



Manchester Branch Newsletter July 2000

EDITORIAL

Many of you have now had the opportunity to look through the May edition of the branch newsletter. You may be aware that colour photocopying is very expensive. Commercial rates are up to £1.39p per sheet plus VAT. Following the June committee meeting it was decided to ask the branch membership how they wish to fund the magazine in the future. Please take a few moments tonight to complete the questionnaire and leave it for me to collect on the way out. If you don't have the time this evening please post or fax it back to me or bring it to next month's meeting.

I am pleased to report this month my first ever flowering of an opuntia. If you have ever visited Abbey Brook Nursery you will surely have been attracted by the large opuntia on the way into the show collection. My specimen of this plant *O. bergeriana* now sports 5 pads and for a few days last month a vivid scarlet red flower on the uppermost pad.

Late June also sees the publication of the annual Treveague Farm Cacti plant list. This year it has been advertised in the journal. Containing over 400 different, mainly South American plants, most with detailed habitat data it remains well worth the cost of two stamps.

DIARY

Sun 9th July

Branch visit to Bradford Branch.

Details available tonight

Sat 5th & Sun 6th August

Manchester Branch Display

Worsley Hall Garden Centre

Details from Philip

Sun 6th August

Tephrocactus Study Group

One-day meeting - Slimbridge Church Hall

Details from Rene Geissler

Sat 19th August

BCSS National Show

Springfields Exhibition Centre

Camelgate, Spalding, Lincs

Details in the Journal

Saturday 26th August

Brian Bates Event

Fresh from his recent trip to Peru, Brian visits Manchester for our monthly meeting

Sunday 27th August

Oak Dene Cactus Nursery Open Day

Gordon Foster's Annual Open Day

Royston Nr Barnsley.

Details and Map: Geoff Bailey

Editor - Ivor Crook. Phone or fax

or e-mail

Harry Ormerod

I was very sad when I read about the death of Harry Ormerod. Whilst he had not attended a branch meeting for several years, I still remember him for his kindness and generosity and willingness to help out the younger members.

I always looked forward to him coming round with the raffle tickets each month so we could chat or so I could tell him about my latest fishing exploits. More often than not I had some plants for him to identify. He in turn told us stories about what he had been up to. One story that sticks in my mind was the time when the whole street thought UFO's were landing in Rawtenstall. It was early in the evening during the winter, and totally dark outside. Several people including Harry could see a ring of flashing amber lights, apparently low in the sky. The mystery remained unexplained until the following morning when it turned out to be numerous roadwork warning lights on the hill behind the houses placed there no doubt by some mischievous children!

He was always willing to help name small plants that I brought with me and more often than not told me how best to grow them. On more than one occasion he was generous enough to give me a small tray of plants, particularly when he found out I had just bought a greenhouse.

I only managed to visit his collection on one occasion. My father and myself spent a happy hour or so looking at his many and varied plants. He only had a relatively small greenhouse ~ it was about four times the size of mine! As you went in there was a boxed off area on the left in which he kept all his tender plants. He had lots of Mammillaria and literally hundreds of Lithops. I never imagined there could be so many. These Lithops took up most of the end of the greenhouse and filled quite a few shelves round the eaves. Needless to say I didn't come home empty-handed.

Several of the plants I brought home that day are still with me.

Harry once said to me that the best thing I could ever do with my collection was to buy and collect those plants that I liked the look of and never bother what name they had on them. I have always tried to stick to this advise, though I have relented slightly and have bought quite a few Gymno's ~ having said that, they grow well in my greenhouse, they flower well and I like them, so I suppose it is not too far away from his advise.

Imagine my surprise one evening when Harry turned up with a carrier bag full of small ring binders. He left them with me in the hope I would find them interesting. He had been having a clear out at home and had brought me his collection of "The Exotic Collection" magazine. For those of you who do not know this publication, it was a small magazine published in the 1970's by Edgar Lamb and his son Brian. I sat and sorted through them the following morning (as all the pages were jumbled up) for hours and hours. I don't think I ever got round to reading them all, but never the less they were very entertaining. Thank you Harry.

Later his bad legs prevented him from driving to the meetings. I am sure I am not the only one who will miss him.

Chris Leather.

June Quiz

For those of you who were stumped by the quiz don't be too upset. Geoff provided the pictures and he didn't recognise the plants either! It must be the poor quality of the photocopying!

Front page - a rather large flowered Mammillaria schumannii

Back page - Gymnocalum bodenbenderianum