



# Berkhamsted and District Branch

[www.berkhamsted.bcss.org.uk](http://www.berkhamsted.bcss.org.uk)

Berkhamsted and District Branch

Volume 4, Issue 1

March 2012

## Contents

- The Haworthia Society Convention 2011
- My favourite plants—*Lobivia densispina*
- Forthcoming meetings

## Programme

### May 2012 to August 2012

- |        |  |
|--------|--|
| 12 May | Alasdair Glen<br><b>Meet the Mamms</b>                       |
| 9 Jun  | Rob Stevenson<br><b>The Genus Turbinicarpus</b>              |
| 16 Jun | Zone 6 Show<br>Giffard Park, Milton Keynes                   |
| 24 Jun | Zone 6 Open Day<br>Luton Branch                              |
| 14 Jul | Eddy Harris<br><b>South Africa again via Tucson (part 1)</b> |
| 11 Aug | Branch Mini Show<br>Judge Richard Bleay                      |

## National Show

18 August 2012

Wood Green Animal Centre

Godmanchester

Near Huntingdon

Many Trade Stands

Your chance to see some outstanding plants

## *British Cactus and Succulent Society*

### Editor's Comments

Welcome to the March 2012 Branch newsletter. After the mildest autumn and early winter for many years there was a period of several weeks, in February, of sub-zero temperatures and some heavy snow falls. We purchased a snow shovel last autumn, we didn't have one for the previous two winters, finally using it for the snow in February.

Sadly in December Lawrie Norton had to be taken into permanent care. This was quite a poignant event, as we had celebrated his 90th birthday with him back in June 2011. Lawrie kindly donated his collection to the Branch and the committee organised their removal and storage. Plants suitable for sale will continue to be brought to meetings or be used to provide raffle prizes.

My thanks to Gill and Julian for their articles on the 2011 Haworthia Convention and *Lobivia densispina* respectively. If anyone is willing to provide an article for inclusion in the newsletter it will be gratefully received.

This year our Branch Mini-Show will

be held in August and will be judged by Richard Bleay, who will lead a discussion about the plants after the judging. Once again the Branch will be welcoming two new speakers: Alasdair Glen, the Society Chairman and Rob Stevenson. Alasdair will be inviting us to 'Meet the Mamms' and Rob will introduce us to 'The Genus *Turbinicarpus*'.

Attendance at the AGM was the highest we have had for a number of years and this continued with the February meeting. We welcomed Linda Fuller to our meetings, starting with the AGM.

After the recent spate of mild weather it has turned cold again so the hope for an early start to getting tidy after the winter has had to be put on hold. Gill has however, been repotting *Rhodohypoxis*, ready for the new season. I hope all your plants have come through the winter and that you are looking forward to a new growing year.

David

Hon. Secretary



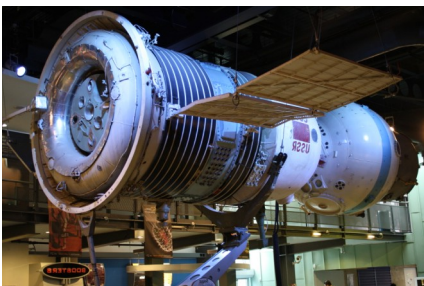
## Haworthia Society Convention 2011 by Gill Wilson

It is no secret that *Haworthias* are one of my favourite groups of plants. Hence I am a long-standing member of the Haworthia Society (HS), which is dedicated to the furtherance of knowledge and cultivation of the *Aloaceae*. This includes



*Gasterias*, *Astrolobas*, *Aloes* and *Bulbines* as well as *Haworthias*, all of which I love to grow. The HS holds a biennial international convention at the Hilton Hotel in Leicester, which is always a very entertaining event. I find this convention particularly enjoyable because **all** the talks are about the plants I'm most interested in and the venue is very comfortable with excellent food.

David and I went to Leicester on 20 October, the day before the event since we wanted to visit the National Space Centre in Leicester.



The 11th Haworthia Society Convention (celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the HS) started on the Friday afternoon with plant sales



from both nurserymen and HS members. A separate room was filled with all the goodies. Robert Wellens of Succulent Tissue Culture from the Netherlands had many tables of choice and unusual plants for sale. He really does sell plants that are not available from anyone else. There was even quite a lot left after



my purchases! Rob and Teresa struggled to keep up with the volume of sales. Stuart Riley also had plenty of plants for sale including his unusual *Aloe* hybrids. We met up with David Latham and several of our friends from Luton, Harrow and Northampton and Milton Keynes branches.

In the evening Alan Rollason welcomed everyone and we were entertained by the first international speaker, Jakub Jilemicky from the Czech Republic. He gave the first of 3 presentations (Robertson to Swellendam) about the plants seen on his travels around South Africa. All his talks were very interesting and

his photography was outstanding.

On Saturday morning after an amazing choice at breakfast, there was just enough time before the talks started, to stage the plants for the mini show. Rob Wellens



spoke about the micro propagation of rare *Haworthias*, Diederick van Den Abbeele (from Belgium) on the area between Cape Town and Port Elizabeth and Stuart Riley on *Gasteria* hybrids. At lunchtime the mini show was judged by David Offord. The standard was very high as would be expected of plants grown by members of a specialist society. Most of the classes as usual were won by Stirling Baker but we were very pleased when



David Latham's magnificent plant relegated Stirling to second place in the *Haworthia arachnoidea* class.

After lunch, we were treated to Jakub's second talk (Heidelberg-Riversdale area), followed by Rob Wellens on variegation induction

and Stuart Riley on new miniature *Aloe* hybrids. After an enjoyable dinner in the restaurant everyone settled down to the plant auction, with Stirling as a very formidable auctioneer. There were some beautiful plants and pictures on offer but the prices went far too high for



me! This was just as well as I had bought far more plants from Rob Wellens than I had intended!

After another fantastic breakfast on Sunday morning, Diederik entertained us with his tales of searching for interesting *Haworthias* in habitat, Rob Wellens spoke about the micro propagation of endangered *Aloes* and Jakub gave his final talk, this time about the Calitzdorp-Oudtshoorn area. Time had flown past and unfortunately the Convention was over for another two years.



After lunch everyone was invited to see Joyce Coccozza's collection on the outskirts of Leicester. I'm sure that most people who attended this convention will be awaiting the next one in 2013 with eager anticipation.

## My favourite plants #2 - *Lobivia densispina*

By Julian Cooke

For this, my second plant, I have moved to South America and picked a plant that may be unfamiliar to some.



*Lobivia densispina*, as its name suggests is a very densely spined plant. It grows extremely slowly so will take many years to fill a 4 inch pot. Initially solitary, it will slowly offset in cultivation to pro-

duce a small clump. Each areole produces numerous short brownish to off-white spines that cloth the plant to the point where the epidermis is completely obscured.

As with most *Lobivia* species, it flowers in the spring time, its hairy buds emerging in early spring. The flowers open in May or June and are among the most spectacular in the cactus kingdom. They can be anything from shades of red, through orange to pale yellow but all have a similar structure with an outer ring of stamens surrounding a second inner ring. Sadly they last but a day or two before fading but are well worth the wait.

The plant is easy to grow and will withstand cold providing it is bone

dry. My plant has stood several degrees of frost with no ill effects at all. Like a lot of *Lobivia* a lot of the plant is actually below the surface and *L. densispina* has a very tuberous root so while it needs to be watered when dry,



allow it to dry between waterings as water logged compost will cause the rot to set in.

Red spider have a particular liking for *Lobivias* in general in my experience and *Lobivia densispina* is one of their favourites so be warned!

## May 2012 Meeting

The May Branch meeting speaker will be Alasdair Glen, who will be letting us 'Meet the Mamms'. He will also be talking on the preceding Friday night at Harrow Branch about 'Neopteris and all that'. Alasdair became Chairman of the BCSS at the 2011 Society Annual General Meeting, taking on the mantle from John Arnold. He was previously Society Vice-chairman, with responsibility for branches and zones.

## June 2012 Meeting

June will bring another new speaker to the Branch in the shape of Rob Stevenson who will be introducing us to 'The genus Turbinicarpus'. Rob will also be talking on the preceding Friday night at Harrow Branch about 'The Country Diary of a Cactus Anorak'.

## July 2012 Meeting

An old friend will be back with us in July when Eddy Harris will take us to 'South Africa again via Tucson. This is the first part of three related talks. Eddy should need no introduction to members having spoken to the Branch on several occasions. He is also the National Society Secretary.

## August 2012 Meeting

The August meeting sees a welcome return for the Branch Mini-Show to be held at the Kings Langley meeting hall, This year the judge will be Richard Bleay (Harrow Branch), who has kindly agreed to talk about the plants after the judging. This is a great opportunity for members to relax and have a chat. A copy of the Show Schedule will be distributed to members and a copy can also be found on our web site ([www.berkhamsted.bcss.org.uk](http://www.berkhamsted.bcss.org.uk))

## More dates for your diary

14 April 2012	National Society AGM, Leicester
02 June 2012	Luton Branch Annual Show, St Margaret's Hall
16 June 2012	Zone 6 Show, Giffard Park, Milton Keynes
24 June 2012	Zone 6 Open Day, Luton Branch
21 July 2012	Harrow Branch Annual Show, Hatch End
18 August 2012	National Show, Godmanchester, nr Huntingdon

**Stop Press... Stop Press... Stop Press...**

**Please make a note in your diaries for Saturday 20 April 2013, when we will be hosting the 2013 Zone 6 Convention.**

**There will be two speakers, giving three talks and trade stands. Watch this space for more information.**

**Stop Press... Stop Press... Stop Press...**

---