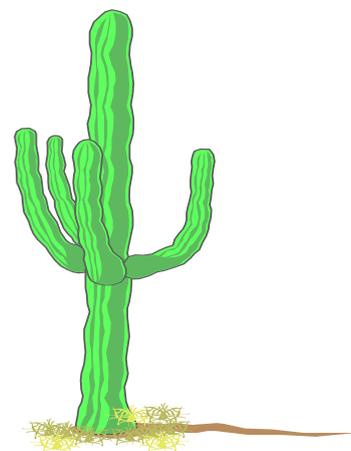


Oxotica

The Newsletter of the Oxford Branch of the
British Cactus and Succulent Society

December 2014

Volume 19, Number 2



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

At the start of the year I was thinking that as I had got the hang of the Chairman's job after two years, 2014 should be a nice coast down to 'retirement'. How wrong I was! It turned out to be an action-packed and challenging, and yet successful, year for all of us.

It started calmly enough, with a nostalgic talk by Gillian at the first branch meeting. Then another annual lunch at the Lambert Arms, but this time preceded by a planning meeting for the Zone. Thanks go to Bill for organising this day. At the March table show, a rare opportunity arose because the usual suspects were each away on continental 'cactus crawls', so Nick and I took the chance to win all of the table show classes. The April meeting was novel: we arrived at the hall to find that it had been taken over as a polling station for the local elections. Nothing daunted, we used the kitchen route to come and go, and made ourselves cosy in the back room for the meeting.

Martin's Open Day a couple of months later was a very pleasant affair, on a warm sunny day. The big new greenhouse, the plants, the drinks and cakes under the gazebos – all very nice. My three passengers (we picked up Peter just down the road) enjoyed it.

Last year, when Bill first mentioned a display at Blenheim, I must admit that I had some misgivings. Fortunately, Bill persisted, and we ended up with a three-day display with plant sales. Not the Floral Marquee as hoped, but in

a nice central position nevertheless. Good publicity for the Society and for the Branch, plus the bonus of substantial sales.

The Branch was well represented at the quadrennial BCSS Convention in Leicester, which was notable for the excellence of the talks, including one by our own Gillian Evison. For our August members meeting we secured the services of Roger Ferryman, who was one of the star speakers at the convention. Good publicity brought members from other branches along to hear Roger's talk.

However, before that was THE SHOW. This show, a memorial to Cathy Darbon, was outstanding in every way. With the biggest number of exhibitors and the biggest number of entries, this was the best show we have put on in all of the years we have been at Langdale Hall. Afterwards, Rene Geissler put a couple of glowing reports on the forum. Thanks go to Mary Stone and Sheila Gibbs who were the mainstay of the refreshments, and to Doreen Donaldson who was back running the raffle this year. And thanks go to all the committee and other Branch members who worked so hard to make this day – memorable.

As well as or perhaps because of the success of the show, it produced a substantial net profit, in marked contrast to last year. Finances during the year surged ahead. Spearheaded by John Watmough, the branch

this year made a profit of over £1000 on plant sales at events which included the Open Day, Portishead Cactus Mart, Blenheim, Bury Knowle Park, the Show, and ELK where we had our own table for the first time.

Autumn saw some of us back at the Lambert Arms, a Zone lunch arranged by Bill as part of a move to revive the Zone. Over coffee, David Kirkbright was on his feet, recounting a potted history of someone who seemed to have had an experience in the hobby remarkable similar to my own. It turned out to be me, and

David and the others insisted that I accept the BCSS Diploma of Merit and Badge that he had brought along, so what else could I do? I accepted with thanks.

Well, it has been a privilege to be Chairman of Oxford Branch for the past three years. It was challenging, but made much easier by all the help that I received from the committee and other branch members. So thank you all, and best wishes to the next chairman.

David Greenaway

OXFORD BRANCH SHOW 3RD AUGUST 2014



It was with some sadness but also with a great deal of pride that the Oxford Show held on 3rd August this year at Witney was such a great success. The show was held in conjunction with the Mammillaria Society and dedicated to the memory of Cathy Darbon. I was astonished with the response that we had from Exhibitors, who all brought out their brightest and best plants to be seen on display. Fitting all the exhibits on the tables was quite challenging, but as can be seen from the pictures in this it was a wonderful spectacle and a great window of opportunity to advertise the Society. We

were fortunate that a lot of the major personalities from the Society came along, which just added to the many other members who attended and hopefully enjoyed the day.

See comment from John Betteley, one of the judges (below).

"This was probably the last time that the Oxford Show would be held at the Langdale Hall, Witney and it was fitting that the Show was dedicated to the memory of Cathy Darbon who did so much for the B.C.S.S. over many years.

I had the pleasure of judging the Cacti and Succulents with David Hutchinson, while Tony Morris attended to the Mammillarias. With over six hundred entries, certainly more than last year, Oxford remains the premier provincial show in the UK."

Bill Darbon

THE MEMORIAL SHOW - A JUDGE'S PERSPECTIVE

by John Betteley



Sunday 3rd August 2014 was probably the last time that Oxford Show would be held at the Langdale Hall, Witney and it was fitting that the Show was dedicated to the memory of Cathy Darbon who did so much for the B.C.S.S. over many years.

I had the pleasure of judging the Cacti and Succulents with David Hutchinson, while Tony Morris attended to the Mammillarias. David and myself have judged together on half a dozen or so occasions and we have very similar opinions when it comes to analysing classes. With over six hundred entries, certainly more than last year, Oxford remains the premier provincial show in the U K.

For the first time, we were judging in accordance with the 10th edition of the Guide to Shows; in this edition greater emphasis has been placed on presentation and less on maturity, whereas rarity carries little or no weight.

Class 2 was for one plant in the Aloe Group and the winner was a fine example of *Aloe parvula*, which had no dieback on the leaf tips - a problem with so many aloes.

Class 4 enabled exhibitors to display their *Echeverias* and the winner stood out - a clean

example of *Echeveria longissima* filling a 7inch pot.

Class 9 (One Mesemb.) was won by a large and immaculate *Glottiphyllum oligacarpum*. Class 13 (Ariocarpus Group) was extremely competitive but the winner was a fine, healthy two - headed *Ariocarpus retusus* - the same plant that won the National Show in 2012. This plant was awarded Best Cactus in Show on Sunday.

Class 14 - Two very large and clean examples of *Astrophytum ornatum* took first and second prize. Five and six inch pots of *Astrophytum asterias* and its many hybrids just do not compete against entries that are many times older.

Class 17 (Echinocactus Group) contained four examples of *E. horizontalonius*, which took the first three prizes, two were superbly presented.

Class 19 (Echinopsis Group) was won in clear- cut fashion by the largest *Lobivia thionanum* either of us had seen.

Class 23 was won by the best *Uebelmannia* I have seen (the same plant was pictured on page 8 of the show schedule and the National Show Schedule 2008) a real tribute to the grower.

Class 31 (Ceropegia or Stapelia Group - 14cm pot) had only three entries, but an outstanding example of the difficult Namibian *Stapeliopsis uniflora* (syn *neronis*) won the day and was eventually given the award of Best Succulent in the Show.

Class 35 (Two *Haworthia*'s - 16cm) was well supported and a fine example of *H. sordida* coupled with the attractive form of *H. lockwoodii* took first prize.

Class 42 (Two pot - restricted *Astrophytums*) - here we were looking for different species suitable for inclusion in 14cm posts. *A. myrostigma* and *A. ornatum* are not really

suitable for small pots, whereas *A. asterias*, *capricorne* and *digitostigma* are more appropriate. A couple of entrants had paired together plants of the same species and variety, not always advisable.

Class 47 (pot- restricted *Eriosyce*) this was won by a fine example of *Rhodentiophylla* certainly not the easiest to grow.

Class 51 (pot restricted *Rebutia* Group) this was lacking competitive plants and was won by an attractive form of *Sulco. rauschii*, which

will grow a lot bigger. The best plant for a small pot would have been *Rebutia einsteinii* ssp *gonjianii*, but is rarely seen on the show table nowadays.

The judging took two hours and David and I enjoyed the challenge, although I noticed that he slumped into a chair once it was all over.

THE MAJOR AWARDS

also here is a note of the major awards given by the three judges and I am told that they could have given more as the quality of plants was so high. As you know we topped a total of 600 entries 150 in *Mammillaria* Section and 450 + in General classes.

Best Cactus - *Ariocarpus retusus*- Richard Bleay (Class13)

Best Succulent - *Stapeliopsis urniflora* - Gillian Evison (Class 31)

AOM - *Crassula deceptor* - Jeff Salisbury (class 3)

Echeveria longissima - Adrian Weatherill (class 4)

Pachypodium namaquanum - Jeff Salisbury (class 10)

Dorstinia Gigas - Mr & Mrs S Baker (class 38)

Display of Cacti & Succulents - Alan Rollason (class 58)

Ariocarpus Trigonis - Richard Bleay (class13)

Exhibit of 2 *Astrophytum*'s max pot 14cm - Richard Bleay (Class 42)

Ariocarpus Retusus - Jeff Salisbury (class 28)

Uebelmania pectinifera - Gillian Evison (Class 230)

Best Cristate - *Ariocarpus retusus*- Mr & Mrs S Baker (class 56)

Best display of flowers - *Adenia obesum* - Barry Tibbetts (class10)

Bill Darbon



Nick Boden with his plants

Gillian Evison

LOOKING FORWARD – NEW HORIZONS

Thanks to the pictures on the Oxford Branch web page I am able to look back at what was an incredible day, it was with some sadness but also with a great deal of pride that this years show was such a success. Much has been written and said and as you will read from the article from John Betteley this was our swan song at The Langdale Hall, as many of you may already know Witney Council have decided to sell the premises for re-development. It is a shame that we are losing a venue that we have had such a long association with but

I suppose that's progress. We are looking forward and hope that the new venue we have found at Grove will serve us as well. Planning is already well in hand for a joint show with The Haworthia Society and if the quality of plants both at our show and their recent show at Birmingham are anything to go by I am sure we are in for another wonderful day. So watch this space for more details but book the date Saturday 1st August 2015 and make sure that it's another day to remember.

Bill Darbon (Branch Show Secretary)

BRANCH MEETINGS JANUARY TO JUNE 2015

4th Thursday in month, 7:30 pm for 8:00 pm

*Please bring plants for the Table Show if you can -
to each of these meetings except January*

We are always open to suggestions for the programme so if there is someone or something that you would like us to arrange please speak to one of the committee.

22nd January JOHN WATMOUGH

Plants growing in my collection now

We are fortunate that our own branch members have a vast diversity of plant knowledge to impart, so tonight John will extol on the virtues of plants that are growing or attempting to grow under his care. John is well known for trying to grow the unusual and has a great deal of success from seed, so I am sure we will all have something to digest

26th February ALICE VANDEN BON

Cape Town to Orange River

Alice is a stalwart of the Society for her work on the production team of our Journal "Cactus World". She is Secretary of our neighbouring Branch at Reading and has been an exhibitor at our shows. She is well known for her love of the Mesemb's and tonight will show us the Highlights of her journeys in South

26th March RODNEY SIMS

Off the beaten track (part 2)

Rodney is a fellow of The Society and old friend of the branch. He is amongst other things Chair of Zone 6 and an enthusiast of fauna and flora in general particularly that of the UK and South Africa. Tonight we will explore with him some of the more remote area of his journeys. I am sure he will find the odd Aloe.

23rd April IAN THWAITES

Photography (how I do it)

Ian had recently tried to retire to take up one of his other hobbies of photography, but big business caught up with him and beckoned him back, however he has

still found time to develop (no pun intended) his passion for capturing plants at their best. Tonight hopefully he may reveal some of his secrets.

28th May

IAN WOOLNOUGH

USA 2011

Ian is Secretary of Exeter Branch and has not visited us before, but he has travelled widely in both North and South America. Tonight he will present one of his trips to the USA, which will include some wildlife and some unusual plants in flower. I am sure this will be a delightfully illustrated talk.

25th June

DR JOHN HUGHES

Echeverias

John is well known as the Chairman of the RHS panel of judges who have attended our last two National Shows. He has travelled to many parts of the world, his favourite being Brazil, however he is just as knowledgeable on other succulents and alpines. Tonight he will bring us the beauty of what some people call cabbages, but they are far from that as you will see.

Bill Darbon

Oxotica

Copyright: Oxford Branch of the British Cactus and Succulent Society. Published in June and December.

The Branch meets 7.30pm for 8pm on the 4th Thursday of each month (except December) at the Rose Hill Methodist Church, Rose Hill, Oxford OX4 4JP.

President:	Alan Ilott	01235 519543
Chairman:	Bill Darbon	01993 881926
Vice-Chair:	Nick Boden	07876 693021
Secretary:	Martin Doorbar	01635 268005
Treasurer:	John Watmough	01865 772709
Committee:	Gillian Evison	01235 532674
	David Greenaway	01235 762761
	Mary Stone	01865 774268
	Steve Williams	01367 718944

Editor: David Greenaway

(e-mail: david@phonecoop.coop)

Branch web site: <http://www.oxford.bcsc.org.uk/>



ELK 2014, The Marquee

David Greenaway

Oxford Show Time



**Chris Davis (Chairman, Mammillaria Society)
and Bill Maddams (BCSS Vice-President)**

Award of Merit

David our retiring Chairman was surprised on Sunday 26th October while attending the Zone 8 lunch to be presented with the BCSS Award of Merit for his services to the Branch and the Society.

David first got interested in Cacti in the 1940's and joined the London Cactus Club and the GB Society. He disposed of his plants due to work commitments but rekindled his interest in 1990, joining the BCSS. He has served on the Branch Committee for over 20 years and has been the Editor of the branch newsletter Oxotica since its origin in 1996, a position he still holds. He was one of the main leaders in setting up the Branch Web site and still maintains and updates this regularly; this now receives hits from a worldwide audience. He took over the administration of the BCSS Slide Library in 2004 and has recently been involved in the project to digitise the slide sets. He was due to relinquish his three year tenure as Chair at the November AGM and we as a Branch Committee felt that this was a very appropriate time to nominate him for this award.

Bill Darbon



Photograph by Peter Arthurs

David Greenaway being presented with his award
by David Kirkbright, BCSS Fellow and Society Treasurer

MARTIN DOORBAR'S GREENHOUSE AND PLANTS

Photographs by Martin Doorbar



