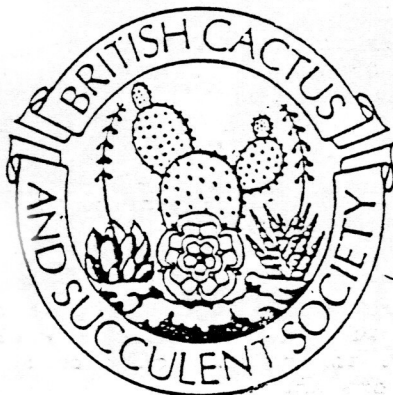


**Manchester
Branch**



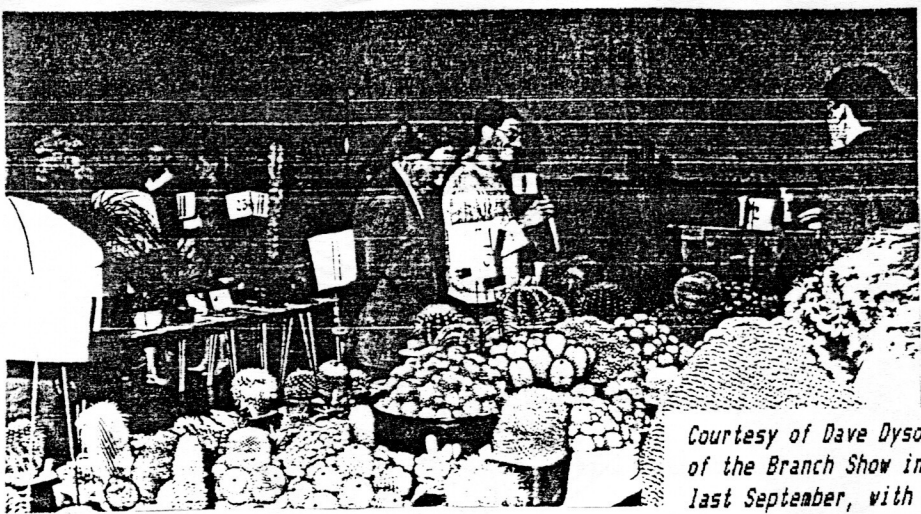
NEWSLETTER

JUNE 1988

Editor...Peter Schofield

Many apologies for the non-appearance of the newsletter in May. It was the time of the year when GCSE coursework has to be marked and submitted - having first managed to extract it from the pupils, There just was not enough time to do the necessary typing. Sorry !

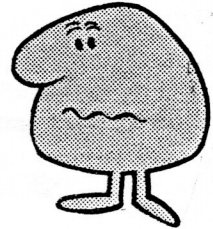
After a few days in Scotland, including visits to Inverewe and Crathes Gardens, we found time to go onto the Wirral and see Ness Gardens. Although many of the rhododendrons had bloomed early, there were enough left to make it a joy to behold. Behind the glasshouse open to the public is a private (Liverpool University) section containing a number of somewhat neglected cacti and other succulents. Although we didn't seek access at the time to record the contents, it served to remind us yet again that there must be many, many such collections up and down the country largely unknown except to a few initiates. It would be useful to compile a list for the Journal - perhaps readers would like to offer their own suggestions for inclusion



Courtesy of Dave Dyson, a view of the Branch Show in Middleton last September, with a lurking editor & secretary.

TAXONOMISTS BEWARE !

"Our own conjectures and observations often mislead us and we discover little. Of what value are lengthy controversies on deep and obscure matters ? It is supreme folly to neglect things that are useful and vital and deliberately turn to curious and harmful things...for what concern to us are *genera* and *species* ?"

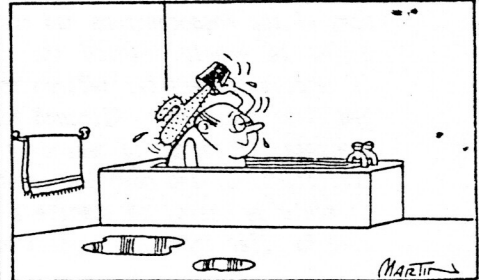
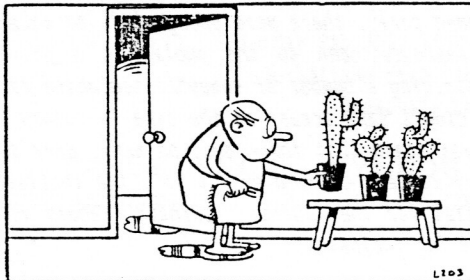


This could well be the response to a learned article on "Nomenclature in the Sulcorebutiae" or some such. In fact it comes from *The Imitation of Christ*, a much-loved Christian work by Thomas a Kempis - published around, 1415 ! Surely the BCSS Journal wasn't around then ?

This much travelled cartoon was found by Ethel Marshall, sent to Harold in Florida, brought back by him and handed to us!

RAMSBOTTOM

by George Martin



JOHN WALKER

This is the first opportunity to record our sadness at the death of John Walker on March 25th. John was a committee member and librarian at Bolton Society and, more recently, at Wigan. He also attended Manchester, Warrington and Southport branches.

His interest in the hobby began in 1980 and his collection spread into three greenhouses. His plants were very well grown and he was a prominent and successful exhibitor at local shows. John gave much to us in time, enthusiasm and kindness. Younger members benefitted from his plant gifts and encouragement. The rest of us had the pleasure of fine books in the library, financed by John through football cards at work. Such was the man


He leaves a devoted wife, Hilda, and three sons, to whom we extend our deepest sympathy. It was Hilda's especial wish that John's plants be distributed widely among his friends, and many of us were welcomed by her on April 23rd when almost all of the plants were bought at very reasonable prices.

He will be greatly missed

FROM ALFRED LAU . . .

It seems that the de-forestation of South America is also having its effect in Mexico, as witness this paragraph from Dr. Lau's latest newsletter,

All through the spring we traveled through areas that were burning. It seemed that all of Mexico was one huge forest fire. At the same time a treaty was signed by the government, to protect the ozone layer. Between our home and the Pico de Crizaba there had been lush forests. The April rains never reached us. As the clouds at that time come from the north, they pack tremendous winds and the cold air from the mountain. The forests contained these storms and slowed them down. Now there is nothing to hold them. Last week the sky blackened, then in three seconds nine windows flew off our roof, which had protected the cacti, and a downpour of hail damaged all the plants and swamped the collection. We have now a thin sheet of plastic as a cover which will not last long. A trying spring indeed. How shall we repair in a fraction of time before the rains really come? Yours sincerely,


Alfred B. Lau

It is evident from the rest of the letter that he and Anni and their two dozen rescued Indian children are struggling against a series of misfortunes. When we pay our few pence for a packet of Lau seeds, recall that he and the children may have walked 15 miles to collect them - and think about sending a donation to the Alfred Lau Mexican Boys' Home c/o 103 Hayes Wood Ave., Hayes, Bromley, Kent BR2 7BQ, I have the newsletters if anyone would like to read them.

SUCCULENT SALFORD

Having announced the resurrection of Salford Show on August 19/20, it is now time to remind members that we need their help. If you can reasonably arrange your holidays around that weekend, we need a good turnout of members to man stalls and meet people. Last year was good, lets make this even better. Last year was not good in terms of the Society show - we need more people willing to exhibit; please don't rely on the faithful few. It doesn't matter if you don't expect to win- you could be pleasantly surprised and you will help put up a good image to encourage potential new members. Finally, and inevitably, we would appreciate any tombola prizes to swell this important fund-raiser; please bring to the July or August meeting.



EXECUTIVE MUSINGS

It's a bit late, but here is a selection of snippets from the April meeting of the BCSS Executive & A.G.M.:

Membership now stands at 4065, 3% up on last year

A loss of over £4000 was incurred in 1988, suggesting a likely subscription increase next year. The Society reserves are around £11,000

The Conservation Committee is shifting its emphasis from challenging DoE import regulations to developing propagation/conservation methods. A report on meetings with the DoE read like a script for the Mad Hatter's Tea Party, but at least dialogue has been established. The inflexibility of the administrative mind is quite staggering. And we pay these people !

Details were given of the 1990 Convention in Reading; Peter Bint's strong protest at the timing of the event was met by explanations that the Open University now tie up all University accommodation during the "holiday months". There was also much discussion as to whether Branches should be allowed to book visiting speakers while they were in the country; it was felt that this might reduce support for the Convention itself, but the Committee agreed to reconsider this, especially if Branches were willing to pay toward the £400 - £500 cost of each speaker

A lunatic from Bradford proposed that attempts should be made to reclaim the Diploma badges of deceased members for re-use. This was not well received.

Fellowships were awarded to Bill & Elsie Tjaden who have staged exhibitions every two months for nine years at the RHS Victoria Hall. It was noted that not once has the greenhouse superintendent at Wisley been to see them. This led to an illuminating discussion on the state of the Cactus House at Wisley, described as "horrifying". Bill Tjaden made an impassioned plea to members to write and complain whenever they found public collections in a condition which would put the public off cactus & succulents.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

Two meetings have passed since the last issue. In April we were treated - there is no other word - to Sonia Barker-Fricker following the Rio Grande to the sea. It was a *tour de force*, as we had a geography lesson, saw wonderful scenery and plants in habitat, heard recommendations for growers and taxonomic detail, and above all were enthused by an enthusiast. There was so much to see and an amazing amount of supporting information.

The river drains the whole SW of the Rockies; the higher grasslands are now much cultivated and irrigated, with good roads, and cactus habitats are shrinking, but the deep river canyon "contains wonderful things". The river can rise 50 ft. in as many hours. The banks are well protected by vegetation with little erosion, but much of the vegetation is the invasive tamarisk. Tolerant of dissolved salts, which it crystallises on its leaves, it is crowding out native shrubs. Here was the highly recommended *Neolloydia intertexta v. intertexta*, which can be flowered in nine months if grafted onto pereskioopsis. Here also was the not-recommended *Echinocereus enneacanthus v.* with 'strawberry fruit' which taste delicious. Rock rattlesnakes discourage enthusiastic delving into crevices.

After rafting 100 miles downstream we reached the limestone region of Big Bend, with *Ariocarpus fissuratus* "one of the commonest plants in the region". pectinate echinocerei were also very common, including *E. dasyacanthus* with 20cm, yellow flowers. *Mammillaria lasiacantha* is also widespread, as are *Echinocactus texensis & horizontalis*, and 2-ft. *Hamatocactus hamatocanthus* can be seen. *Opuntia violacea v. macrocentra* has beautiful purple pads and yellow flowers with red centres. It can be flowered at 10-15" if not overwatered and kept cool in winter. *O. leptocaulis* was seen at one campsite growing against a background of reeds! This was the site which was irrigated without warning to keep it green.

60-70 miles further down, moving into a more volcanic area, we found a pink flowered Euphorbia which deposits wax on its stems. This has been used for chewing gum, candles and packing chocolate in pre-refrigeration days. The whole region so far suffers winter frosts, and all the above are dry hardy. Nearer the coast the temperature and humidity rise. *Ancistrocactus uncinatus* appears; it has curving 12cm. spines, but tends to loose its roots. *Coryphantha micromeris* flowers well (David Rushforth queried this - some clones don't!)

Around 1984 the coastal area suffered an ecological catastrophe when the frost free zone froze, killinh off cotton & citrus crops. Tree ring studies suggest this happens very 200 years or so, but this was the first time since colonisation of the region. A forested are beside the road had the strange *Opuntia leptocaulis* among the trees - this is the one with red fruits from which new growth emerges. Here the humidity was high and the temperature a nere 90F; tillandsias overhung echinocerei; mosquitos abounded. Finally to the coast, with tuberous rooted mesembs, and *H. setispinus* on the tidal salt flats, opuntias on the sand dunes and fragile ecology protected by wild life trusts.

LIVERPOOL SHOW.....with Annette Black

Bank Holiday Monday found us on our way to Liverpool Branch Show; I had written to Show secretary ray Allcock some weeks earlier and had received a reply with show schedule. The show is housed in the Old Dining Room of Croxteth Hall, not too big a room but really beautiful with large leaded windows, wood panelled walls and a huge open fireplace, the hall itself is in Croxteth Country Park with extensive grounds, a walled garden and large greenhouses. There is a playground for the children, a farm, cafe and a small train which will take you on a tour of the grounds

There were three sections in the schedule: 19 classes for Branch members with the usual mamillarias, euphorbias, gymnos etc., 12 open classes and a section of three classes for "novices". Each section had a good number of entries even though we were told that entries were down this year. The twelve trophies for members, diplomas for open classes and an award of merit for novices were all displayed on the high mantelpiece. Very noticeable by absence were the ariocarpus group; according to dr.Allcock, branch members seem to grow what they like rather than what is considered "choice"

We introduced ourselves and were given cups of tea, and were asked about the health of various Manchester branch members. After chatting to local members and buying some seed for thr princely sum of 20p, we said our goodbyes and headed for home. Although not a large show, the plants seemed to be well grown and in good condition and well worth the drive on a sunny bank holiday.

COMING EVENTS

York Branch Show...Saturday 17th June, Friends' Meeting House, Clifford St.

Euphorbiaceae Show; Sunday 30th July, North Cheshire College, Warrington
Lectures by Susan Holmes & Tom Jenkins, Sales

Mesembryanth,..etc. Show; Saturday 30th September, 1 - 4.30, Hartford
Methodist Hall, Details from Penketh 4699.

Zone 3 Rally.....Saturday October 21st, Sheffield (details later)

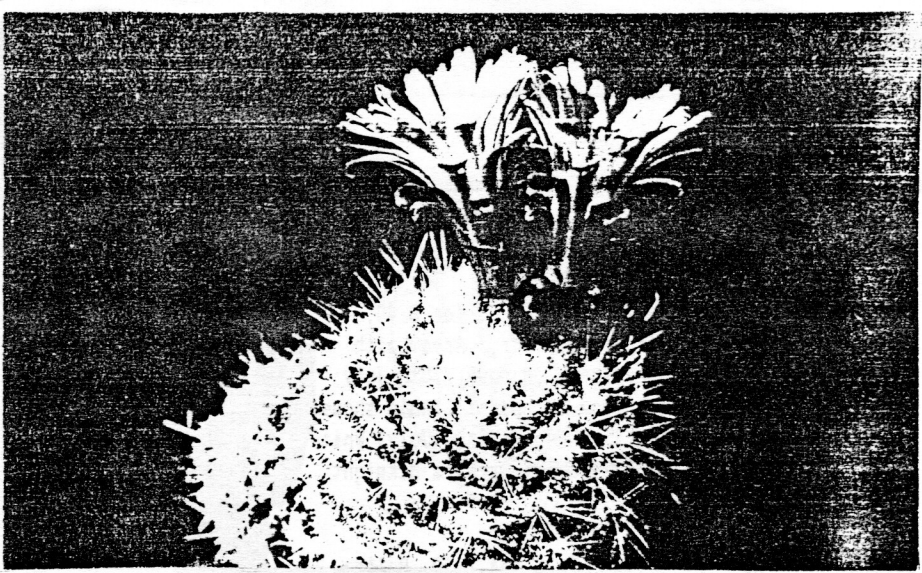
GATESHEAD 1990 !

In case you are planning your holidays for next year, the Garden Festival includes the following events;

Zone One Show.....May 25 - 28 1990

Cactus Display.....June 15 - 17

Succulent Display....Aug. 24 - 27



CHILEAN MYSTERY

Just arrived from Alfred Lau - first photos of a plant discovered by him in the Atacama desert in the mid-1960's, seed collected in 1986 and first seen in flower last year. The flower is yellowish green, with red-tipped sepals and a naked tube. A suggested genus is *Islaya*, although the fruit is unusual. The flower form resembles *Neoporteria*, but the colour would be unique. The seed testa suggests *Copiapoa*, although the seed is large.

COMING EVENT

WILMSLOW CACTUS SHOW
in the Public Library
Sunday July 9th 1989

IT'S TOMORROW !

If you're reading this on Saturday June 10,
the MAMMILLARIA SYMPOSIUM is tomorrow at the
Manley St. Community Centre, Lower Ince, Wigan.

Doors open at 11.30, lecture by Bill Maddams at
about 12.30. Please bring Lau & Reppenhagen
plants for examination. ALL WELCOME !



"Now that's what we
call dry scalp!"

*Yet another contribution from
Annette Black, for which ta!*

ROUND THE SOCIETIES



EAST CHESHIRE, ..Monday, 12th June, 7,30 for 8,00,
Wilaslow Public Library: Mr,J,Arrowsmith
on "Cactus Literature,..Monday, 10th July;
Mr,I,Laurie on "Show Stoppers"; table shows
(June) Mammillaria & Euphorbia, (July) White
spined & Crassula;contact Barbara McKnight
on 061-431 8148

BOLTON, ...Tuesday, 13th June, 7,00 for 7,30, Bolton
Town Hall; a new talk by Tom Jenkins, ..Tuesday,
11th July; "2001 A Cactus Odyssey" by Mr.I,
Robinson; contact Philip Barker on 0942 56440

WIGAN,Weds, 21st June, 7,15 for 7,45, Manley Street Community
Centre, Lower Ince; Mr,B,Keen "Showing & Judging", with
a mini-show as the context, ..Weds, July 19th;
Mr,I,Robinson's "Greenhouse Year Pt,1"; contact Jim
Harrison, 0942 218465

WARRINGTON, ..Wednesday, 14th June, 7,15 for 7,45, Meeting Lane
Leisure Centre, Penketh; "Two weeks in the USA" with
Tom Jenkins; contact Barbara Beesley on 051-424 9432

NEXT MONTH,

MEXICAN CEREI

by Derek Bowdery

Saturday 8th July 1989 7,00 for 7,30
Sutherland High School Heywood
Community Centre

TABLE SHOW; GYMNOS & CAUDICIFORMS