

31st January

## My Greenhouse 2015 - A calendar year

I thought that as the new Chair of the Branch I might supply David with some text for either the web page or Oxotica or both. This will be an ongoing commentary of what's happening in my greenhouse throughout the year. The collection is based in three greenhouses: the Cacti are mainly in 12 x 8 (Crittal) the Succulents are in a 14 x 8 (Robinson) with a 4 x 8 hot end, and there is overflow into Gareth's old 6 x 4.

After Christmas and the New Year we are all looking at the weather to see if we need to turn up the heaters and planning what we need to do. My plants really need a good sort out especially with the Open Day in May, but frosty days are not really the best for re-potting so January will be just for keeping those plants that need a little water going. When you look around there are some plants still in growth: some Mesembs and the Dudleya's and the occasional flower (*Eriosyce nigrihorrida* with its red/pink flowers and *Othonna triplenevia* flowering for the first time with its yellow petals).

Sadly there are always plants that do not survive and I have lost a number of plants in particular *Neochilena malleolata* (below) to the dreaded red rot. I enjoyed it when it was at its best, reminiscence of past glory.



(photograph at Witney Show courtesy of Gillian)

A recent disaster was that I found one of the greenhouse heaters had failed and because of its age (over 20 years old) the spare part - a new thermo coupling - is no longer available, so I have had to improvise with a mobile butane heater until I can find a suitable a replacement.