'Mrs. H.E. Beale', apparently changing it to 'H.E. Beale' after some marital dispute. 'Mrs. H.E. Beale' is surely the closest we can get to the original find of 1926.

Many of the 'H.E. Beale' heathers grown in US gardens have definitely hairy foliage. Apparently most of those in the UK do not. With the much larger nursery activity in the UK - and heather gardening activity - it would seem much more likely that the original 'H.E. Beale' clone was lost or superseded during the long period of sporting and reverting of doubles considered identical to (but improvements on) 'H.E. Beale'.

Let me repeat. Go out in the garden and look at your 'H.E. Beale'. Is it hairy? Does it form long sprays of pink double flowers? Does the foliage darken noticeably in winter? Do you remember the source?

Whatever your information please submit it to Heather News or Heather Notes. Do we have plants masquerading as *Calluna vulgaris* 'H. E. Beale' running loose in our gardens? Or do we have the real thing? Will the real Mrs. Beale stand up?

Note: If you have access to old nursery records consider that there could be useful information in them if heathers were offered. Any mention of cultivar similarities or confusion in naming or new offerings could be especially valuable.

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REPORTS ON THE GARDENS TRIMMED BY NEHS MEMBERS THIS SPRING

Fort Tryon By Donald Mackay

Nine people assembled on April 11 to prune the heather. It was “Heather Shearing Day” as announced by Jennifer Hoppa, the Administrator. A piper in Gordon Highlander uniform, Jerry Dixon, led a large parade of garden visitors through the paths in the Heather Garden. The park provided an excellent lunch to celebrate our pruning activities. We are also indebted to them for the use of their cottage for our Board Meeting.

Prior to the meeting advice was offered to Park staff on siting of plants, provision of canvas shields for winter wind protection, and involvement of visitors making use of the copious clippings produced. The possibility of providing small pots with potting soil and plastic bags, and a simple handout describing rooting of cuttings, was also raised. Ms. Hoppa seemed to think this could be done next year.

The Board Meeting also discussed membership issues, future meetings, The Regional Heather Guide, and concluded with a warm Vote of thanks to the Fort Tryon staff and administration for enabling our meeting.



The Fells By Suzanne Barnes



Under an overcast sky that threatened rain on Saturday, May 11, 7 NEHS members performed the annual trimming event at The Fells in Lake Sunapee, NH. The dueling battery powered trimmers of Mary Matwey and Bill Dowley made quick work of the tops of the plants. Donald Mackay, Elaine Miller, Suzanne Barnes and Bunny Van Valey used their hand trimmers and shears to tidy up the sides of the plants and remove the winter-browned stems. The finished product was a mass of undulating heather mounds.

Donald stressed the need to trim the sides of the plants to prevent long unruly growth that is unsightly and unhealthy for the plants. Mary also worked in the rock garden area where the heathers had stretched around rocks and other plants. As raindrops began to fall, the group picked up their equipment and headed to Bubba’s Place for lunch and a Board Meeting.

Lasdon Park By Donald Mackay

The site was pruned on April 11. The overall impression was very good with darleyensis hybrids in full bloom. They did, however, show a fair amount of winter damage due to stem splitting, which was cut out. The calluna, as expected, showed little growth but were generally in good condition. The new callunas at the north end looked fine, but had grown little. Heather adjacent to the path showed some foliage damage, especially 'Little Tib' and 'Brita Elisabeth'. Misplaced or missing labels continue to be a minor problem.

We spoke to Evelyn in the Garden Shop. She thought all the Heather Guides had been sold since she couldn't find any. We spoke to Tully who was very complimentary about the appeal of the heather garden although no winter protection had been used. She said Ted Kozlowski was also pleased and was considering extension of the garden both to the north (into the rocks) and to the south in an area now occupied by pachysandra. I asked Tully to tell Ted we would be glad to cooperate, but obviously had to wait his decision on timing and use of RoundUp. Tully said Ted himself, as the sole licensed applicator on staff, now does



The Heritage Museum’s Heather Garden By Mary Matwey

The heather trimming at The Heritage Museum was greatly aided by the garden staff, led by Les Lutz, who removed all leaf and twig debris from the heather bed before we arrived. My husband, Pete and Sally Moore from Mashpee, MA put this time savings to good use as we were able to give extra attention to each plant. To our surprise we found a few heather volunteers; one in the gravel path and the rest in the beds.

We didn't move them but I brought them to Les's attention and their future lies in their capable hands. This garden may not be front and center but the bloom of the spring Ericas and summer/fall bloom of the Calluna will draw garden visitors to this well tended treasure of heathers on the hillside.

HEATHER NOTES, all rights reserved, is published quarterly by the Northeast Heather Society (NEHS), a tax-exempt organization and a chapter of the North American Heather Society (NAHS).

The purpose of the Northeast Heather Society is to foster interest in growing heathers (*Calluna, Erica, Daboecia, Cassiope, Phyllocladus* and *Andromeda*) in northeastern North America, by serving as a conduit of educational information for both the experienced and the novice gardener.

MEMBERSHIP in the Northeast Heather Society is open to anyone who pays dues to this chapter. Membership benefits include: a subscription to this quarterly newsletter, participation in chapter meetings and elections, borrowing privileges for slide/power point presentations, and, most valuable of all, contact with fellow heather gardeners who mostly live in or near your growing zone, all willing to share helpful advice and their experiences. A family membership permits more than one family member to vote and participate in all NEHS activities for an additional \$5 per year fee above the annual dues. The family membership includes all household members residing at the same address and each member has one vote. Each household will receive only one copy of Heather Notes.

Dues for an Individual: \$15 a year; \$28 for a two year membership; \$40 for a three year membership

Dues for a Family \$20 a year; \$33 for a two year membership; \$45 for a three year membership

Remit payment to: Peter Matwey, Treasurer, 7 Heights Court, Binghamton, NY 13905

For digital presentations, contact Bill Dowley, Keene, NH. Tel. (603) 355-8801; wdowley@ne.rr.com

WEB INFORMATION: North American Heather Society website: www.northamericanheathersoc.org

NORTHEAST HEATHER SOCIETY website: www.northeastheathersociety.org

ADVERTISING: Quarter page ad: \$35 per issue; \$25 per issue if advertising in two or more consecutive issues.

Contact: Pat Hoffman (856) 467-4711; njgardener15@hotmail.com

BE A CONTRIBUTOR TO HEATHER NOTES:

Do you have a suggestion, a question, a story, an anecdote, a poem, or a photo to share? Contact the Content editor:

Mary Matwey, 7 Heights Court, Binghamton, NY 13905 (607) 723 1418 mmatwey@stny.rr.com

All material may be edited for clarity and length.

DEADLINES FOR EACH ISSUE:

March 20–June 20–September 20–December 20

