

NEWTON-LE-WILLOWS GARDENERS' ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER, SPRING 2017

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

A happy new year to you all and welcome to the start of another gardening season. 2016 was overall a good year for our Gardeners' Association. Membership seems to have stabilized having steadily declining over the previous three years and sales from the Rob Lane Hut have yet again exceeded expectations. I think both reflect a vote of confidence in the excellent work done by both the committee members and our army of volunteers who come along week after week to lend a hand.

While most people know us for the Rob Lane Sales and Advice Hut, the Association is involved in organising other events. In 2016 the annual show was a real success in September, while throughout the year we were again able to put on a number of events including talks & demonstrations on a range of gardening subjects as well as visits to Biddulph Grange & Little Morton Hall in June and Harrogate Autumn show in mid September. A similar full schedule is planned for 2017 so please do come along and get involved in these.

I will be handing over to a new chairman at the AGM in January. It has been a real honour to work on the committee in the last seven years and I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their support and commitment during that time. I plan to still continue to help out at the Hut and maintain a keen interest in the future on the NLWGA.

Best wishes

Dave Hemingway

EDITORIAL

Everyone I have spoken to is saddened by our Chairman Dave's decision to relinquish that post and it is gratifying that he is keen to continue to help out in our work at the Sales Hut.

For many members the Sales Hut is the main reason for belonging to our Association, and rightly so, for the £4 annual subscription is peanuts when you compare our prices and those of the local garden centres. The reason our prices are so low is that we sell to members at a small fraction over what we buy in our fertilisers, seeds etc, and that we don't have to pay staff. Everyone involved in running the Hut does it voluntarily (i.e. it costs them time and money to be volunteers). We are always looking for new hut helpers, so if you can manage to give up a weekend morning or, later in the spring, a Wednesday evening, please let us know.

On pages 2-3 are lists of events for 2017. These include three trips involving coach hire. In 2016 we just managed to cover costs but coach hire is not cheap. If we are to have trips for members, we must have members wanting to go on those trips. Otherwise, future trips will be in jeopardy.

Have a great 2017 gardening year!

Malcolm Greenhalgh

*"In the calendars of Januar'
Thou shalt trees both set and rear
To graft therein apple and pear"*

That was written in 1275, when Edward I paid 1s 6d (7½p) for 100 cherry trees, 2/- (10p) for four quince trees, 1/- (5p) for two peach trees, and 3d for 20 gooseberry bushes. They were all planted at the Tower of London. Today, using container-grown fruit, we can plant all year round.

NIWGA ACTIVITIES 2017

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday, 19 January 2017 at 7.30pm at Newton Sports & Cricket Club, Crow Lane East.

HUT OPENING TIMES

Saturdays 7 January – 28 October, 10.30-12 noon

Sundays 8 January – 29 October, 10.30-12 noon

Wednesdays 5 April – 21 June, 7.00-8.00pm

Good Friday 14 April, 10.30-12 noon (see below).

TALKS AND DEMONSTRATIONS

These, with the exception of Good Friday, are held at Newton Sports & Cricket Club, Crow Lane East, on Thursdays at 7.30pm.

23 February: Sue Nicholas – Gardening under glass

30 March: Phil Dunnett – Summer bulbs

27 April: Marguerite Hughes and Sue Gillon – Spring; making the most of this season
in the garden

25 May: Stephen Halliwell – From hornbeam to handkerchief tree;
a celebration of trees

26 October: Sue Beesley – Herbaceous perennials throughout the year

Good Friday, 14 April, 10.30-12 noon: Coffee and Cake at the Rob Lane Sales Hut. Members may avail themselves of two “happenings”: 1) Avoiding confusion...buying what you need...a tour of the Sales’ Hut (newish members may find this especially useful); 2) Soil pH testing: members may bring a sample of DRY soil (dry it at home) and we will test its pH and advise on the need for liming; cost 50p per sample.

SHOWS

Spring Bank Holiday Monday, 29 May: Willow Park Rural Craft Fair

Saturday 5 August: Newton Town Show

We have had a stand at these two local shows in recent years and always welcome members who could ‘give a hand’ or just come and say ‘Hello!’

Saturday 9 September: Newton-le-Willows Flower and Vegetable Show, Penkford School, Wharfe Road.

This is OUR show and we look forward to as many members as possible putting in exhibits, volunteering help, or just simply coming in the afternoon to admire the judged exhibits and having a cup of tea and piece of cake.

AN ANCIENT RECIPE THAT STILL TASTES GOOD

Take pears, peel and boil them in good red wine and mulberries [you could use blackberries or damsons]. When cooked remove the pears and make a syrup by adding sugar and powdered ginger to the cooking liquid. Put the pears back and heat them again before serving.

Richard II’s Cook Book.

TRIPS

We meet and get on the coach either at Stocks Tavern (main street opposite Highfield Hotel and next to the Parish Church) or Lime House (near the traffic lights close to the Lowton end of Newton Road). Departure 9am.

Saturday 3 June: Harlow Carr RHS garden, Harrogate. This is one of the best RHS gardens, and was designed by Mr Geoffrey Smith of TV fame. **ESTIMATED COST:** £27 (£18 to RHS members). Last date for booking: 14 May.

Saturday 15 July: Powis Castle. This castle in the Welsh Borders has one of the most spectacular gardens which every gardener worth his or her salt ought to visit at least once. A great day out: bring a friend! **ESTIMATED COST:** £29 (£18 to National Trust members). Last date for booking: 25 June.

Saturday 19 August: Southport Flower Show. Get to our nearest BIG show without the hassle of driving and parking, or waiting for the train. By popular request. **ESTIMATED COST** £30, including Show entry. Last date for booking: 23 July.

2016 FLOWER AND VEGETABLE SHOW

The 2016 Flower and Vegetable show was a good one! We had 452 individual entries with the most popular classes being: Pot plant in bloom, Apples, Onions from sets, Beetroot, Sweetcorn, Jam and Photography. As well as great exhibits we had a good number of visitors, all interested to see the displays and to purchase raffle tickets. However, before the doors opened to the public the judges pondered long and hard about each exhibit before awarding the coveted first, second or third prizes. We had a new vegetable judge for our last show, and are delighted that he's agreed to come back again in 2017! Our cookery judge particularly enjoyed sampling the delicious 'Chocolate and Apricot cake', 'Frisolous fancies', and the children's 'gingerbread men' as well as the jams and chutneys.

The main prize winners were:

The Royal Horticultural Society Banksian Medal	Alan Holman
Gordon Brooks Trophy	Alan Holman
Dahlias Most Points	Chris Nightingale
Chrysanthemums Most Points	Ian Burns
Gladioli Most Points	Chris Nightingale
Roses Most Points	Don Farrell
Pot Plants Most points	Ray Weeks
Flowers Most Points	Chris Nightingale
Vegetables Most Points	Alan Holman
National Veg Society Silver Medal	Andrew Moakes
Garden News Shield	Andrew Moakes
Photographic Challenge Cup	Dave Sumner
National Chrys Society Silver Medal	Ian Burns
National Dahlia Society Silver Medal	Ray Weeks
National Dahlia Society Bronze Medal	Carol Moakes
Top Vase	Mary Dearden
Top Tray	Andrew Moakes
British Gladiolus Society Bronze Medal	Andrew Moakes
Royal National Rose Society Bronze Medal	Ian Burns

We couldn't put the show on without sponsorship and we are very grateful to the Rotary Club of Newton-le-Willows, Winwick Parish Council, Penkford School, Jewellery by Silvana, Lapwing Gardening, Loach (Horticultural), Hattons' Travel and Kings Seeds. We also had numerous individual donations as well as one from a member who was very grateful to Think Ahead Community Stroke Group and the support received from them.

Keep an eye out for our 2017 schedule which will be available May this year, with new photographic and baking challenges! If you want to sponsor please contact us, we're grateful for your support.

The 2016 show was my last as Show Secretary, and I've enjoyed working with a great committee and helpers, and particularly enjoyed meeting everyone who enters and enjoys the thrill of the show! I've met a lot of people who say 'I'm only entering to make the numbers up, my exhibit isn't good enough to win' and then win a prize!! So, I'd encourage everyone to take part, not only will you enjoy it, you might win!

Chantelle Seaborn
Show Secretary

WANTED!
NEW SHOW SECRETARY

We have been very lucky to have Chantelle as Show Secretary, but she feels that she must move on. We will miss her. Now we need someone to replace her and the job is ideal for someone with an experience in organisation and co-ordinating things and is computer literate. The new Show Secretary will not be expected to carry out the work in isolation, and for the 2017 Show will get a great deal of help. You are out there.....please.....we are awaiting your call!

AN INTERESTING VARIETY OF POTATO

I was told of an interesting variety of potato during a recent visit to the Canary Islands. It is called, "Outodatis." Its origin was some boxes of seed potatoes sent from the UK to the islands in the 1950s, and on the boxes was written, in large letters, "OUT OF DATE". The locals, who were beginning to develop their agriculture, thought that this was the name of the variety, and not a warning that the seed potatoes were past their best. And weren't we generous in sending them?

Malcolm Greenhalgh

HAVE YOU SOWN TOO MANY SEEDS?

If you have sown more brassicas, tomato, pepper, melon or other seeds, and have surplus seedlings, please, don't throw them away. Prick them out into small pots or seed trays and bring them along to our Sales Hut. We can then sell them on to other members and this will help keep our costs down. Similarly, if you are splitting your rhubarb clump or some herbaceous perennials this year, let us have the bits you would usually throw away. Waste not, want not. But, please label everything, with variety, e.g. Tomato, Shirley.