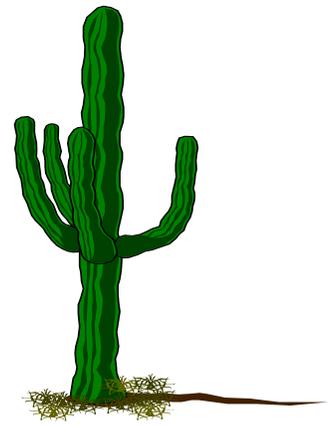


NEWSLETTER

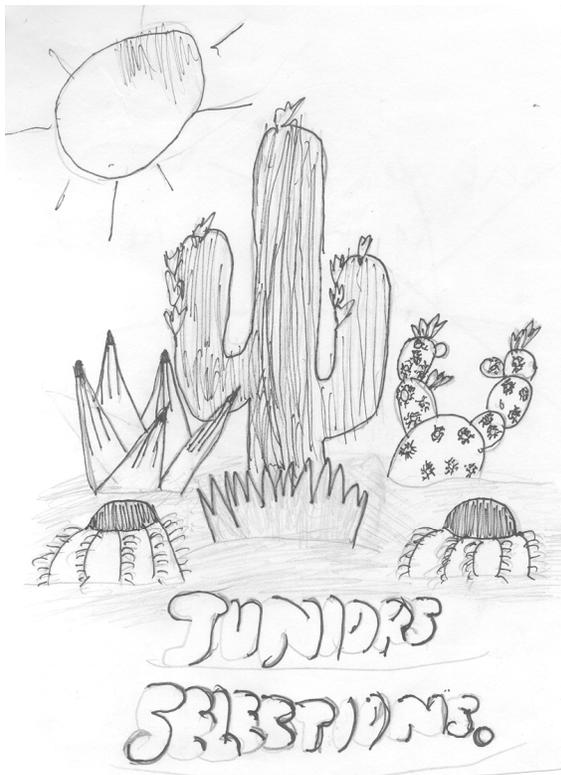
of the Oxford Branch of the British Cactus and Succulent Society

Meetings are held at 7.30 PM on the fourth Thursday of each month in the John Bunyan Baptist Chapel, Cromwell Road, Cowley, Oxford.

June 1996 Volume 1, Number 2



This summer:
Gareth Darbon sums it up!



The national show is coming up and this is a good opportunity to show some of those best plants.

We have lots of things happening in July. The Branch show is on the 14th of July, the Zone show is on the 7th of July and the Zone convention is on the 20th of July.

Oxford Branch Show, Sunday 14 July

The Branch Show will be held at a new venue this year - Langdale Hall, Langdale Gate, Witney, from 10.30 am to 4.30 pm. First and foremost, we need your PLANTS on show (says Show Organiser, Bill Darbon). This is the occasion of the year when everyone can bring pots along - small growers, big growers, newbies and veterans. And your help is wanted on the day to make things run smoothly - come along, be given a job, and enjoy yourself! Please support your local show. Contact Bill on 01993 881926.

Zone 8 Convention, Saturday 20 July

The Zone Convention will be held at **Didcot Power Station Social Club**, the programme to be as follows:

Doors will open at 12.30pm when lunch will be available (price included in the ticket).

- 1.30 Ken Preston-Mafham: 'Travels with a Camera'
- 3.00 Break
- 3.45 Mary Hoogvliet: Sarcocaulons and Pelargoniums
- 5.15 Ticket draw

The cost to be £5.50 per ticket with a cash prize for 'lucky ticket'. Plant sales will be by Brookside and by Oxford Branch.

Next Meeting - 28 July

Coryphanta and Thelocactus by Bill and Yvonne Tree

Yvonne was for many years Minutes Secretary to the Society, and Bill is currently on the Shows Committee. They are very well known throughout the hobby and have recently retired.

Plants of the month:

Four classes: Pachypodium Group, Lobivia Group, 3 x 3 1/2 Euphorbia Group, Anacampteros Group, and any Plant in Flower.

Tea, coffee and biscuits this month will be arranged by Steve Willam.

Notes on the Lecturers for the next six months

22 August Ray Stevenson
(Echeveria Group)

A speaker I am sure many will not have heard - but what a speaker! Ray is a judge, and gave a similar talk at the judges course last year. To be honest it was not a talk that many of us were looking forward to, but believe me not one person gave him less than 100% attention all the way through. Ray published a book in 1995 - the Sedum Handbook.

26 September Pat Delaney
(Cristates)

Another regular at Oxford meetings. He lives in Luton and has graciously helped us at short notice on many occasions. Pat is on

the Shows Committee, and has been a judge for many years.

24 October Eddie Cheetham
(Echinocactus)

A name I'm sure all will recognise as the editor of the Journal. Eddie was previously on the Shows Committee for many years before being coerced into taking over from Bill Keen. Eddie is also an athlete and has represented us in many veteran events overseas.

28 November (AGM) Graham Hole
(Gymnocalycium)

Graham may not be known to many of you, although he does not live far from us, a village between Northampton and Kettering. He is also a leading light in the Chileans.

Cathy Darbon

Transport to the National Show

Ring John Watmough on 01865 772709 if you intend going to the National at Spalding on 17 August, and he will try to coordinate transport.

Zone Show

And don't forget the Zone Show, 7 July, which is being hosted by Swindon Branch this year. Show manager Winnie Dunn.

BCSS Executive Committee (am) and AGM (pm)

Leasowes High School, Halesowen

13 April 1996

For the morning session Cathy represented our Branch and John just observed. Following previous experience, delegates expected two great immutables: wrangling about the Library, and failure to organise a car boot sale. Amazingly however, the F & GP Committee had sorted the library out and raised £1000 from the sale of surplus books. Any questions? None. Hooray. Then came the most welcome novelty of all: delegates queuing up to congratulate Eddie Cheetham on the best ever edition of the Journal. Unfortunately, the journal had come out after the closing date for claiming a pitch at the Car Boot Sale - so there wasn't one. A carload of plants caused a flurry of excitement, but they were only being transhipped to Glasgow Branch.

After lunch the delegates turned into ordinary members and joined the frustrated plant buyers: heckled at the back, incontinent by the door, barrack-room lawyers at the front and June Jenkins behind the Daily Mail. Matters arising? None. Hooray.

Bill Maddam, in a welcome follow-up to his 1994 address, spoke of the need to keep new members interested once they have been recruited. Some branch secretaries were being dilatory and uncommunicative - but by definition these were among those absent from the meeting.

There was a small but steady rise in membership for the first time for some years. This was attributed in part to: the new improved publicity material; the now outstanding quality of the Journal; Tony Mace's pages on the Internet and a mailshot

of recent non-renewers of subscriptions. Winnie Dunn told us to leave the new leaflets in fish and chip shops and flog the nation's youth until they agreed to grow cacti - or else she would come and flog us.

The Prez then removed his WC and Chain, but was immediately re-elected. The presidential address took the form of a wittily presented proposal (not unmixed with a formidable dose of sheer cunning, not comprehended by all members) for the exclusion of all plants of originally illegal origin from our shows. This was to show willing on the conservation front, knowing well that by the time the thousand of AH's and Geo-whatsits that are at present sitting on Pereskopsis stock are big enough to show, the legal position will be clarified. George Hollis, representing the judges, wanted specific rules about identifiable plants, whereas Gordon's proposal, although ethically unexceptional, would have been too general for easy implementation. The debate was a model debate - speakers were brief, well-informed and interesting, and covered all possible points of view. It was agreed that Gordon would keep trying to wring an opinion out of the IOS, while Bill Maddams would seek the views of HMG.

All the others officers were declared re-elected by acclamation. Then David Kirkbright was awarded the Fellowship of the Society in recognition of his superlative work as Treasurer and as organiser of the Reading Convention. North London Branch became the first winner of the new annual prize for recruiting the most new members.

It was agreed to hold the next AGM at Halesowen, but the October Executive Committee Meeting in Sheffield. Rebellious mutterings ensued especially from the South Coasters, who suggested, sotto voce and after the vote, that Reading was much nearer the centre of Britain - or even Oxford.

My own feeling as we trundled back along the motorway was that the Society had perhaps turned a corner. Defensiveness had turned to, no, not that, but...confidence, even ambition.

John Watmough

Social Event

A dinner for the Branch members is planned for next Winter, probably in the second week of January. We have been recommended a particularly interesting Chinese restaurant; we would like to know if this would be acceptable to you, or whether you would only support the event if the food was more 'conventional'. Comments please!

Membership Renewal

If you have not paid, please send your BCSS subscription for 1996 to Peter Lewis at "Firgrove", 1 Springwoods, Courtmoor, Fleet, Hants. GU13 1SU, quoting your membership number (if you cannot remember your number please contact Cathy Darbon on 01993 881926).

Northern Weekend - Alston Hall

Disaster! ! My eagerly awaited trip to the continent had been cancelled, too few takers. I was feeling right in the dumps, but half a loaf I thought, rang Ralph, and was squeezed in. A long drive up the M6 gave me time to wonder just who I would know, also how they would take to stranger southerners jumping in. I had allowed myself time for hold ups and met none so I arrived early, had a good look round and

waited over half an hour before more arrived. From Wales, Lincoln and all points north up to Inverness, all gladly welcomed by everyone, many well known already. Dinner was a noisy start. I learned to lip read quickly.

It wasn't long before we were being ushered off upstairs belatedly for Graham Charles' first talk, beautifully illustrated, on the Argentinians' cacti that is, but not forgetting the landscapes. And so to bar, bed and dreams.

Saturday - Did anyone manage to eat breakfast with us all talking at once - John Arnold Parodias and Notocactus - well illustrated and discussed but also that interested calm (awe?) which became apparent at all the presentations (except one, later).

The vote of thanks expressed, particularly that feeling of being with friends in a cheeky, witty almost caustic manner that embraced us all.

Coffee was rushed and all were eager for more - Keith Grantham on Madagascar, Pachypodiums, Euphorbias of course, but also Kalanchoe and aloes, wildlife and landscape all were discussed and presented and attentively received. Lunch - then the inevitable plant sales. The imperceptible quickening pace that verges on near stampede and that not quite crush as Philip holds the door until the prescribed minute. After tea came Graham's second round on Cacti the easy way. His trip with Elizabeth to, wait for it, South West USA, did I say easy?, poor Graham. He splendidly fought all the witticism, the barbed comments as he showed Aric's - Sclero's - Echinocereu - Opuntias etc. H.S.V.s to Steve Brack - Chuck Hanson's Adeniums - Sonora Desert Museum and more. His visit to the National Parks provided information on pamphlets and guides knowledge available to all interested parties. Oops! I almost forgot, Elizabeth did appear in one shot.

Dinner and somebody new to me. Sheila Collenette, Aloes and other succulents of Oman. Sheila has worked for the British

Museum and Kew, I'm told, even though she has no formal botanic training. With first hand knowledge like hers it isn't needed. During her journey from half way up the Red Sea to the Oman, along the coastal scarp she thrilled, dragged, awed and exhausted us with her slides of plants, the terrain, many little known species of Aloe - Caralluma - Ceropogon - Echidnopsis etc. interspersed with completely new species. Her hair-raising trips to find the 86 species and sites over a few hundred miles were received in rapt and near silent attention. Unfortunately some of these species are already lost, due to man's encroachment.

Having re-fortified ourselves at the bar, an informal members session, now the small cabal of hecklers and jokers from the rear left of the hall took over. Slides of seed raising. *Geo Hintonii* and *A Hintonii* - grafting at only two days old (brave men) with advice and discussion all round. *Ariocarpus* species Hybrids next up to 10" pot size and in flower. Mouthwatering stuff. A trip to Hull followed showing Colin Norton's collection. Tall *Cerii*-plump *Caespitose Rophophora* - Large *Grusonii*, fluffy *Espostoas*, *Copiapoas* and more, mostly received with "cor look at them"!! Envy all round. Well past midnight and still watching slides, this time plants around Majorca.

Sunday morning - Some poor souls already leaving on their long journey home. For us was Keith Grantham's trip to Mexico for the 1995 IOS Congress at San Miguel de Allende. *Aztekium Hintonii*, *Geo Hintonia* (see March journal) and in the wild shots of *Turbinocarpus Hoffii* - *Isabella* - *Subterraneus*, all the latest finds, *Ferocactus*, *Stainessii*, *Ilheads* in show condition. *Echinocerii*, inc *Knippelianus*; *Ariocarpus* inc *Trigonus* (big or what! Ooh) and *Obregonia* too. All these in superb condition and the spination - wow! ! Mickey taking over Keith showing cacti of course, but the other plants, wild life and scenery were still there.

Coffee and Sheila Collenette this time, succulent *Ascepiads* of Saudi Arabia. Still in the coastal strip below the mountains: *Caralluma* - *Crenulluma* - *Cryptolluma* - *Borealluma* and *Sinaeica*. Goodies galore! Just the job!, and while still heady from panoramic and geological views (3000ft straight down the sea) on we went to *Cylindrilla*, *Desmidorchis*, those flower heads, cooee! *Monilluma* - *Sulcalluma* and *Cerope Gia* with flowers like Narwhal tusks or bees knees. The photography is so clear and vivid one felt you could smell the flowers or even pick them. *Duvalias* and many new species and/or new forms, some of which are already or nearly extinct. Sheila took us along clearly but so speedily that we were breathless. Nevertheless we had to arrive very reluctantly at the end of her journey. Fantastic.

A very noisy lunch, more departures, time for John Arnold's second talk - Melo's and Disco's - one could sense his eagerness to get into this subject, obviously a big favourite with him. Through *Micranthocereus* - *Vatricana*, *Thrixantherii* and *Buingiana* showing development of cephalium to the full crowns of the melos. The smaller tight *Cephalia* and bigger scented flowers of the Disco's particularly *Disco horstii* (your favourite John?).

Wonderful stuff.

Afternoon tea, time to recover - good-byes all round.

What a programme, what organisation, good food, good accommodation. Many thanks to all the speakers, Ralph and Philip, also to all the staff at Alston Hall for such an interesting and enjoyable weekend.

Next year is the 30th anniversary of this event and accommodation for a larger number will be available. Book early, I will, in anticipation of renewing both old and newer friendships (if you will have me again!).

Thanks to all,
Brian Conway

Zone 8 and other events:

7 July	Zone Show	Swindon
10 July	Doug Donaldson - Beyond the Chiricahuas	High Wycombe
10 July	Bill Maddams - Coryphantha & allied genera	Swindon
14 July	Oxford Annual Branch show	Witney
14 July	Open Day - Doug Donaldson	High Wycombe
16 July	Keith Grantham - Caudiciforms	Birmingham
20 July	Zone Convention	Didcot
28 July	Coryphantha and Thelocactus	Oxford
10 August	Hughendon Village show (Competitive display)	High Wycombe
14 August	Plant Auction	Swindon
14 August	Bill Tree - South American cacti	High Wycombe
17 August	NATIONAL SHOW	Spalding
20 August	Sonia Barker-Fricker - Lithops	Birmingham
22 August	Ray Stevenson - Echeveria Group	Oxford
6-8 Sept.	Autumn Show and Display at Wycombe Town Show	High Wycombe
11 Sept.	Terry Hewitt - Epiphytes & lots of etc!	High Wycombe
11 Sept.	Derek Castle - The Indiana Jones American Adventure	Swindon
17 Sept.	John Henshaw - Mexico Part 1	Birmingham
26 Sept.	Pat Delaney - Cristates	Oxford
6 October	Autumn Show with Haworthia Society	Birmingham
9 October	Keith Grantham - Mexico '95	Swindon
15 October	Tony Mace - Cereanae	Birmingham
24 October	Eddie Cheetham - Echinocereus	Oxford
13 Nov.	David Minnion - To the Land of Pedios. And Scleros.	High Wycombe
13 Nov.	AGM	Swindon
19 Nov.	Rodney Sims - Aloe Aloe	Birmingham
28 Nov.	Graham Hole - Gymnocalyciums and AGM	Oxford
10 Dec.	AGM and Christmas Social	Birmingham
11 Dec.	AGM and Christmas Dinner	High Wycombe
8 Jan. 97	Inter Branch Quiz with Reading and A N Other	High Wycombe

The next issue of the Newsletter is planned to be in December 1996. Please let the editor have any material for this issue as soon as possible after the November AGM..

If you would like to contribute any item, large or small, to the Newsletter then phone David Greenaway on 01235 762761.