

Autumn Bulletin – Update for 2018

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 2019. **Your contributions are always very welcome.**

Notes from the Editors



Coprosma rugosa © B Stanley

Welcome to the new season; we need to get through winter, but it helps to think about spring and to plan garden visits in 2019. It's hard to resist visiting botanic gardens, which suggests that we have certain expectations of gardens so designated. Their role is neatly summed up by the International Agenda for Botanic Gardens in Conservation as "institutions holding documented collections of living plants for the purposes of scientific research, conservation, display and education", a statement which sits well with Plant Heritage objectives, and also, hopefully, guarantees a garden at its peak.

The University of Dundee Botanic Garden was therefore essential visiting on a recent trip to Tayside. It is probably the noisiest garden we've ever visited. The relatively narrow 23-acre site slopes southwards along its length towards the Tay, but also towards the airport, where small aircraft take off every few minutes to a background chorus of revving engines. It (almost) doesn't detract from the pleasure of exploring. As botanic gardens go it is relatively young, formed in 1971. Compare this to its nearest neighbour, St Andrews, which was founded in 1889 (though in the early '60s it had to move from its town centre site to allow for expansion).

Dundee has developed into a significant local, national and international resource, with small but representative plant collections from Australia, New Zealand, Asia, America and the Mediterranean, plus indigenous British plants demonstrating a range of habitats. There's also an outdoor Garden of Evolution and Genetics, an interesting concept designed to highlight the role of plants in our understanding of genetics, and the contribution of plant variation to the selection and breeding of better crops. Water and herb gardens and glasshouses tropical and temperate add to the seasonal displays, though it is the fine collections of conifers and broad-leaved trees and shrubs that most characterise the garden. The Visitor Centre promotes a Plant of the Month, the October offering being a New Zealand native, *Coprosma rugosa*. The photograph showed a substantial and unusual shrub smothered in pale blue berries, clearly worth seeking out. The berries lived up to expectations, though it's not a plant we'd rush to acquire: Dundee has a harmless 2-foot specimen, but in its native habitat it forms impenetrable thickets of stiff, dense, interlocking twigs.

The Garden's Endowment Trust aims to facilitate public engagement as well as supporting the University's research programmes in many fields, all with the clear objective of promoting the need for plant conservation.

Bryan & Suzanne Stanley, Editors (01670 787 916 or maxitoby1@gmail.com)

Notes from the Chair:

The weather this year has continued to surprise and challenge gardeners. Some plants have appeared, flowered, set seed and gone over in record time whilst others are experimenting with flowering in a different season to usual. The autumn colours in various Acer leaves have been the best I have ever seen and so many other trees and shrubs are adding new colour to the garden. Asters are flowering well too although some are less tall than usual. Will the 2018 season finish abruptly with heavy frosts or a slower, gentler cooling I wonder?

Our Plant Sale at Kirkley Hall in May did not raise as much money as the previous year and we seem to have had fewer people attending, based on money taken at the door. However, those that did come spent more per

person on plants than the previous year, so we are getting something right. The committee has decided to continue holding the sale in May for another year as we felt the difficult season did not allow us to assess properly if this is the best time of year for our annual sale.

Attendance was down at our Plant Fair at Blagdon in July too. When we booked the date we were unaware that it was World Cup football final day as well as Wimbledon Men's final day. The weather was also extremely hot. We cannot know exactly why numbers were down but it is a concern. For 2019 we have booked the first Sunday in July which avoids the Wimbledon final date. At the Plant Fair most of our takings come from entrance fee plus refreshment sales so these were lower than the previous year. However the money from Plant Heritage plant sales compared favourably with the previous year. These are our major fund raising events so it is disappointing. Thanks are due to the small band of very hard working members who put in many hours to make these events possible, in advance and on the actual day.

Our garden party at Capheaton Hall, hosted by Jane Armstrong, was well attended. The size, quality and overall impact of the borders, plants and vegetables impressed everyone.

Irene Bosomworth has booked another fascinating range of speakers and topics for our 2019 programme (details in this newsletter).

Roz Cooper

Plant Heritage National News Items and how they might impact PHNE

In August the charity changed its name legally to Plant Heritage, which means that the initials NCCPG will no longer be part of the logo or included in the charity's name. PHNE will now change its bank account name to match. Over time all our publicity materials nationally and locally will be updated.

As you will know already, the proposed change to one member - one vote achieved the required 75% of votes in favour of the change so will be implemented. In order to keep the cost of voting as low as possible for the charity it is intended to use email voting wherever possible. It is important that we have an up-to-date email address for as many members as possible. Members without access to email will receive voting papers by post. It was also proposed that each group should have a specific communications role on the committee to ensure that email communications received from trustees and staff at PH are shared with our group members not using email. Lesley Fowler has volunteered to take on this role in addition to her work promoting our group on Facebook and our website.

In order to continue the valuable interchange of views and ideas between groups and Trustees a new meeting of Group Chairs will be held twice a year. This partially replaces the now disbanded Council meetings. I will be attending the next meeting on 6th November. Trustees have been allocated a number of regional groups each and those able to attend our October meeting met Catherine Penny who is our trustee contact. Any member can of course still contact any trustee if they wish to do so.

The charity's finances have been a major cause of concern for most of this financial year. Some sources of income previously available are no longer available, either because they were time limited, project-specific or sponsorship which is not being continued. Plant Heritage has also received very little from legacies recently compared with a few years ago. In order to address this issue the staffing levels at National Office have been reduced. We no longer have a CEO and many tasks undertaken by staff are now being done by trustees, panel members and other members. There will be a large loss in the current financial year, which will be covered from our reserves, and we will have a draft budget for 2018-19 presented to the Chairs' meeting. As a group we will no longer receive a small annual sum per member to support our group activities. PHNE committee has considered the impact and is taking steps to offset this loss of income. We have increased the cost of tea and coffee at our meetings and are more dependent on the money raised by the raffle to go towards speaker and meeting room costs. We will continue to have free meetings for members and a small charge for visitors but have agreed that for our occasional prestige speakers we will need to charge an entry fee to everyone, but with a discounted cost for members. We are also reviewing printing costs as these have been increasing.

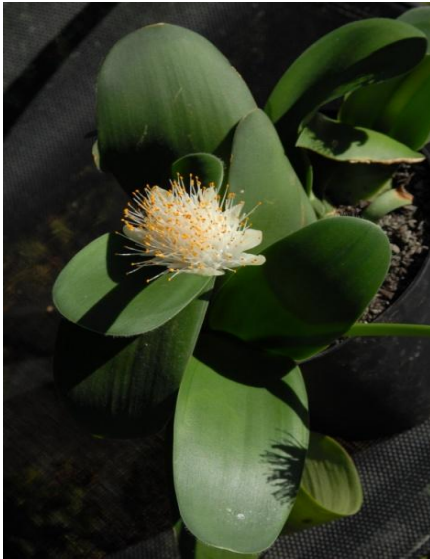
Plans to improve the national website and the Collection Management database were put on hold when the seriousness of the financial problems was recognised. Some regional groups have been able to provide additional funds in order for some of this work to improve the national IT systems to be undertaken. The Collection Management database development work is going well and will, in future, make the production of the National Collections Directory much easier and therefore manageable with reduced staffing. In September the Board of Trustees agreed that the website must be replaced but have allocated a much reduced budget.

The National Office is being renamed **Central Office** (CO) to reflect the more central support role offered by a reduced number of staff. However, one piece of good news: nationally the charity is advertising for a Conservation Manager which is a 3-year contract funded by a grant from the Esme Fairbairn Foundation.

Roz Cooper

Looking Back on 2018

Outdoor events in 2018



Kirkley Hall Plant Sale

This year the 2018 Plant sale was held on Sunday 20th May in an attempt to avoid other local events in June. Sadly, we weren't able to predict that the draw of the football or the tennis would keep some people away from the Sale. The poor weather earlier in the year meant that the plant stock was different, if less plentiful than in previous years, but we took far fewer plants 'home' at the end of the event. Importantly, financially it was still a reasonable success. Thanks to all of you who again contributed plants for the event and helped prepare, set up and dismantle everything. We were able to complete the bulk of the setting-up on Saturday and felt that we were ready for the public to arrive on Sunday.

In 2019 the Plant Sale is on Sunday 19th May, so now is a good time for you all to be dividing plants, and monitoring cuttings already taken, in preparation for the event. Don't forget that in the spring it will be time to sow the seed you collected this year from your more special plants.

Haemanthus albiflos © R Cooper . It was bought at the Plant Sale in 2018 and flowered this year.



Blagdon Plant Fair

Once more a significant feature of the Plant Fair was the large number of dogs that came. If you're thinking of getting a new dog you couldn't hope to see a better selection to choose from! There was a good selection of nurseries too and a very varied and interesting range of plants on our stall (partly as a result of the unusual weather earlier in the year?). Most of the visitors took a serious interest in the plants, resulting in good sales and some new members. The Blagdon grounds and gardens were popular and our excellent Tea Room was a good way to round off the experience. A big thank you to all those who helped to make it a successful Fair.

Recent indoor events

13th October – Catherine Penny: NC of Hybrid Musk roses bred by Pemberton & Bentall 1912 – 1939

This talk traces the history of the start of the group of roses that came to be called Hybrid Musk. Joseph Pemberton was one of those Anglican clergymen of the era who also had a keen interest in plants. Conveniently Pemberton wrote a book so we know a bit about the thinking behind his rose breeding programme.

Pemberton loved the old roses, but he had an idea for a new group with some additional qualities, so he set out to breed a group which would out-bloom his grandmother's, most of which were finished for the season in July. Pemberton wanted his to be flowering as long as the winter allowed, even up to Christmas Day. Many also have the good scent of the old varieties.



Pemberton & Bentall



Rosa 'Pax' bred in 1918



Rosa 'Penelope' bred in 1924

Some of his varieties like Cornelia and Felicia are still well known, others are no longer commercially available. A variety of significance this year is Pax. In 1917 Pemberton wrote in a letter to his gardener Bentall, who was away serving in the forces: "The rose for next year is Pax. I am certain this rose has a future and will be in everybody's garden. If the War is over we will send it out in the autumn of 1918, but it will be useless to do so while the War is on. It bids fair to be a good autumn rose, because after cutting down the old plants for buds, it has thrown up strong growth from the base, bearing large clusters of good heads which will be flowering in September."

This is a good illustration of the importance of Plant Heritage keeping a variety like this, with a history, available for future generations to enjoy.

Catherine Penny

Still to come in 2018 (Memorial Hall, Ponteland at 2.30pm)

Saturday 10th November: Alan Furness – "Alpine Meadow Plants".

Saturday 8th December: Richard Barnes – "It's not all about plants". N.B. Christmassy food donations welcome; tea coffee will be provided.

Notes from Howick



After a testing summer for the gardens and arboretum things are slowing down for the winter. Autumn colour has been good on some things especially the Euonymus, Cercidiphyllums and Sorbus but it has not lasted very long which I think is a consequence of the trees struggling through the summer with the heat and lack of moisture, so almost as soon as they change colour they are then losing their leaves. While it has not been good for autumn colour it has been an excellent year for fruits and berries with many of the Sorbus and Crataegus providing a good harvest for many of the visiting birds.

Cercidiphyllum japonicum SICH 1210 © R Jamieson



Cyclamen hederifolium © R Jamieson

We've added to the groups of *Cyclamen hederifolium* over the years and they've been particularly good this year, flowering for a long period. They seem particularly happy at the top of the rockery and under the large cedar tree where they are seeding themselves. They are an ideal plant if you have a dry shady area where not much else will grow. Now is the time to get on with bulb planting; we have dug up many 'Seagull' daffodils from one of the woods not visited by the public and added them to a new area where they will be planted under groups of different *Malus* along with drifts of *Narcissus poeticus*; hopefully over time these will give us a good show in the spring. Tulips are also added to the meadows now. They don't

naturalise in the grass so we generally add 1,000 bulbs at the north of the hall and 6-700 on the south side. Some of the old bulbs will flower but it is best to add new ones to get a decent display. Also in the meadows we continue to add *Fritillaria meleagris* which grow well, especially in damper areas, although they do not like to be waterlogged. Also important at this time of year is building up a stock of new plants for the herbaceous borders by taking cuttings from Penstemons, Osteospermums, Salvias and Phygelius among others which will be overwintered in the greenhouse ready for planting out in the spring after the last frost. Even if these survive the winter in the ground, which they will most years, we like to replace them after a few years as they become a bit woody and do not flower as well as new stock.

A new addition to the garden this year has been the 'Sensory Garden' designed by Natasha McEwan for the Autistic Society which has proved very popular both to group members and general garden visitors with its varied planting to stimulate the senses of sight, sound, smell, touch and taste.

Even when the weather is bad at this time of year there are still things to do especially sitting by a warm fire with seed catalogues looking at what is new for next year and looking forward to a good display next summer.

Robert Jamieson – Head Gardener

Reflections on the Hot Summer

In most years October arrives and we realise that we have only done half the garden visits that we had planned. This year we have made a great effort to organise our gardening to allow us time to revisit some of the gardens we have not seen for some time.

A hotel near Perth was chosen because we wanted to visit Kate White and deliver a car load of plants we had propagated for her. They were to go into the shady areas of Cowden Castle's Japanese Garden. We arrived there the week before it was officially opened and had the whole place to ourselves. Having seen the development in Kate's talk to the Group it was great to see it in real life. The garden is already looking beautiful and Kate has posted some lovely images on Facebook. The bridges, the tea house and the gravel paths were pristinely new but the lake was well established and the trees, some of which were originally on the site, had been brought back to good shapes. It may have been a hot summer but there was no sign of stress.

Wherever we went in Scotland, the good weather brought families out to picnic on the lawns and grassy areas (especially under tree canopy) and this in itself brought the properties to life. The castles were definitely of an era but the grounds full of people were very much of today. I think we chose the hottest day of the Scottish summer to visit Scone Palace. It was officially a visit to update Demeter for Brian Cunningham, the Head Gardener, but we took advantage of the occasion and explored the castle and grounds as well. Much of the park is woodland, so it was welcome shade.



Japanese Garden, Cowden Castle @Marjorie Goodchild

Falkland Castle, right in the middle of the town, had glorious mixed borders of interesting shrubs and herbaceous plants and a well-stocked fruit and vegetable garden and again no indication of drought.

Stirling Castle has little in the way of grounds but there was a token small internal colourful annual and herb garden. The castle itself is well worth a visit to get a feel for Scotland's turbulent history. We got a lecture on the precise position of the Queen's bed from a guide in full period costume.

We regularly go to the Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh which is always a delight. On the way back in September we called in at Inveresk (National Trust for Scotland). We had not been there since the Plant Heritage trip some years ago. A new gardener was appointed there four years ago, and with the help of just one lady volunteer for one day a week, he has brought the garden back to life after a few years of neglect. The garden is open all year and as being on his own much of the time must be boring, we have resolved to go again if there's a fine day in February to see the snowdrops (just to brighten his day!). The garden is on several terraced levels with good views to the local countryside. There was still a lot of colour both in the herbaceous plants and some trees, especially a huge Liquidamber, starting to show autumn tints.



Kenneth Cox's garden centre in Glendoick was a place of perfect plants reflecting his interests especially in rhododendrons and, yes, we just had to buy one (and a golden privet - 'Lemon and Lime').

Our visit to Branklyn was a double delight because we met head gardener Alistair Chalmers whom we knew from Kirkley Hall. He gave us a personally conducted tour of the garden. You get so much more out of a visit this way. Again it was hot and we sat in the shade to enjoy scones freshly made by Property Manager Jim Jermyn's wife who lives on the site. Branklyn has two National Collections, Meconopsis and Cassiope.

Meconopsis at Branklyn Garden, Perth @Marjorie Goodchild

We have been to other gardens, Wallington, Belsay, Howick, Newby Hall, Thorpe Perrow Arboretum to name but a few of our favourites, and I don't remember seeing the effects of drought that everyone seemed to be shouting about. Maybe they all have a hidden water supply somewhere but Mother Nature is wonderful: so resilient and responding to whatever the weather throws at her.

Marjorie Goodchild

Helpers needed in Ponteland

The Ponteland in Bloom Group is looking for help in redeveloping a large rockery on the Main Street (opposite Waitrose). It was planted several years ago and has looked very good but is now overgrown and needs drastic action. Most of the plants will be removed and we're looking for ideas for a new planting scheme. If you'd like to help please let me know.

David Goodchild (david@potentilla.org.uk or 01661 823 145)

Dispersed National Collection



A recent proposal from the new Plant Conservation Panel was to encourage regional groups to hold one or more dispersed national collections. The panel actually suggested focussing on plants with a regional connection but we have struggled so far to come up with an idea which fits this. North East group however would like to be involved and, after discussion of various options by the committee, we are considering Physocarpus as a possibility. There is no National Collection of Physocarpus at present and a shrub would be a suitable subject for a dispersed collection. Much to my surprise Faith Williams, our group's National Collections Coordinator, pointed out that we do not have a shrub collection in our region. At this stage we are trying to establish how many and which cultivars of Physocarpus are grown by members already. *Physocarpus opulifolius* 'Diablo' (or 'Diabolo') is proving to be a popular choice and is grown by the largest number of members so far. *Physocarpus opulifolius* 'Dart's Gold', 'Luteus' and 'Anny's Gold' are the only other cultivars grown by more than one member that we know about. We have also identified *Physocarpus opulifolius* 'Amber Jubilee', 'Burning Embers', 'Chameleon', 'Donna May', 'Lady in Red', 'Luteus', and possibly 'Diable d'Or' as growing in NE members' gardens.

Physocarpus opulifolius © Roz Cooper

We could limit our collection proposal to just *Physocarpus opulifolius* or try to cover the whole genus, and which option we take depends on how many cultivars we are able to include. I have done preliminary research on-line and find there are potentially between 40 and 60 species and cultivars, but some of the cultivars identified may not be available or ever offered in the UK. If you grow any Physocarpus we would love to hear from you. Please email me at r.cooper738@btinternet.com with the full name of the plant and, if known, where and when it was obtained by you. Alternatively you could bring details to the next meeting and give them to Faith or me.

Below are some cultivars we are particularly keen to hear about as they have two or fewer suppliers in Plant Finder 2018: *Physocarpus opulifolius* 'All Black'; *Physocarpus opulifolius* 'Black Light'; *Physocarpus opulifolius* 'Center Glow'; *Physocarpus opulifolius* 'Firebrand'; *Physocarpus opulifolius* 'Gelesq'; *Physocarpus opulifolius* 'Korona'; *Physocarpus opulifolius* 'Lemon Candy'; *Physocarpus opulifolius* 'Little Joker'; *Physocarpus opulifolius* 'Nugget'; *Physocarpus opulifolius* 'Red Baron'.

Also if you can think of a specific group of plants which have regional significance and are suitable for consideration as a national collection, please let Faith or me know.

Roz Cooper



Plant Exchange 2019

The deadline for submitting the names of any plants you are able to offer for next year's Plant Exchange is 25th November. If you have suitable plants (2 or fewer suppliers in this year's Plant Finder) please let me know by the deadline either by email at r.cooper738@btinternet.com or at the November meeting. Once again we are expecting to put some of the rare guarded plants cared for in the NE Group back into the scheme, increasing their availability. If you are seeking a specific rare plant, you could put this onto the wanted list and perhaps be lucky enough to receive one in this year's exchange. The deadline is as above. 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. I will provide the exact deadline for bids later but it will be before the end of February 2019. The wanted plants list will also be issued in December for you to check and see if you can supply a wanted plant.

Symphyotrichum novae-angliae 'Festival' © Roz Cooper

Plant Guardians update

All existing Plant Guardians will have been contacted by Lucy Pitman in her annual registration renewal for guarded plants. If there have been any changes to the plants you have registered please let me know, if you haven't already done so, to keep our NE Group records up to date. Also if you have registered any new plants this year I would like to hear from you with details of these plants. I would be pleased to receive photographs on any new registrations too. If you remember from the Spring Journal a target at national level is to increase the number of rare cultivated plants conserved through the scheme by 75% by 2020. Locally we are well below the target figure based on current additional registrations, so do think about registering plants received via the Plant Exchange.

Roz Cooper

Looking forward to 2019

We're very pleased with the 2019 programme that Irene Bosomworth, Programme Secretary, has put together for us. She is already planning the 2020 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 would be delighted to hear from anyone prepared to offer their garden as the 2019 Garden Party venue. Please email our Secretary, Isobel Shaw at isobelrothley@yahoo.com to give her your details.

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

Saturday 12th 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 Michael D. Myers – **"Snowdrops and snowflakes: a galanthophile's tale"**.

Saturday 9th February: Faith Douglas – **"Thorp Perrow Arboretum and 5 National Collections"**.

Saturday 9th March: Mike Hughes – **"Durham Botanic Garden"**.

Sunday 31st March & 7th April: Members' visit to Brian Whitton's **Corydalis National Collection** 2-5pm.

Saturday 13th April: Nick Bailey – **"365 Days of Colour in your Garden"**.

Saturday 11th May: Chris Mullin – **"My walled Garden in Northumberland"**.

Sunday 19th 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.

Sunday 16th June: Members' visit to Ray Stephenson's garden and **Sedum National Collection** (talk & tour).

Sunday 7th 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 12th October: Andrew Davenport – **"Gardeners' Cottage"**.

Saturday 9th November: Jan Hoyland – **"Wildlife Gardening"**.

Saturday 14th December: John Richards – **"Botanical treasure trove: the wonders of SE Tibet"**.

Membership Update

I'm pleased to say that 7 people have joined the North East group since the last newsletter, while one person has resigned [*plus 2 new members & 1 more resignation at time of going to press. Ed.*].

Nationally the picture is bright too. Data supplied by National Office indicate that since 1st May more than 200 new members have joined Plant Heritage with just under 130 of these coming from the various Group Events, Plant Fairs and National Shows. Group members have also individually been successful in recruiting 35 new members (proven to be the best way of recruiting lasting memberships), and we have welcomed back 10 previously resigned members. This is 12% higher recruitment in this year than for the same period in 2017.

PH has had good coverage through media outlets this year. You may have seen some of the features connected to it on TV coverage of the RHS shows, on Gardeners' World and in the "English Garden" magazine. I was pleased to see Dianne Nichol-Brown, a long-standing member of the NE Group, talking about her national plant collection of Polemonium one Friday evening on Gardeners' World a few weeks ago. It's good to know the charity is gaining more recognition for the excellent work it does in conserving plants.

Pat Skews (Membership) September 2018

From a Collection Coordinator

When looking back at my records I was surprised to find that I have been Collection Coordinator for the North East area since early 2012. During this time I have learnt a lot about the plants that are held in NE collections and developed an interest in plant families I did not know before. I have also learnt about taxonomy, accession lists and the requirements for a well-maintained and documented collection. Early on, the Geranium and Sanguisorba collections were given up but none recently. We currently have 18 collections in the North East. Collections extend from Trimdon Grange (Polemonium) in the south to Berwick (Helenium) in the north, and from Ryal (Primula) to Choppington (Sedum). I am pleased that by next year if all goes to plan, there should be new collections of Erodium and Mentha and a dispersed collection of Physocarpus.

The guidelines, which I try to follow, are to visit each collection every two years and hold a Collection Holders meeting also biennially. The North East is within the large Northern region for Plant Heritage (including NE and NW England, Scotland and whole of Ireland) and I have just attended the Regional Coordinators meeting at Branklyn in Perth. Many collection holders will meet at the Workshop in Edinburgh in November.

This year I visited the Corydalis and Sedum collections at their open days. Both Collection Holders manage to squeeze many plants into small gardens and they had a good number of visitors including some PH members. Roz and I visited the Fagus collection at Kirkley Hall which is well-maintained with new acquisitions. The collection features in teaching and a DNA project is starting. I also went to Blagdon to see how the Sorbus, Acer and Alnus collections are being managed by the new estate manager Claire Scott. I will visit the other collections, Leucojum, Brunnera, Potentilla, Centaurea, *Iris spuriae*, Sorbus at Houghall College, Polemonium, Hakonechloa and Fragaria next year.



Part of the Corydalis National Collection © Faith Williams

A few things are worth highlighting. The Nichol-Browns have celebrated 25 years with their collection of Polemonium which was featured on Gardeners' World and they contributed to the PH display at Chatsworth. A PH blog of a rare plant featured *Fragaria vesca* var *muricata*. *Primula marginata* featured on our display boards this year. There are changes at Belsay and I will visit John Henley, the new Head Gardener, to review the collection of *Iris spuriae*. We feature plant collections at our Annual Plant Sale and some Collection Holders have stalls at the Plant Fair.

So generally there are no problems, as our collections are well maintained and I look forward confidently to 2019.

Faith Williams

National Collections[®] North East Open Days 2019

Corydalis (Brian Whitton) Sunday 31st March, Sunday 7th April 2- 5pm.

Sedum (Ray Stephenson) Sunday 16th June 10 – 3.30pm.

Collections open whenever property open:

Acer, Alnus, & Sorbus (Blagdon Estate) various events including Sunday 15th July for PHNE Plant Fair.

Centaurea (Bide-a-Wee, Mark Robson).

Fagus (Kirkley Hall – John Guy). Iris (Belsay).

Sorbus (Houghal East Durham College).

Visits by appointment:

Brunnera (Lorna Hutchinson).

Leucojum (Ena Gatenby).

Potentilla (David Goodchild).

Primula marginata (Ruth Hadden).

Plant Propagation Days

We have had two propagation sessions so far this year, 14th June for softwood cuttings and 31st October for perennial plant division. It is hoped that these will produce a good amount of extra stock for next year's Plant Sale and / or Plant Fair. It already looks good for the softwood cuttings taken in the spring, many of which have already turned into 'proper shrubs'. Hopefully we will have similar results from the root division session.



Isobel & Lorna tussle with a tough root



Bryan, Lorna, Val and Roz deep in thought

The sessions are open to all members, 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.



Springtime in a Swarland garden (sadly not the Editors') © Bryan Stanley

Final word

**The PHNE Committee wishes you all
a very happy Christmas,
and all the very best for 2019.**

We look forward to seeing you throughout the next year.