

BENJAMIN CARRINGTON (1827-1893)

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This is one in a series of articles about prominent British and Irish field-bryologists of the past. The author would be very pleased to learn of any information which supplements its content.

A Social and Biographical History of British and Irish Field-bryologists is also available on-line at <http://britishbryologicalsociety.org.uk/>

[portrait in *Rev. Bryol. et Lichen.* (1930) 3:1-4]

Bryological career

Carrington was mainly interested in liverworts, having encountered them in the Scottish hills while a student at Edinburgh.

He wrote the section on cryptogams for the *Flora of the West Riding of Yorkshire* (with L.C. Miall) in 1862, compiled *British Hepaticae* (1874-5), and issued *exsiccatae* as *Hepaticae Britannicae* (1878-80). Ulster Museum, Belfast has 75 specimens of *Hepaticae Britannicae Exsiccatae Fasc. IV numbers 216-290* only (1890), acquired from the herbarium of Queens University, Belfast, as well as a duplicate of the same volume from the collections of Belfast Museum and Art Gallery.

Carrington's herbarium at Manchester Museum and University contains plants collected from 1848 onwards, with further plants at Bolton Museum, and letters at Kew and the Natural History Museum. The National Museum and Gallery of Wales, Cardiff also has 34 of his specimens.

Family background and biography

Benjamin Carrington was born in Lincoln on January 18th 1827, a son of Benjamin Carrington (c.1805-1890) and Mary (*née* ... 1810/11-<1851). Benjamin Carrington senior was an upholsterer and cabinet-maker. Benjamin senior and Mary had eight children: first Benjamin junior, then Joseph (born 1830/1), followed by Charles (born 1832/3), Sarah (1833/4), Mary (1837/8), Elizabeth (1840/1), Rachel ((1842) and Alfred (1845).

By about 1850, Benjamin the son was apprenticed to a Dr. McNicoll in Liverpool, and qualified M.D. from Edinburgh in 1851. While a student at Edinburgh, he met Greville, W.J. Hooker and Balfour, who must have kindled his interest in bryology. Carrington collected his first liverwort in 1850 – *Anthelia julacea* from the hills near Glen Shee, and subsequently added to the British list *Gymnomitrium crenulatum*, *G. corallioides*,

Scapania cuspiduligera and *Eremonotus myriocarpus*, as well as *Riccia beyrichiana* from Barmouth in Wales.

In 1853, Carrington married Caroline Matilda Anderson (1828-1893) at Bradford. She was a daughter of Christopher Anderson. The couple had a son, George Hedwig Carrington (born 1861/2), who followed Benjamin into the medical profession.

Carrington practised medicine at Radcliffe near Manchester, than at Lincoln, Yeadon in Yorkshire, Southport in Lancashire, and finally for 18 years at Eccles in Lancashire, where he was Medical Officer of Health for 18 years. He was an authority on liverworts, and the first parts of his *British Hepaticae* appeared in 1874 and 1875, but ill health was to prevent him from completing this work.

The family lived at Barton-upon-Irwell, near Eccles at the times of the 1871 and 1881 Census Returns. The young bryologist William Henry Pearson (1849-1923) lived in Eccles in the 1870s, where Carrington fired his interest in liverworts, culminating much later in Pearson's two-volume *Hepaticae of the British Isles* (1899 and 1902).

Carrington became too ill to continue working, and had retired to Brighton by the time of the 1891 Census, where he died on January 18th, 1893.