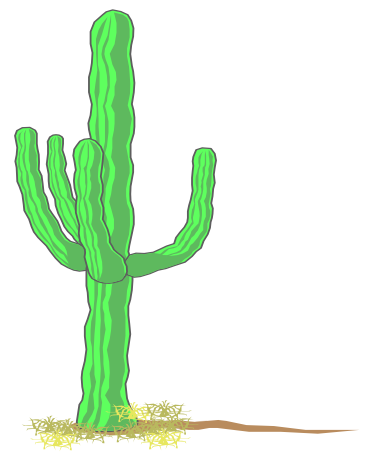


# Oxotica

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

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## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT Oxford Branch AGM 2016

Well folks another year has passed by and it's time to reflect on our year's activities. I will begin by thanking all the other members of your committee for their support throughout the year, we may be few in number but are enthusiastic about what we do on your behalf. It has been nice to see some new faces at the Branch Meetings and long may that continue. We have had a varied programme and continue to try and invite speakers who have not been before as well as a few old friends.

Apart from the normal monthly meetings we have been very busy with plant sales throughout the year at various events, the proceeds of which I hope put a smile on our treasurer's face. As well as being the custodian of our funds John continues to produce lots of plants to sell to prospective customers and for that I think he needs a special mention of thanks.

Martin has assisted greatly in keeping some of the stock of Branch plants in his "Glass Mansion" particularly the residue of John Warwick's plants for the auction in April, which again was a successful day and more recently the acquisitions from Rene Geissler.

Martin also arranged a joint "Open Day" with Kathy & Keith Flanagan in June as a Zone Event and apart from a miserable start to the day from the weather a large number of folks from our Zone came along to both collections and made it a good day "Thanks to you both"

The main focus this year has been twofold: first was the display and sales at Blenheim Flower Show in June, we were overjoyed in achieving a GOLD AWARD for the display. Martin produced some new advertising material for distribution at the event so let's hope that we may get some new interest in the area. Thanks go to those who help steward the stand over the three days and we hope to do it again next year.

The second of course was our Branch Show, which we again held at Grove in July in conjunction with the Mammillaria Society (a view from one of the Judges of which will be published in Oxotica). The show continues to bring out some of the best plants in the area on display and although it was National Show year the standard was magnificent. I am conscious that we would not have such a successful event without the support we get from other members of surrounding branches and for that I am truly grateful. The post show talk from Wolter ten Hoeve was very informative and enjoyable, I feel that the continuation of these joint ventures brings another aspect to the Hobby for us all to enjoy. The sumptuous cakes and bacon rolls provided by Juliet were irresistible.

I do have to mention the National Show in August: although not directly connected to The Branch it's the primary event of our Society held every 4 years. I should say that some of our own members featured highly in the prize winners. I hope that as many of you as could, made it to Godmanchester to enjoy it, if not for the display of plants then the lure of the sales area.

Your committee is always willing to receive suggestions for talks or other events and hopefully the arranged programme for 2017 will have something for you all to enjoy, don't forget that it's **your branch** and any suggestions are always welcome. A big thank you to everyone for your continued support of the Oxford Branch in all that we do.

It just remains for me to wish you all good growing and good health for the coming year.

Bill Darbon



*Photo: David Greenaway*

Whichford Pottery

## THE MAMMILLARIA SOCIETY SECTION OF THE 2016 OXFORD BRANCH SHOW

Tony Roberts

*Photographs by Martin Doorbar*

It was a special privilege for me to be asked to judge the mammillaria classes at the Oxford Show this year for the show was designated as the 'Bill Maddams Memorial' to recognise Bill's immense contribution to the hobby and to the world of mammillarias in particular. It was Bill who first introduced me to a wider range of species through his booklet 'Interesting Newer Mammillarias' which preceded his later work 'Meritorious Mammillarias', both published by the Mammillaria Society.

On my initial walk around the show tables prior to judging, I spotted many fine plants and some classes stacked with entries and I thought to myself, "This is going to be fun!", as indeed it proved. I'm not going to cover every class in detail, nor am I going to keep exactly to the order in the schedule.

Let us look at the related genera first which these days include the Turbinicarpus Group as well as the longer-standing Coryphantha and Thelocactus Groups. There were two classes for each of these three groups and Kathy and Keith Flanagan (K&K) came first in both the Coryphantha

classes whilst Ian Priestley did the same in both the Thelocactus classes, receiving BCSS Bronze Medals. Noteworthy plants were K&K's *Coryphantha nickelsiae* and Ian Priestley's *Thelocactus lausseri*. Alice Vanden Bon deservedly took first prize in Class 86 with fine mature specimens of *Turbinicarpus gielsdorfianus* and *T. alonsoi*. Interestingly there was also a class for one plant from each of the Coryphantha, Mammillaria and Thelocactus Groups. There were four entries in this class and Alice again took the honours. Unfortunately, one of the entries consisted of plants in 16 cm pots so was Not According to Schedule (NAS). Throughout this show, there were three more NAS entries, all again because of oversized pots – so, a salutary lesson for exhibitors, please check and measure your pot sizes for restricted classes!



On to the Mammillaria classes proper! Class 67 was for plants from the Ancistracanthae Group. In my experience, plants in this group are tricky to grow for any length of time and my plants often remain as single heads and eventually succumb. There were two stand-out clumping plants here though.

K&K gained first prize and an Award of Merit for their *M. insularis* and Stirling Baker was second with a mature clump of *M. grahamii* subsp. *oliviae*.



Class 70 was for *M. schiedeana* and related plants. There were eight good entries and there was not much to choose between the top four entries from K&K, Martin Doorbar, Alice and Ian, respectively. My difficulty in separating the plants for 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> meant a Highly Commended was also awarded. I was somewhat disappointed with Class 71 as I was hoping to see some plants of *M. humboldtii*. It turned out that all three entries were *M. lenta*, all of a similar size. This was an easy class to judge because the best entry from Chris Davies shone like a beacon whilst that placed third looked dull by comparison with little new growth!



Class 72 was for plants from subgenus *Cochemiea* and the top two plants, a *M. setispina* which had flowered well and a superb *M. halei*, both exhibited by Ian Priestley, were both given an Award of Merit. I would have been happy to take either of those plants home as a 'Judge's Choice'!



Moving on to the big boys in Class 74, I saw what ultimately became my 'Best Plant in Show', the large clump of *M. beneckeii* of K&K. This is another species which I struggle to get beyond a single head. Class 75 was pot restricted but up to 30.5 cm so still contained some fine clumping specimens. My choice was for Ian's *M. multidigitata*, a plant not often seen these days on the show bench. This was in exceptionally good condition and in full flower, gaining an Award of Merit.



Classes 79 and 80 took much longer to ge – smaller pot sizes, more plants and more entries. Class 79 called for 3 plants in up to 16 cm pots and there were 12 entries. So 36 plants to admire and scrutinise – not an easy task as the standard was very high. In the end I chose Alice's entry of *M.*

*zephyranthoides*, *M. crucigera* and *M. schumannii* as first, closely followed by K&K's *M. microthele*, *M. grahamii* and *M. crucigera* second. Not far behind was Ian's entry third and Gillian Mills' entry highly commended. Class 80 called for four smaller plants so the 7 entries gave me 28 plants to judge, all of which were very worthy of their place on the show bench. After much deliberation, Alice's plants again came first, with K&K's second and Peter Clayton's entry third.



Overall, this was an excellent exhibition of the cultivation skills of many Mammillaria growers from across the country. Whilst Kathy and Keith took top honours for most points in the show, all the prize winners and exhibitors must be congratulated and thanked for showing us their wonderful plants. In combination with the general Cacti and Other Succulents classes, it again confirmed to me that the Oxford Show is the premier event out with the BCSS National Show.



## BRANCH MEETINGS JANUARY-JUNE 2017

*4<sup>th</sup> Thursday in month, 7:30 pm for 8:00 pm*

*Please bring plants for the Table Show if you can - 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.*

**26 January** **BILL DARBON**  
"Chairman's Choice"

Hopefully this will be a presentation of a recent trip made to South Africa's Western Cape. Alternatively, a choice from the BCSS slide library.

**25 February** **MARTIN EDWARDS**  
"Southwest USA"

Martin is a Harrow branch member and has not spoken to our Branch before. He was one of the two judges who came to our 2015 show, so will be known to some of our members. Tonight he will present a trip he made to the Southwest USA.

**23 March** **IVOR CROOK**  
"Sulcorebutias"

Ivor will not be known to many of you but he is now the Zone 19 representative and a regular attendee to the Cactus Explorers weekend. He has recently done a review of the Rebutia group and visits us for the first time and hopefully will impart some useful knowledge about this group of plants.

**27 April** **HAZEL TAYLOR**  
"Cacti of Northwest Argentina"

Another new face for Oxford Branch members, although some of us will know Hazel from visits to High Wycombe. She is a regular attendee on the Judges' Course and has travelled to both the

Americas and South Africa. Tonight's presentation is a botanical trip she made in 2008.

**28 May** **ALAN BROWN / TONY MORRIS/**  
"Madagascar Botanical Gardens /  
The Caribbean"

Alan and Tony come from Leicester and we welcome them to Oxford, they are both well known by Society members as Judges and Tony is our membership secretary. Tonight's presentations will be split in two halves so should be an interesting and diverse evening.

**22 June** **DEREK TRIBBLE**  
"Western Cape"

We welcome back Derek for the second part of the talk that he gave us last year. Derek has travelled widely in South Africa and has a vast knowledge of the plants that grow there.

*Bill Darbon*

### Oxotica

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

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**SOUTH AFRICA (Western Cape) 2016**

Bill Darbon

I had long had an ambition to see “The Cape” flora, the trip had originated as an idea when speaking to Rodney Sims and was eventually transformed into a 28 day expedition. Our other travelling partner was John Watmough.

We all flew off to Cape Town where we had pre booked a hire car for the trip. Rodney had been to this part of South Africa before so had made a provisional itinerary for us. Little did we know what was in store for us, but the anticipation of the unknown is what gives you a buzz of excitement. Over the trip we saw some amazing plants, wonderful scenery and lots of different and varied birds (in fact John became our resident “twitcher”)

We had arranged to have a number of centred stays at various places throughout the trip. I should say at this point that the main (N) roads were very good but the R roads left the passengers enduring some very uncomfortable rides at times. We managed to avoid any real disasters on the 7,500 kilometre trip apart from the standard punctures (which are par for the course) and silly me managed to get us stuck in the sand, but thanks to a friendly local we managed to get extracted. A 4 x 4 is I think essential from this experience and would possibly make the rougher roads a bit more comfortable for all the travellers.

It is difficult to pick out favourites from such a wonderful experience as we visited

so many different and sometimes challenging locations, The Gibbaeums, Cheridopsis, Argyrodermas and Pleiospilos were all outstanding The Fenestrarias in the sand at McDougalls Bay and the Dactylopsis in the quartz flats of the Knersvlakte were very probably the most memorable, as was the quiver Tree Forest with stands of Aloe. But I think one of the unscheduled stops we made off the main road was possibly the most outstanding for the number of different species we found.

The visits to the two nature reserves at Hantam and Goegap showed a different facet of how the fauna and flora are being cared for and our ‘wild’ experience with the Warden from Cape Nature gave us an insight into how much they care for their environment. Finally of course the not to be missed visit to Kirstenbosch Botanical Garden.

Some lasting memories of a wonderful trip of a vast country that one has only tipped one’s toes into and gives one an appetite for more

Bill Darbon



Dactylopsis digitata



Quiver tree forest



Fenestraria at McDougalls Bay

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## OXFORD SHOW 2016

Some of Gillian Evison's photographs







*Astrophytum myriostigma*



*Copiapoa krainziana*



*Arrojadoa penicillata*



*Melocactus glaucescens*



*Ariocarpus trigonus*



*Gymnocalycium quehlianum*



*Epithelantha micromeris* ssp. *unguispina*



*Rebutia fiebrigii*



*Maihueniopsis minuta*



*Melocactus bahiensis*



*Echinopsis famatinensis*



*Agave victoriae-reginae*



*Desmidorchis speciosa*



*Dorstenia gigas*



*Euphorbia cylindrifolia*



*Euphorbia desidua*



*Tavaresia grandiflora*



*Echeveria tolimanensis*



*Euphorbia sepulta*



*Senecio scaposus*



*Namibia ponderosa*



*Agave potatorum* 'Kichiokan'