



## The Potting Shed March 2019 No. 48



Come and join us on 30 March 10:00am – 3:00pm for our Early Spring Sales Day in this our 10th year at Poppleton.

Sale of Spring bedding plants, flowering bulbs, shrubs and alpine.

Model & narrow gauge railway.

Tea, coffee and homemade cake will be available.

Our Spring Sales day will be 27 April 10:00am – 4:00pm.

### POPPLETON COMMUNITY RAILWAY NURSERY

Station Road Upper Poppleton  
York YO26 6QA

☎ 01904 797623

☎ 07800 501382

✉ [pcrn.info@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:pcrn.info@yahoo.co.uk)

🌐 [poppletonrailwaynursery.co.uk](http://poppletonrailwaynursery.co.uk)

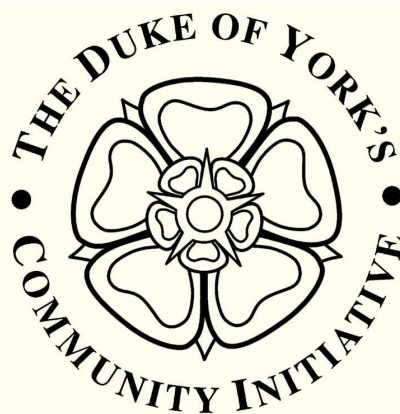
**Charity Number:** 1148341

**Company Registration number:**  
06211163

## Editorial

We live in interesting times, and I am not referring to politics. We have a February that thinks it's April and then a return to winter with gales and heavy rain. The work at the Nursery goes on though and I can't believe that we have been at Poppleton for 10 years. This bumper issue has much to report — the Duke of York's Community Award, an article from our on-site cactus expert, the new toilet block and a further way to communicate with the Nursery with an Instagram account.

## Duke of York's Community Award



The Nursery has been awarded the Duke of York's Community Initiative. This is a Royal Award presented to community projects based in Yorkshire. The schemes need to be owned, developed and led by the people they serve. The schemes should be of real value to the community, well

run and an inspiration to others. The Award lasts for five years, after which a reapplication can be made.

## Membership

If you haven't renewed your membership for 2019, it is due before the end of March. Your name will be removed from the membership list if you haven't renewed by then.

# Instagram

The Nursery now has an Instagram account at [https://www.instagram.com/poppleton\\_railway\\_nursery/](https://www.instagram.com/poppleton_railway_nursery/)

## Allotment

The Autumn planted onions and garlics have thrived in the mild winter and are now promising green shoots of garden recovery and hope of produce later this year.

Jo's seed team have sown a variety of vegetables in the greenhouse which have germinated and along with using the old compost area for early seed potatoes, they'll be ready for planting out in late March, in line with the Veg Plan.

Strawberries have been thinned and re-planted to improve both quality and yield. Raspberries, blueberries and

rhubarb are also in good shape. I can taste those fruit crumbles now!

The Autumn planted spring cabbage and kale will be joined by spring sown greens to take advantage of the extra nutrition from the recently added manure.

So, notwithstanding rabbits, slugs and other garden pests, the Garden is looking much more 'ship shape' and things are looking promising for edible produce this year. However, as all gardeners know, the weather will have the last word!

**I'd like to hear from any volunteers who would like to spend some time working in the garden or allotment.**

Barry Treanor

## Railway and building work



*Uprights and crosspieces.*

Our two winter jobs have been the building of a car port-type roof over greenhouse G7 and the refurbishment of a new truck. Due to a succession of fine-weather Thursdays, the latter has rather been neglected although some

work has been carried out. On the roofing job by Christmas the supports for the uprights and three uprights were in place, the remainder of the uprights and the crosspieces followed soon after, followed by the roofing. Most of the guttering is also complete.



*Attaching the roofing panels*

## New Toilet Block



After lots of negotiation we now have a new toilet block, although it's still to be fitted out. The foundations were constructed the week before Christmas and over the last couple of months we now have a building. Its in blockwork which the nursery volunteers will clad to make it look like our other buildings. Once the floor slab has dried out, then the flooring will be laid and after that the fittings can go in. We have ensured that they are accessible to everyone. There is a gentle slope up to the doors and wide doorways and plenty of space inside. We are indebted to our architect and

builder and the many people who have donated grants and donations to get this built.

Paul Botting

## Gardening News

### Special Offers

Available at the Nursery now while stocks last:

- **Cowslips** 50p each or 6 for £2. Also larger pots at various prices.
- **Foxgloves** £1 each or 3 for £2.
- **Aquilegia** (yellow) £1.50 each or 3 for £3.
- **Mimulus** 50p each or 6 for £2.

Gill Duxbury

## Cacti at Poppleton



To those who have seen me around the site you'll know I often travel up from Harrogate on the train and although I have only met a small number of the volunteers on site so far and am very touched by the kind welcome and interest. I'm a signaller on the Harrogate Line, known as a GPR relief working at most of the signalboxes since I started in 1995. I knew the nursery from when the BR staff used to come out in their pick-up truck and tend to the flower

tubs and beds on the local stations where I work. (Alas they don't do that anymore but the volunteer adopters do a great job.) My dad passed on his plant interests to me from the late 1970s and I have been a member of the British Cactus & Succulent Society for about 8 years, where I am now a committee member and Shows Secretary of the Bradford branch. (There is also a branch in York).

With grateful thanks for the invitation after my proposal to the nursery committee I was really 'chuffed' to get the green light from the railway nursery to collaborate on a cactus and succulent display for these once more popular plants. They are becoming quite well represented across the media and once more in shops selling gifts, prints, stationery and household objects as designers get on the band wagon of succulent success! It seems that some drier climate areas have seen quite a big rise in interest in them, I am told that Korean and Chinese housewives are seeing them as must-have accessories for the kitchen windowsill — so much so that the US authorities are prosecuting unlicensed collectors stealing them for illegal export. Ex-situ conservation is becoming a more promoted subject in the hobby in order to combat this, after all who is going to pay a large sum for an illegal import plant when nurseries are seed raising them and selling them much cheaper?

The collection display contains a variety of mostly North

and South American cacti and a few South African succulents, if anyone wants to know anything particular do feel free to stop me any time I am around the nursery — unless I am dashing for the train home! I am very interested in South American plants and the genus *Eriosyce* in particular, for their geometric patterns and their bright flowers — pollinated in several cases by hummingbirds. These all live in habitats in Chile, Peru, Argentina and Brazil from the coasts to the high Andes, between where the Atacama desert is the driest place on Earth. Contrary to general belief cacti don't often grow in such harsh environments. In fact they are dying out in some such places where there has actually been no rainfall in the last 4 or 5 years at all.

You may have heard of National Plant collections and I am working with UK Plant Heritage towards accredited status for a collection of *Eriosyce*. The process is long because of the need to collect and grow 90% of the available taxa and the botanists changing their opinions of which plants are distinct species. The committee kindly suggested that the nursery could be available as the site to house a National Collection.

Cacti are available for sale and there is a sales tray next to the display with a variety of plants which I keep trying to increase and keep the prices really low as I particularly enjoy spreading the knowledge of them out to other people. There are also some leaflets

about the various cactus societies etc on the display bench too. I shall be trying hard to arrange some seed raising in the new year to grow plants on which I can donate to the sales house.

Matt Gibbs



## Ten Years Ago

This is the first article looking back, through the pages of The Potting Shed, at what was happening ten years ago. For this first article we have to go back over ten years as the first Potting Shed to appear after our takeover of the Poppleton Site was number 2 and did not appear until April 2009. Issue number 1 appeared in July 2008 and was 4 A4 pages without pictures. It was emailed to people on the original database to try to find people who are interested in the nursery project, with a form to be returned to show interest. The company had been registered and a bank account set up with a donation of £5000 from Northern Rail. Access to the site was a problem as Jarvis were demanding a high cost for the perimeter fencing. However, a quick survey of the site had been carried out and costings given to Network Rail. One of the out-



side parties to show interest was the NHS Trust for patient therapy.

## **Poppleton station adoption**

Northern Rail's Richard Isaac came to see us in early January, took some photos and promised to get back to us to help solve some of our difficulties on the station. These include the disconnected rain butt—no water for our plants except by us carrying it over from the nursery, crumbling garden wall, fences, cabling across our flower beds and a whole lot more! Unfortunately nothing has happened yet, nor have we heard anything from Network Rail who we know have been alerted and who share some of the responsibilities for putting things right for us.

On the positive side Saturday strikes have been suspended so Poppleton has its 7-days-a-week regular railway service back and some of the trains now used on our line offer a more comfortable travelling experience than the old life expired ones. Also CCTV has been installed on both platforms and a dialogue has begun between a Northern Engineering Manager and our railway group about possibly getting some help from apprentices. We hope something positive comes out of it.

Most importantly Richard Scott, already a member who lives in Upper Poppleton, has agreed to join our group so swelling our numbers for our

gardening and other tasks for 2019. Sue Barker and I have already made a start on Thursday mornings to make as good a garden display as we can on the station, given the safety concerns, for the 30 March 10-year Anniversary Sales Day!

Colin Wood, Station Adoption Team

## **Collecting Aluminium for SNAPPY**

One of our PCRN members collects aluminium cans and foil for Special Needs Activities and Play Provision for York (SNAPPY). There is a box at the Nursery for aluminium cans and foil, so you are welcome to bring it along.

## **Help required**

- **Can you help at a railway event at the Nursery?** We are looking for a couple of people to help our railway group on Sunday 12th May in the morning. We have agreed to welcome a visiting group of about 30 people from Narrow Gauge Railway Society who are holding their AGM in Yorkshire. We will be running trains, and the model railway, as well as refreshments and visitors looking about the site. Training will be given if required.
- **Glazing repairs** The nursery would really benefit from someone

who could take on the glazing repairs on the greenhouses. We have a large amount of glass which now needs replacing. Someone who knows how to cut glass would be ideal, but not essential. Most of the Nursery glass is bought in standard ready-cut sizes. This is an intermittent job tending to be concentrated in the late winter or spring after the bad weather. There is some working at height from a step ladder. Contact Paul on [pcrn.info@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:pcrn.info@yahoo.co.uk) if you can help.

## **Jobs**

There are lots of tidying jobs at the nursery — any extra help would be appreciated. There are numerous repair and maintenance jobs on-site, and we need members with DIY skills to take them on. Please do contact us.

## **... and finally**

Free with this issue is the first of 4 photo supplements **PCRN — The First Ten Years**.