

**MANCHESTER BRANCH
NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 1998
A LOOK AT RECENT EVENTS**

Welcome to the New Year at Manchester Branch. If you were not at the AGM you will not be aware that we have three new committee members namely Harry Mak who will take on the duty of branch librarian. John Dawson and Vic Blomley who will co-ordinate the kitchen duties and welcome any help that you might wish to offer. Vic is also taking over the duties of Show secretary. We welcome them to the committee with open arms as we have been short of help for some considerable time. At the same time we offer thanks to Judith and Peter Schofield who have just retired from the committee due to their removal to the idyllic haven of Angelsey from whence they will visit us regularly for branch meetings.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN 1998

Our new year's programme started with a rousing tour of areas in the south west states of America presented by John Henshaw. This was a different talk to that originally planned and one that kept people enthralled throughout its whole length. It was a change to see plants later into their yearly cycle.

If you haven't yet procured your programme card then see Geoff Bailey immediately. There are a few points to make about the schedule. **APRIL** sees the meeting on the **THIRD Saturday** because Easter occurs at the second weekend. An extended meeting is planned for **JUNE** when we welcome **Ralph Peckover** from South Africa to join **Alan Craig** in producing a Summer Banquet (food and plants). This is a unique opportunity for us to welcome a first time visit to this

country by Ralph who intends to combine holiday, family research and talks.

ENFORCED CHANGES

News just in means a change to our schedule both in February and July. Sonia Barker-Fricker is unfortunately suffering from blood clots on her lungs and has been forbidden to travel by her doctor. We wish her a speedy recovery. In July we should have been welcoming Philip Downs but as we have had to move the meeting to the **THIRD Saturday** he is unavailable. Plans are in place to provide a replacement.

POSSIBLE HAPPENINGS

Information has just reached my ears that **Ted Anderson**, the well known American author and traveller in the world of cacti will be in the country around September/October so we may try to acquire his services for a special meeting.

SPEAKERS FOR NOW AND NEXT

Our speaker for February will now be David Rushforth who needs no introduction to most of you as he has visited our branch many times and I gave him a write up when he came in the latter part of 1997 so please excuse the omission this time.

In March we receive a visit for the first time from Ray Stephenson from Northumberland in the north east. Beyond the fact that he is a very knowledgeable and interesting speaker I know little. Watch this space next month for further information.

HE NEEDS YOUR VOTES

The March journal, which I am assured should be out on 7th March will contain a voting slip for the position of vice chairman. Brendan Burke will be one of three names on that slip. The

other two I am not aware of yet but our Brendan is asking that you support his claim on the job.

MONEY, MONEY, MONEY

As we prepare for this year's Show we are acutely aware that we have made no money from the last four or five shows. The days when we used to have the show at Salford in late August or early September disappeared many years ago and with it our ability to make a profit of £150 to £200 to finance the following year. What we need is a venue with an automatic viewing audience. One such idea is a Garden Centre. Alas we cannot find one locally that will accommodate us. Do you know of one that would be willing to stage our show or alternatively do you know of any other type of place/function happening this year where we could exploit such an audience. We had intended making quite a killing at the car boot sales suggested by Philip but unfortunately, due to trouble at another site Morrison's have pulled the plug and the scheme has been scrapped.

READY TO SOW, GROW OR SHOW

For those of you who grow mainly cacti the new growing season will soon be upon us. Are there any facets of growing you would like information about, tips or help with, or maybe you would like to offer your experiences for publication. How have you fared this winter with the milder than normal conditions? Is anything showing unusually early growth? Those of us who have an affinity for the other succulents will have observed growth and flowering even through the grey days.

THE INTEREST TABLE

Don't forget to support the interest table this year. There were some very interesting sights to see last year. If something is worthy of merit to you then others will also enjoy viewing it. It could be a very ordinary plant flowering for the first time, a plant that has suddenly gone cristate, a new acquisition --- it doesn't matter. I remember the first time a plant of *Copiapoa barquitensis* flowered for me. I was thrilled. I didn't realise it was one of the *Copiapoas* that flowered at a small size but so what. It was an achievement. You should "crow" about your successes as there will be plenty of people who will learn from and admire your joy.

THE RAFFLE

Please remember Philip's plea. If you have surplus cuttings that you could pass on to him that he could grow on for future raffle prizes he would be delighted to receive them. They could be unrooted cuttings, unpotted seedlings, small duplicates from your collection, or whatever. Bring them to the next meeting. If you have any plant that you wish to donate for whatever reason he will be only too pleased to accept your generosity.

YOUR INTERESTS

Only just into 1998 and yet asking about 1999! We desperately want to know what you would like in the way of meetings, how they are run, anything you would like changing and the reason for change. We need to keep new members when they join and to find other new members. How could we help in this area? The Society seems to be showing signs of recovery no matter how slow. Let's all strive to bring that recovery to Manchester.