

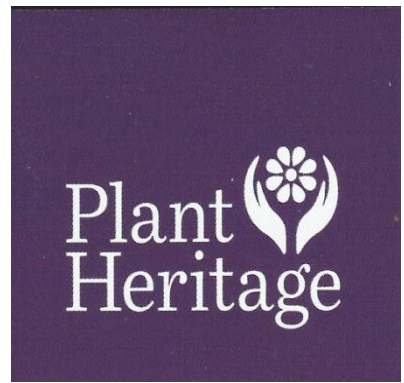
North East Group

Plant Heritage Reg. Charity No. 1004009 / SC041785

Plant Heritage is a Company Limited by Guarantee. Reg in Cardiff No. 2222953.

Autumn Bulletin – Update for 2019

The Autumn Bulletin goes to most members electronically; a printed version is posted only to those who have not supplied an email address. If you have a new address, please send it to Pat Skews (pat.skews@btinternet.com) – this will ensure you are kept up-to-date and saves PHNE the postage costs. We're hoping to have a good line-up of material for the next glossy issue in spring 2020. **Your contributions are always very welcome.**



Editorial

An incidental benefit of our Plant Heritage remit to support biodiversity in cultivated plants - particularly old and threatened varieties - is that our gardens attract and sustain wildlife. We can further help insects – and thereby birds and small mammals – by buying or acquiring pollinator-friendly plants, and if they contribute to our primary objectives, so much the better. The garden centres are well aware of the high media profile wildlife-friendly plants currently have, and market swathes of them with appropriate labelling, often featuring a cartoon bee. It's therefore disappointing to read that many plants labelled as bee- or pollinator-friendly contain a range of pesticides and herbicides. Research carried out at Sussex University in 2016-17 by PhD student Andrea Lentola, supervised by Prof. Dave Goulson, analysed a wide selection of plants, some from Wyevale carrying the RHS 'Perfect for Pollinators' logo, and others from Aldi, B&Q and Homebase, all of whom have a high turnover of plants. Chemical analysis showed that most contained a cocktail of fungicides and insecticides, including one flowering heather with five different insecticides and five different fungicides. Many included neonicotinoids, and though not all are dangerous to bees, three are particularly harmful. Challenged with these research findings, the RHS has apparently subsequently changed its logo to 'Plants for Pollinators' (acknowledging that they're not 'Perfect') and the other sampled chain retailers promised that they'd be buying plants free of neonics by the end of 2018. However there was no agreement to abandon plants containing pyrethroids or organophosphates, though concentrations of these also showed up in nectar and pollen. Details of the research can be found in Professor Goulson's book *The garden jungle, or gardening to save the planet*. Jonathan Cape, 2019.

As with agriculture, commercial horticultural growers need to fight insect pests for economic reasons, but find themselves in the same vicious circle as the farmers: pesticides also kill off many of the beneficial predators, and as the pest becomes more resistant to chemical agents, heavier doses of ever-stronger chemicals are needed, wiping out pests and their predators alike. It would be a brave grower who could take a step back from his vast acreage of glasshouses and say he was going to stop using chemicals and let nature re-balance itself. Maybe, where plants are concerned, we should all remember 'small is beautiful', and direct our buying power towards small independent nurseries who will usually have grown their own safe stock over many years, as well as propagating from well-established plants that have hopefully lost any toxicity they might once have had. And if we're lucky, we find an organic grower who is prepared to work hard to avoid shortcuts. Andrew Davenport is just such a one in our area, and those of us who attended his talk earlier this month were fascinated by the integrated system he has developed in his garden and nursery at Bingfield (see brief report latter in this issue).

David Nichol-Brown

Having reported the sad and untimely death of David in our Spring Newsletter, we were pleased to see a full tribute to him and his work in the Autumn issue of the PH Journal (p.11) which you'll all have received. David's local contribution will be missed but we continue to give Dianne our support and good wishes.

Suzanne Stanley

Chair's Ramblings - Autumn 2019

Autumn is such a varied season, week on week, and it is always fascinating to see how plants wind down at the year's end. This year some asters have flowered and retired already whilst a few are still to start. It looks like a bumper year for berries and beech mast. Robert Jamieson, Howick's Head Gardener, told me on a recent visit that much of the beech mast was empty of seed and having checked some of my local trees that does seem to be case here too. I wonder why the trees go to all the trouble of keeping the seed cases until the end of the season when they are empty.



NCH Coordinators in Warden's garden. © The Editors

Many of our recent group activities are included in this newsletter, so no need for me to mention them here. I would like to thank Irene for putting together another interesting programme of speakers for 2020 and hope that you will find them enjoyable. At the time of writing I am looking forward to our Nick Bailey talk and the remainder of our 2019 programme. After the local group AGM in January the focus for the committee and me will be preparations for the national Members' Weekend and AGM. As always I would like to thank all our committee members for their hard work and commitment to the charity. Particular thanks at the moment to Bryan and Suzanne on their wonderful work on our electronic Bulletin and the printed Newsletter in the spring.

Roz Cooper

Plant Heritage National News Items and how they might impact PHNE National Members' Weekend 2020

This year the North East Group is pleased to be hosting the AGM weekend at the Marriott Royal County Hotel in Durham. There are lots of opportunities for volunteers to get involved throughout the weekend and meet PH members from other regions, trustees and staff from Central Office. We hope that local members will book to attend, either staying at the hotel or as non-residential attendees.



Corydalis solida 'King Arthur'
at Brian Whitton's © The Editors.

On the **Friday afternoon**, we will be staffing a reception desk for delegates to pick up their delegate packs, free plant and ID badge. The Plant Exchange will be open for groups to deliver plants for distribution to their new group homes. We need help to carry plants from cars to the Plant Exchange room on the first floor (there is a lift). So volunteers are wanted for both these roles. Brian Whitton is opening his Corydalis collection on the Friday afternoon and visitors who have arrived by public transport may need assistance travelling to the Collection and back to the hotel. If you have never seen Brian's National Collection this would be a great opportunity to see it and volunteer at the same time. The first event at the hotel is an **afternoon** one with some of our local Collection Holders. There will be talks by three of them and plants from local collections for sale.

After the evening meal, Ray Stephenson will be talking about some of his trips to locate and identify sedums in their native habitats. Any of you who have heard Ray speak will know how entertaining this will be.

On **Saturday morning**, we will be staffing the reception desk until the start of the AGM for those visitors arriving that day or who have booked for the day only. There may be more plants arriving for the Plant Exchange too. Again volunteers are needed for this and for a session on reception.

Brian Whitton will be talking about his Corydalis collection in the **morning** before the AGM. **After lunch**, we will be visiting Durham University Botanic Garden. Mike Hughes, who you may remember from the talk he gave our group in 2019, will introduce the garden and then visitors can use the self-guided route around the garden. Again local volunteers could help shepherding members to and from the coach and locating features in the garden. We will then return to the coach to travel down to Thornton Hall with an opportunity to talk to Sue Manners, the owner, as well as tour her garden. If you haven't visited either of these gardens, why not take the opportunity to visit in the company of other Plant Heritage members?

Once back at the hotel, we will have another talk **after dinner**. This time it will be given by Susie White talking about developing her current garden. The raffle will then be drawn and the main part of the weekend will conclude. Volunteers can help with selling raffle tickets or by donating a prize.

On **Sunday morning**, there is an optional visit to Crook Hall Garden and, once again, volunteers could help with transport from the hotel to the garden and back.

The Plant Exchange will disperse all the plants and close on the **Sunday morning**.

As well as specific roles, we would also welcome volunteers as general ambassadors for North East Group. Unfortunately we are not able to supply free meals, entry into gardens etc for our volunteers, as the event is run to a very tight budget which should just recover all costs incurred. We can be flexible with volunteering roles and timing to fit around availability.

There is also an opportunity for a flower arranger to provide table decorations which will be used for both evening meals and then sold off to delegates at the end of the weekend. There will be a small budget to pay for flowers or plants.

If you want to be involved in any way please, contact Roz Cooper (at r.cooper738@btinternet.com) who will pass on details to whichever committee member is leading on that role.

Looking Back on 2019

Outdoor events in 2019

Plant Sale at Kirkley Hall College



This year the Plant Sale was held on Sunday 19th May. Again we weren't able to predict what else was on at the weekend that would keep some people away from the Sale. The odd weather so far this year meant that our plant stock was different and there was certainly more in flower, and we took far fewer plants away at the end of the event even though numbers seemed down on last year, and financially it was still a reasonable success. Thanks must go to all of you who contributed plants for the event and helped prepare, set up and dismantle everything. We decided to complete the bulk of the setting-up on Saturday again and this meant we were well organised for the public's arrival on Sunday.

◀ Setting up on Saturday © The Editors

Belsay Hall weekend

The very first Belsay in Bloom took place on Saturday 29th and Sunday 30th June and PHNE was invited to have a stall to promote the charity and to sell some of our more unusual plants. Some of the committee agreed to organise and staff this event which resulted in significant sales and some interest in PHNE. Sadly on a sunny Sunday morning we found that our gazebo, display boards and materials had been scattered across Belsay's grounds as there was a violent storm overnight. We set up the tables and plants in a new location and had a pleasant and financially productive session. It was good to be involved with an English Heritage property but we'll have to wait and see if Belsay wishes to repeat the event next year.



Saturday's stall at Belsay Hall. © Roz Cooper

Blagdon Hall Plant Fair



Our stall at the Plant Fair © The Editors

With the agreement of Blagdon Estate, this year we held our Plant Fair as part of its Garden Open Day on Sunday 7th July. Numbers were down a bit, but there was the usual interesting variety of doggy visitors. The weather was much better than last year, almost warm. The good number of specialist nurseries complemented the very varied and interesting range of plants on our stall (partly as a result of the unusual weather earlier in the year?). The visitors showed a serious interest in these, and we nearly sold out! We also gained some new members. The Blagdon grounds and gardens were open after we had stopped selling plants, and also food from our excellent Tea Room. A big thank you to all those who helped to make it a success.

These three were our main fund-raising events for the year and between them we cleared over £5,000. The committee later agreed that at this stage of the year PHNE should send only £5,000 to National Office as it was sensible to retain a contingency fund in case costs were higher than hoped for at the Durham National AGM.

Recent indoor events

12th October – Andrew Davenport: Gardener’s Cottage Plants: QR composting solutions

Does the answer lie in your compost?



Many of you will know Andrew Davenport through visiting either his nursery at Bingfield, or his stall at Blagdon Plant Fair. He specialises in perennials, wild flowers and herbs which are grown at his sustainable organic family-run nursery, and also offers garden services and courses. However, maybe few of us were aware of his interest in the art and science of composting, and as QR Composting Solutions he provides workshops, courses, an activator compound and equipment, as we discovered from his talk on 12th October.

We all appreciate the importance of soil condition, and recognise that digging damages soil structure. Based on well-researched evidence, Andrew has therefore developed a low-maintenance no-dig philosophy and practice which includes mulching and has influenced the development of his own garden since he acquired it in 2002. He needed to change the clay soil in order to improve drainage, produce fruit and vegetables, and create ecosystems for wildlife, so, for example, instead of replacing existing old raised beds, he used Edward C. Smith’s ridge and furrow system, so that water drained down the furrows, the surface area for growing was increased, and the angled slopes warmed up more effectively. There were no construction materials or costs, and mulching the pathways with straw had many benefits including moisture retention, so less watering was needed.

He drew our attention to the proceedings of a 1949 Soil Association symposium on organic husbandry, which introduced Maye E. Bruce (a founder member of the SA) whose book *Common Sense Compost Making* presented QR (Quick Return) composting to the world. The system involves layering materials, greens and browns, moist and dry, rough with smooth, and adding an activator to produce compost in as little as four weeks, without turning or adding manure. Her activator included dried dandelion, nettle, yarrow, valerian, chamomile, oak bark and honey. She adapted Biodynamics Association ideas to make solutions which were used homoeopathically in dilutions of 10,000:1, and greatly increased the speed of decomposition.



Andrew’s own book, *Quick return compost making: the essence of the sustainable organic garden*, explains his composting methods involving the use of his own activator. Using membrane to keep down weeds can result in stale and lifeless soil, so Andrew recommends using natural mulches which improve soil condition by adding organic matter and vital organisms such as bacteria and fungi. He applies organic mulch to a depth of 4” – 6”, leaving natural processes including worms to do the work of getting it into the soil. In 2014 he decided the grass and weeds in his garden had to go, and covered the selected areas with barley straw which did its job in 3 – 4 months. He then left it in place as mulch, parting it in order to plant, and adding more mulch. He also treats his beds with an 8” layer of spent hops from the local brewery.

Recycling is a big part of Andrew’s garden philosophy, and he showed us his tyre stack wormery, his gabions using discarded plastic crates which hide behind a dry stone wall constructed to lean against them, his compost bins and his drainage system that has alleviated serious annual flooding. You can find full details of QR composting, his plant stock, books, equipment and services on his websites: www.qrcompostingsolutions.co.uk and www.gcplants.co.uk.

Suzanne Stanley

Kelway Herbaceous Paeonia Plans

At this time of year my mind is full of beautiful peonies as I plant the bare roots and imagine what they will look like next summer. Originally I planned to plant two mirror-image beds of about 15 varieties and thought I'd narrow down the choice by restricting myself to pre-First World War varieties. The range was still huge and irresistible, so two beds became four and then six . . . But while I was being seduced by these delectable plants mostly bred in France, I became aware that it's in fact peonies bred by Kelways Nurseries in Somerset, from the late 1880s on, that have fallen out of commerce and are crying out for conservation. Dream of Edwardian gardens with blowsy borders and somewhere in the picture it is likely that a Kelway herbaceous peony appears. A large part of our garden heritage is lost if these peonies are gone. My hunt so far has turned up a few plants, but I feel sure that there must be many more out there in people's gardens. I shall be putting a proposal into the next Plant Conservation Committee for a National Collection of *Paeonia lactiflora* bred by Kelways, so I am redoubling my efforts to find them. You may have read my plea which featured in the Spring 2019 Plant Heritage Journal (p. 43).



At first there was no response, which was down-heartening, and then I heard that Roz Cooper had contacted National Office to say that she had *Paeonia* 'Gleam of Light'. This was very exciting, it's a beautiful pink peony with glorious golden stamens and always very highly rated in the catalogues. To my delight Roz was willing to let me have a division, so it headed south to Cornwall from County Durham, while a division of *P.* 'Baroness Schroder' made the return trip in exchange.

◀ *Paeonia* 'Gleam of Light' © Caroline Stone

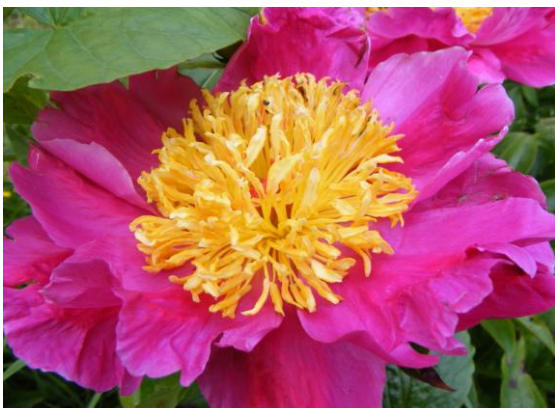
I've found only a fraction of the hundreds that were produced by Kelways, but I hope that I'll be able to find more yet. Perhaps 'Knighthood' - a glorious dark double, or 'Newfoundland' - a deep rose with a large centre of golden fawn, 'Queen Alexandra' - pure glistening white with lemon central petaloids, 'June Morning' - a rose and silver double with a very good shape, 'Bridal Veil' - a double of indescribable light pink with a creamy-white and pink centre, 'Augustus John' - a deep cherry-rose single, 'Elizabeth Stone' from 1936 (I'd love to find this as by chance it is my sister's name!) - a large and very beautiful lilac, pale rose and silver double, 'Ballerina' - a fragrant, beautiful double with good autumn colour, and there were many with names like 'Kelway's Scented Rose' - a sweetly scented informal rose pink double, 'Kelway's Silvo' - a pink double with an ochre centre, 'Kelway's Circe', or named for the family like 'Cecilia Kelway' - a flesh to white double.



Paeonia 'Knighthood' © C. Stone



Paeonia 'Kelways Circe' © C. Stone



Paeonia 'British Empire' © C. Stone



Paeonia 'Knight of the Thistle' © C. Stone

And there are patriotic names like 'British Empire' and 'Knight of the Thistle', or those named after Kelway customers: 'Colonel Heneage' is a rosy-red to crimson double that shows some anthers. It becomes quite an interesting game working out who some of the people were that the peonies were named after. Colonel Heneage was a local land-owner living at Coker Court not far from the Langport Nurseries of Kelways.

If anyone thinks they might have a Kelway's peony and could help me expand the collection, do please get in touch with me at doubleprimroses@gmail.com and perhaps they could register it and become a Plant Guardian.

Caroline Stone, PH Cornwall

Still to come in 2019 (Memorial Hall, Ponteland (meet after 2pm for 2.30 start))

Saturday 2nd November: Nick Bailey – “365 Days of Colour in your Garden”.

Saturday 9th November: Jan Hoyland – “Wildlife Gardening”.

Saturday 14^h December: John Richards – “SE Tibet: Botanical Treasure Trove”. N.B. Christmassy food donations welcome; tea / coffee will be provided.

Notes from Howick

Now that summer is gone it is time to assess how the borders have worked this season and what to do ready for next. There are still a few things giving a bit of colour at this time including *Salvia fulgens*, *S. curvifolia* and *S. 'Nachtvlinder'* and *Aconitum 'Bressingham Spire'* amongst others. It is hoped to do a lot of dividing and replanting this winter as some of the clumps of geraniums and others are getting too big, and although they give a good show in early summer they then leave large gaps later in the year, so time now to reduce them. We will lift everything in the herbaceous borders on the lower terrace, double dig them adding plenty of well-rotted manure, and then replant as required (weather permitting of course). We have also taken a lot of cuttings from Penstemons, Diascias, Salvias and Osteospermums which have now rooted and been potted on and these will spend the winter in a tunnel ready to go out in the spring once the last frosts are past.



Acer cappadocicum © R Jamieson



Decaisnea fargesii SICH 1756 AJW 165B © R. Jamieson

It has been a mixed year for autumn colour with some of the early leaves just shrivelling up in the dry weather, but the ever-reliable *Cercidiphyllum japonicum* continue to give a good show with their heart shaped leaves which turn a lovely yellow or orange accompanied by the sweet smell of candy floss as they change colour. These need to be planted in a sheltered spot this far north to get the best show from them. Yellows continue with *Acer cappadocicum* a large member of the maple family which is found from the Caucasus Mountains through the Himalayas and into south west China; some large specimens can be seen here at Howick. Reliable red autumn colour trees with us include *Zelkova serrata* and *Sorbus commixta* a Japanese rowan which is also covered in masses of bright red berries until we get the annual migration of birds such as redwings and fieldfares which seem to find the berries very attractive and tend to head for them first. Shrubs that give good autumn colour for us include the spindles, *Euonymus alatus* which turns a

brilliant red as does *Enkianthus deflexus* which has lovely red-tinged bell shaped flowers in late spring followed by good autumn colour. *Lindera obtusiloba* leaves turn a lovely golden-yellow and if you have male and female plants you may get the spherical glossy red-brown berries as well. *Decaisnea fargesii* is another shrub to give good yellow autumn colour along with its blue bean-like fruits which lead to its delightful common name of dead man's fingers.



Lindera obtusiloba H&M 2042 NB 101 © R. Jamieson



Sorbus commixta EHOK "NB 241 © R. Jamieson

It has been a good year for fruit and many of the thorns, viburnums and cotoneasters are covered in berries which should make it a good autumn for all the visiting birds, who don't seem to mind if we are growing native plants or Chinese species - all seem to be eaten with equal vigour.

Robert Jamieson – Head Gardener

Dispersed National Collection



P. opulifolius 'Red Baron' © Roz Cooper

Our developing National Collection is progressing well. NE Group has identified 23 different *Physocarpus* grown by members, a mix of species already growing at Howick and cultivars. 13 cultivars are single plants and just seven are grown by more than one member. We need to continue propagation to ensure we have at least two of each cultivar before we can put in a full proposal to the PH Plant Conservation Committee.

The current Euro Trial of *Physocarpus* at RHS Wisley, which I visited and photographed this summer, includes 30 cultivars. RHS Wisley is keen to support the establishment of some new National Collections and, in a new and exciting cooperative venture between Plant Heritage and RHS, we have permission to collect cuttings from all but two taxa in the Euro Trial. The remaining two are cultivars bred



in USA and protected by American Plant Patents and we have to obtain specific permission before we can propagate these.

Keen members have found and purchased four cultivars which are not in the Eurotrial to add to our list. Assuming that our cuttings root and establish successfully we could have 35 out of a potential 37 currently identified taxa. **If you want to be involved please let us know and we can add you to our list.**

Roz Cooper

◀ The *Physocarpus* trial information board at Wisley.
© Roz Cooper

Plant Propagation Days

This year so far we have had two propagation sessions. On Saturday 16th March we had a plant division session open to all members. Hopefully, this will produce a decent amount of extra stock for next year's Plant Sale and / or Plant Fair. On Thursday 17th October, Roz, Bryan and David had a very busy time taking many softwood and hardwood cuttings from the material Roz brought back the day before from Wisley at the end of its Physocarpus Trial. Hopefully we will have good results from this work and PHNE will then be able to add a worthwhile number of new Physocarpus to its bid for a Dispersed Collection. Another propagation session at the Goodchilds is scheduled for Wednesday 6th November. The proposed schedule is start at 10.30am, propagate until we run out of plants, bring your own lunch, and drinks will be provided.



David & Bryan at work © Editors



Softwood Physocarpus cuttings in the mist unit © Editors

These sessions are open to all members (who can hopefully bring stock for division and take it home again), and are very sociable as well as being a good learning opportunity - we always discover something new. If you are interested in joining a future session, please contact any committee member with your details.

Plant Exchange 2020



The annual Plant Exchange process starts again and this time will conclude with the actual exchange of plants between groups at the AGM in Durham. As transportation of plants will not be such an issue we can cope with a higher level of contributions than usual. So please consult your plant lists, check out your borders and rack your brains for plants you have received in the past. Can you propagate something to put back into the Plant Exchange, bearing in mind that we do not need the actual plants until late April 2020? The usual rules apply - two or fewer suppliers in this year's Plant Finder. The deadline is 25th November, and you can email me (r.cooper738@btinternet.com) or give me written details of plants you can offer at the November meeting.

If there is a specific rare plant (2 or fewer suppliers) that you are seeking, you could put this onto the Wanted list and perhaps be lucky enough to receive a plant in this year's exchange. The deadline is as above.

◀ *Galanthus elwesii* 'Fred's Giant' - a Plant Exchange success.

© The Editors

If you just want to bid for a plant from the Exchange, the lists of plants offered will be available by late December for you to browse. The deadline for bids will be 25th February 2020. Have you thought about bidding for a plant but been too shy or cautious about taking on a rare plant? All the bids are submitted as NE Group so no one but the local Plant Exchange Coordinator knows who has asked for which plant. Any bid might be unsuccessful as there are other keen gardeners around the country also choosing from the published list, and the National Plant Exchange Coordinator has the difficult job of deciding which group receives which plants. If you do not participate you might be missing out on discovering a new favourite plant.

Roz Cooper

Plant Guardians update

NE group now has 75 plants registered in the scheme, including four duplicates. These are held by 14 members (counting joint guardians as a single entity) which means over 10% of NE group membership is participating. Each year we have a few withdrawals, usually because local conditions do not suit the plant, so having duplicates helps to ensure the specific cultivar remains available. So far new plant registrations outnumber any losses each year.

You may remember the ambitious national target to increase the number of plants registered in the scheme by 75% by 2020. I don't know the exact baseline figure for NE Group which was used but think we had around 50 plants registered. This means we need another 13 plants to be identified and registered by June 2020 us to achieve our contribution to this target. Can you help? You may already be an unknowing Plant Guardian as there may be rare plants thriving in your garden which could be registered. Plants which were available widely only 10-15 years ago might not have any current suppliers and are in danger of being lost. Registering these plants will ensure that we know each rare plant is being conserved and where it can be found.

To be eligible, a plant having less than 2 suppliers in the current Plant Finder is a good starting point, and you do need to know the correct name of your plant. Further research will be required to confirm if your specific plant is rare enough. If wanted we can help with initial name checking to try and eliminate synonyms etc before you submit your plants. **If you want more information about what being a Plant Guardian means in practice, do ask one of our committee members as almost everyone is a Plant Guardian.**

Roz Cooper

Looking forward to 2020

She's done it again! We're very pleased with the 2020 programme that Irene Bosomworth, Programme Secretary, has put together for us. She is already planning the 2021 programme and would love to receive suggestions for speakers or visits. Please contact her on 07835 332 931 or irenephne@btinternet.com. The only item that has yet to be fixed is the Garden Party. We hope to confirm the Garden Party venue and date as soon as possible.

Unless otherwise stated, all our meetings are held in the Memorial Hall, Ponteland (now with wi-fi).

Saturday 11th January: PHNE AGM. We're always keen to welcome new blood onto the Committee. If you are interested in joining in, even if you don't want the responsibility of a specific role, please do have a word with one of the current Committee members. To be followed by Mike McQuade – **"Humphry Repton"**.

Saturday 8th February: Sean Murray – **"The Great Chelsea Garden Challenge"**.

Saturday 14th March: Peter Williams – **"Backhouse Daffodils and Rockeries"**. Plants for sale.

Saturday 4th April: David Warden – **"Heleniums and their Companions"** plus
Dianne Nichol-Brown – **"An Update on Dianne's National Collections"**. Plants for sale.

24th - 26th April: PH National AGM at the Marriot Royal County Hotel, Durham.

Saturday 9th May: Graham Stewart – **"Dawyck Botanic Garden"**.

Sunday 17th May: Plant Heritage Plant Sale at Kirkley Hall. We will again be under cover in the Sports Hall. Please start collecting or propagating plants to bring along to sell to support this major fund-raising effort.

June: Members' garden visit (tbc).

Sunday 5th July: Plant Heritage Plant Fair at Blagdon Hall. As usual we will have our own plant stall, and there will also be numerous specialist nurseries and garden sundries stalls.

August: Members' Garden Party (tbc).

Saturday 10th October: Nick Johnson – **"Veteran Tree Project"**.

Saturday 14th November: Stella Exley – **"Camassias: a calling or a vocation?"**. Plants for sale.

Saturday 12th December: Christine Liddle – **"The Secret Gardens at Birkheads"**.

Cashless at a PHNE Event?

Accidentally left your cash at home? That's no longer a reason not to make purchases at our meetings as we now have a card reader that can take payments by Credit or Debit Card, even for raffle tickets. Or we can take cheque payments made out to "Plant Heritage - North East Group" (our new bank account name). Please note that this facility may not apply when the speaker is selling plants on his or her own behalf.

Alan Briggs

Membership Update

Pat Skews, our Membership Secretary, tells us that sadly our membership has fallen by 7 in the past few months. These were mostly people that had joined in the past year and not renewed their subscription. I'm pleased to say that we have just gained one new member, from the Sunderland area.

Ed.

Collection Holders' Coordinator' meeting at Howick

The Northern Regional group of Plant Heritage is extensive and for many years collection coordinators have not met in the north east. Representatives from North West, Yorkshire, and Scotland attended (unfortunately Ireland could not). Thanks must go to Lord Howick for hosting the meeting at Howick Hall, Robert Jamieson for leading the garden tour, and Lucy Pitman for travelling up from the National Office. Thanks also go to the two Davids (Warden and Goodchild) for opening their gardens for group visits. There were updates on collection activities over the last year by local coordinators in all areas. As our local coordinator, I find it useful to hear the issues challenging other groups and areas. We have a very active scene here in North East with a regular meeting programme, unlike some areas, particularly Scotland, where distances are great and the local groups are not very active, there may not be active collection coordinators or they cannot cover the whole area. Ross Kerby, Regional Coordinator SE Scotland, works tirelessly but is due to retire in a year's time.



Collection Holders with Robert Jamieson. © The Editor

It was good to chat informally with other coordinators at the evening meal in Alnwick. I was particularly pleased to hear from Valerie Heppel, Dumfries and Galloway, that the *Chionodoxa* collection, which I had considered taking on, had found a good home at Tinnisburn Nursery where research on the best cultivars was being conducted.

Next year we will go to Holehird for the meeting.

Faith Williams, NE Collection Co-ordinator

National Collections[®] North East Open Days 2020

Corydalis (Brian Whitton, Durham) Sunday 29th March, 2 – 4.30 pm.

Sedum (Ray Stephenson, Choppington) Sunday 28th June 10-3.30 pm.

Polemonium / Hakonechloa / Fragaria vesca (Dianne Nichol-Brown) Sunday 24th, Monday 25th May, Sunday 30th, Monday 31st August 2 – 5 pm.

Collection Afternoon - PHNE National AGM Friday 24th May.

Collection open whenever property opens:-

Acer, Alnus & Sorbus (Blagdon Estate) Plant Heritage Plant Fair, Sunday 5th July and other open days.

Centaurea (Bide-a-Wee Gardens, Netherwitton – Mark Robson)

Fagus (Kirkley Hall College / John Guy)

Iris series spuriae (Belsay Hall)

Sorbus (Houghall East Durham College)

Visits by appointment:-

Primula marginata (Ruth Haddon, Ryal)

Brunnera (Lorna Hutchinson, Allendale)

Helenium (David Warden, Berwick)

Tweedhill, Paxton and Gardeners' World

We have been looking out for the result of the Gardeners' World "Gardens of the Year 2019" competition, in which David and Kim Warden's garden (west of Berwick) was judged just before the National Collection Holders' Co-ordinators recent visit. Sadly their garden, although selected as one of the final six gardens in this year's competition, did not make the top three.

You can see the results at <https://www.gardenersworld.com/win/gardens-of-the-year-2019-competition/> . If you have previously followed this link and voted for their garden (entitled "Billowing Borders") as the "peoples' choice" for this year, these results are to be announced in a later issue of the Gardeners' World magazine. There is also going to be an article on David & Kim's garden in a future issue.



NE National Collections Co-ordinators' visit to David & Kim Wardens' garden © John Wilkinson

Final word

**The PHNE Committee wishes you all
a very happy Christmas,
and all the very best for 2020.**

We look forward to seeing you throughout the next year.