



**MANCHESTER  
BRANCH  
NEWSLETTER**

**AUTUMN 2016**



## **A few words about the speakers for 2017.**

January 14th Dorothy Minors: Dorothy is no stranger to Manchester Branch having spoken here many times. She has a great love of everything indicated in the title of her talk— “Sunshine and Succulents in South Africa”. Along with her husband, Chris, she is no stranger to South Africa, having been a visitor interested in the flora which that country offers to intrepid explorers, a flora unmatched anywhere else in the world for its huge variety. In addition to being aware of her love of that country it is well known she likes sunshine as well and to that end she is a regular visitor to the Canary Islands. Her talk will be full of excellent photography and reminiscences.

February 11th Ian Robinson: Ian is another regular visitor to our branch having given us many talks through the years as well as being a regular exhibitor in the Mesemb Show. Quite how he manages to juggle his impressively busy timetable even he cannot explain. He manages a small farm and is always busy with lambing in Spring, he is an athletics coach who regularly travels with his ‘pupil’ to prestigious events throughout the season and he has a large collection to maintain. He is a regular attendee at branch meetings at Chester Branch, to which he is attached. His talk is to do with the letter ‘L’ but what will appear remains to be seen as he always looks to include the unexpected. You will not be disappointed with what you see and hear.

March 11th Les Percy: We welcome Les back to his ‘home branch’ once again. Les was a very regular attendee and committee member before he was lured away to Derbyshire to live and work. In recent years he has been able to travel far abroad now that he has time on his hands and their daughter has flown the nest. Here we have another speaker who enjoys the ‘other succulents’, certainly having a great love of Haworthias amongst the huge array available. This evening we will see his jaunts in Namibia displayed upon the screen along with reminiscences of the time spent there with his wife. With his knowledge of succulent plants you will be treated to an excellent spectacle.

April 8th Paul Shirley: We welcome Paul back to speak to us for a second time this evening. We do not hear a great deal about Caudiciform Plants these days; they were all the craze in the 1970’s through to early 1990’s. The range of these plants has broadened massively in recent years and we may well see plants this time we have never even heard of. Paul travelled extensively in parts of Africa before he settled in Holland, not far outside Amsterdam. He has a greenhouse in his garden, as many of us do, but that greenhouse is hidden behind plants of all descriptions at the bottom of that not overly large space. However his major greenhouses are a couple of miles away on his ‘allotment’ a huge space covering many squares metres of space which is filled by all kinds of strange and exotic plants. An evening to be relished is in store.

May 6th North west Cactus Mart: Our usual offering for the early growing season and a chance to add to the collection, replace cherished items lost in the winter or discover plants you have never met before. Our ranks will be graced by one nursery less this time as Plant Lovers have had to call it a day due to both age and ill health. A lot of our

Nurseries are run by people of roughly the same age who started up at the same time back in the 70's and 80's and are now reaching the latter years of their ability to carry on following the same punishing schedule. Of the people willing to bring plants for us to buy we have only one nursery with youth on its side, namely Williams Cactus run by Craig Barber and his dad. There are nursery owners from much further south in England but they are not willing to travel the distance and use the amount of fuel even though we offer very modest table rates. So I say to you back our efforts to bring plants to your doorstep so we can keep the event going for as long as possible..

May 13th Peter Bint: modesty forbids I say more than a few words. As you will be well aware I have been on a crusade to help people see the beauty of the mesemb family for the past few years. To that end I have produced a brand new talk, 'Magical Moments with Mesembs' wherein I hope to inspire you to try a few. I hope you will; enjoy the experience.

June 17th David Rushforth & John Miller: PLEASE NOTICE THIS IS ON THE THIRD SATURDAY OF THE MONTH. This is an opportunity to 'try it yourself' Every so often we include a practical evening and this time it is the art or skill of grafting. I am far from the most proficient of grafters of plants and my success rate is probably about 10% as it is usually ailing plants I try to save. I am looking forward to learning how to help small seedlings grow more successfully. You will not need to provide anything for the evening as our two experts will bring what is needed though if you do have something you want to graft you can certainly bring it along. More details nearer the time.

July 8th Paul Spraacklin: Paul is a brand new speaker to the branch. He has an amazing garden where he lives in Essex as was seen if you watched Gardeners' World earlier in the year. He has a wonderful garden with many succulents permanently bedded out. Due to his proximity to the sea he enjoys a much milder climate than we do in the north west but it will be very interesting to learn what we can do to try to enjoy cacti and succulents in the garden, maybe all year round. This will be a surprising and rewarding evening, one definitely not to be missed.

August 12th Brendan Burke: another of 'Manchester's sons' we again welcome Brendan back to familiar territory. This is a twelve month delay to see 'Snow, Rain and Penguins' as his works company decided in their wisdom to send him to Ireland to work just when he should have been here in Manchester. I have now been waiting for 4 years to see this talk which was poached from us by the Northern Area Weekend when it was first booked. Brendan is a regular visitor to Chile and there are not many cactus sites, if any, he has not visited in that country. Hopefully we will be successful this year in finding out how penguins enjoy rain and cacti cope with snow.

September 9th Ian Thwaites: though no longer on the speakers list Ian has agreed to visit us to talk about 'Endangered cacti of Mexico'. Ian is a wonderful, professional photographer who has travelled in both the American and African continents in search of cacti and succulents. He is a highly successful speaker who will thrill you with the sights and

plants of the Mexican environment in this talk. Though he hasn't been here for a few years the longer serving members will remember with anticipation the talks he has given.

October 14th North West Mesemb Show: Now is your chance to enjoy in reality what I spoke about in May. Mesembs are fascinating, highly variable plants ranging from quite large and bushy down to tiny plants that would sit in the palm of your hand without ever touching the outer edges of it. The smaller they are the more succulent and highly evolved they have become. We all know the names Lithops and Conophytum because they are both large families that are freely available in the trade. But how many of you grow Gibbaeum, Argyroderma, Bijlia, Cheiridopsis, Dactyloopsis, Didymaotus, Dinteranthus, Frithia, Hereroa, Jacobsenia, Mitrophyllum, Neohenricia, Oophytum, or Vlokia to name but a few of the huge number of genera that exist. You will see many of them at the show. And bear in mind it is the only competitive Mesemb show in the country and one of the very few available in the whole world. Dorothy Minors will again address us after the show with a talk entitled 'The Magic of Mesembs—at home and in habitat'.

November 11th Ivor Crook: that veritable fount of knowledge who soaks up information about the plants he loves, searches avidly for answers to questions that puzzle him and command attention from him. He is another person who has visited both major continents where our favoured plants grow. No matter what the topic he chooses to address you can rest assured it will be an absorbing evening where questions will be answered but many more probably raised. We are indebted to Ivor for meeting the annual challenge to provide us with more photography of his travels and attempt to unravel conundrums that have triggered his enthusiasm.

December 9th: yes it is AGM time again as another year rolls to its finish. There will be food to savour and more interesting pictures and thoughts to follow.

January 13th 2018 Peter Berresford: We have been fortunate in having Peter live in close proximity to Manchester. However his worth is known far and wide now and it is 'the early bird that catches the worm'. Thus I have booked him before too many others do the same. He is an Echinocereus addict who has travelled far in his search for these 'hedgehogs' and we will not be disappointed by the tales he has to tell or pictures he has to show. He is also likely to bring plants of the genus for sale. He is very up to date with new forms and species so don't miss the chance to add to your collection.



## Notable plants not often seen in collections



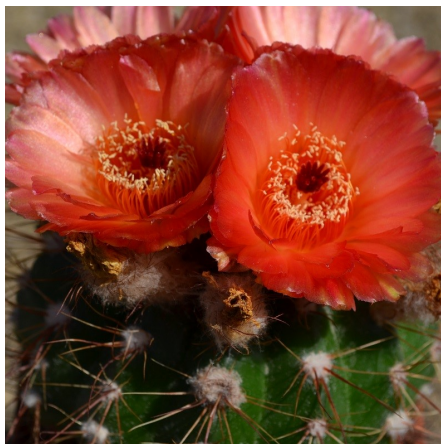
*Islaya islayensis*. Now placed in the rather large and highly variable genus *Eriosyce*. Reasons for growing it: it is a slow growing plant that will take years to reach a size of 8" in diameter. It is a plant that will withstand cold easily if kept dry in winter. It will flower at a small size.. It will enjoy being in the garden in summer providing it is in a free draining compost where it will flower more readily than being kept in the greenhouse.



*Tephrocactus bonniae*. There have been many plants moved into different genera from what was a large genus with many named plants. Reasons for growing it: this is another plant that grows in the Andes meaning it is capable of coping with cold temperatures in winter. It is undemanding in culture and enjoys a clear sunny spot in the greenhouse. Unlike many plants in the *Opuntioideae* group it is easy to handle. As the photo shows it has a pretty flower and is capable of blooming at 4" across or even less. Another plant that will not take up a large space in the collection.



*Tanquana hilmarii*. This is a delightful mesemb that was once part of the *Pleiospilos* genus but which was removed from there because it is so different from the majority of plants within that group. It is one of three species in the group. Reasons for growing it: it will never form a large plant. Mine has been in a 4.25" pot for many years now. It is NOT a thirsty plant and only gets watered sparingly just a few times a year as overwatering will cause the leaves to split. It is an autumn flowering plant giving a splash of colour when cacti are beginning to go to sleep. Each body produces a single bright yellow flower. It enjoys a good sunny position.



*Parodia (Notocactus) ottonis 'venclusiana'*. An unusual plant for a couple of reasons. It is believed to be a hybrid which has orange red flowers as opposed to the normal yellow ones normally seen for this species. It is infertile and cannot produce seed so the only way of propagation is by cuttings which root easily. Reasons for growing it. Like virtually all of the *Notocactus* wing of the *Parodia* genus it withstands winter cold if thoroughly dry. It is easy to grow using your normal soil mix and it produces a good many flowers as can be seen in the picture. It will offset slowly and eventually attain a medium size but this is not done quickly



*Haworthia emelyae*. This does not really fit into the mould of 'not often seen in collections' but it is not, perhaps seen as often as it deserves. There are many forms of this more desirable species which comes from the section that has windowed leaves where the sunlight requires for photosynthesis passes through the leaf ends which are often flattened. Reasons for growing this plant: these plants provide all the year round enjoyment. They will happily rest during the height of summer, preferring to grow in autumn, through winter into spring so they give you pleasure when cacti have gone to sleep. The flowers are not spectacular but they are regular. Like finger prints the leaf ends are all marginally different on each plant. In sunlight if you view the plant horizontally looking towards the source of light you will be able to see the translucent windows.



*Graptopetalum (Tacitus) bellum*. This is a delightful plant that is rarely seen in collections these days. Reasons for growing this plant; It bears beautiful large deep pink to red flowers, the largest in the Crassulaceae. It is a plant that enjoys a little shade and will do really well on a sunny windowsill if there is no greenhouse. It will grow in most soils that are well drained but have water retaining material present (loam). A little water can be given occasionally through winter to prevent the plant from shrivelling and keeping the roots alive.

	Manchester Branch	Programme for 2017
	Speaker/Event	Title
January 14th	Dorothy Minors	Sunshine and Succulents in South Africa
February 11th	Ian Robinson	L is for .....
March 11th	Les Percy	Texas and the Big Bend National Park
April 8th	Paul Shirley	A new selection of Caudiciform plants
May 6th	North West Cactus Mart	From 10.30am to 2.30pm
May 13th	Peter Bint	Magical moments with Mesembs
June 17th	David Rushforth & John Miller	Grafting, how and why its done. Your chance to try.
July 8th	Paul Spracklin	An introduction to Exotic Gardening
August 12th	Brendan Burke	Snow, Rain and Penguins
September 9th	Ian Thwaites	Threatened cacti of Mexico
October 14th	North West Mesemb Show Judge/Speaker:Dorothy Minors	The Magic of Mesembs - at home and in habitat
November 11th	Ivor Crook	
December 9th	AGM	
January 13th 2018	Peter Berresford	Texas 2011: Extraordinary Echinocereus pt 1