



Midahl 2010

The Magazine of the Midlands Dahlia Society



The 2009 Midlands
Championship entry
from **Dave Gillam**

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Publisher: Robert Cheetham

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From the Editor

A year to remember for the Midlands Dahlia Society, Champions at the National, runners up at Harrogate and a fantastic Annual show at Kenilworth.

Big changes seen with the NDS Executive and the honour of hosting the National AGM at Kenilworth School in March.

Novices moving swiftly into the ranks of the great and good. A very eventful year indeed. No doubt the single bloom show and the small show have made this improvement.

I wonder what I have to do to win trophies at the MDS Show these days. Grow them better I can hear you all saying. Well I have to rise to the challenge because I could not miss being there. We exhibitors are looked after like Kings when we go there.

I have to give a big thank you to Rob Cheetham, his work to make the MDS website memorable is really paying off, You can find it easily now by going to google and putting in 'MDS' and there it is on the first page!. Well done Rob.

I would like to congratulate an old stager for putting up two great exhibits at the two national shows. Les Jones is back with a vengeance growing Large Decoratives and they were quality exhibits. A nicer man you could not meet and I think he plays to a good standard at golf too! Didn't he raise a couple of seedlings in the last century? I am sure I heard that somewhere.

Speaking of seedlings and the people that breed them, it was good to see so many midlanders gaining awards for their new cultivars around the shows. One thing that pleased me greatly was that every entry in the Miniature cactus classes at the two National shows came from the Tom McClelland 'Weston 'Stable. Marie Jane looks to be keeping it in the family with her new seedlings also.

Changes to the National schedule in the Society classes now mean that we don't have to find five mediums for the class entry. They have been changed to threes but we will need very good quality to compete. One good thing is that the donor of the vase can set up in threes and they won't have to be messed about by adding two more blooms to get to the five.

Roger Turrell

Presidents Page **Les Jones**

It may well be just a memory now, but as I put pen to paper we have yet to be frosted in most of the Midland area.

Yes, A truly great year for the Midland Dahlia Society. We have won the Herbert Brown Trophy (I believe for the fifteenth time) and we were runners up in the Arthur Luck Trophy at the Northern National, held at Harrogate.

A big "thank you" must go once again to June & Don Davis, who as usual, supplied a lot of their classical bloom for the exhibit. We are also indebted to Tim Williams, the societies Vice Chairman, who travelled to Adderbury to collect June's blooms and then stopped up all night to stage them.

It was pleasing to see quite a few individual members in the prizes at the National, headed by the illustrious Marie-Jane Roberts, who won The Weston Trophy for Miniature Cactus, a first for her in this particular class, but I'm sure not her last. Marie – Jane also won the Crowley Cup for the best small or miniature cactus seedling.

Our own shows were very well supported- the main one being held at the school in Kenilworth. A relatively new face came to the fore in the name of Paul Fulford who left some well known names in his wake, long may it continue.

The year began with the one bloom show, where again a new face appeared like phoenix out of the ashes, in the form of Rob Cheetham. He had the cheek to take home both the Best and Runner up award in the show. Well done on your achievement Rob. Rob as some of you will now is known as the King of the M.D.S Website.

Our Last show, for the members, held on a Sunday and also well supported has been reported elsewhere in our magazine.

It was really nice to see Tom & Mary Bebbington, at one of our open meetings and they also supported our Annual Dinner held at the Kenilworth Golf Club.

The Year has unfortunately ended with a number of the Executive members on the sick list- including our worthy Midahl Editor, may they all return to full fitness in the not too distant future.

My kind regards to you all and I hope you have a successful growing and showing season in 2010.

R.L.Jones

From Your Chairman.....Ron Guest.

As a society we have had a good year, it started with our tuber sale, and then on to the plant sale, and on to the shows. Our single bloom show was a success with more people bringing flowers than we had vases for, amazing.

Our main show once again, was a huge success although we had our fingers burnt by a young wiper snapper by the name of David Gillam. What a day he had winning the Midlands Championship along with three other Trophy classes and finishing second in another, along with the Silver medal for best exhibit in show and another five special awards. I felt a bit like the bridesmaid finishing second to him twice and five further runners up spots. I must also mention the wonderful vases that won Paul Harvey the Dennis Watson Challenge Cup, another new exhibitor to our show. It is always pleasing to see new exhibitors. From here we held our annual pilgrimage to the National Show at Shepton Mallet. I am sure its been well documented that we won The Herbert Brown, for the umpteenth time, but I would like to Congratulate those who were also in the prizes. Ladies first, Marie –Jane Roberts winning a couple of trophies, the Weston Trophy and the G.F Crowley challenge cup for the best seedling of small or miniature cactus. Our editor Roger Turrell who won the Hamari Trophy for medium cultivars, Terry Bratcher for winning the Vivienne Dale Memorial Challenge Cup for small cactus and semi cactus, John Digweed finishing second in the Perpetual Challenge Cup for Miniature decs, and now to the old timer, Les Jones who staged a very good exhibit in the Stuart Ogg for six large Decoratives, only to come in second. I know he felt a bit cheated, as he did not use the large or giant dec that has changed it name??? Kenora Valentine, or should it be Kenora Wildfire. He also was Runner up in the Drayson Trophy for the best Giant or Large Decorative in the show with his Large Decorative Grace Kendall. Well done to all.

From here we all moved north to Harrogate and the northern National, not quite the success we had hoped for, we were beaten into second place by the Vagabonds in the Arthur Luck Trophy. However you can never keep a good man down as our President carried all before him in the Six Large Decs to win, despite having to tear his exhibit apart at the last moment. This was because he had to come to the rescue of the “Arthur Luck Team” because the giants they had staged were falling apart before their eyes. Les also managed to claim second and third prizes in the large decoratives with single and three bloom classes. Arthur Hayes (Gabby) managed a third place in the Oscroft Challenge Trophy, for three vases of Miniature Balls two of the three vases were seedlings, quite an achievement.

Marie – Jane Roberts came in third in the J Parkinson Trophy for small, miniature or poms showing a new seedling named after Tom McIlleland. She also came third in the cut flower seedling Class with one of Toms’ seedlings Weston Melody. Marie -Jane also won the basket class along with some second and thirds in the single vases. Roger Turrell had success in the Northern Committee Trophy for Medium seedlings, with his new medium decorative Mary Crichton. Brian Caswell our secretary came a good second in the Six Giant Decs. It was also pleasing to see Frank Bolsover a regular visitor to our Show winning some special awards. I should also like to congratulate Cliff Wragg who took his judging exam at Harrogate and was successful, it’s nice to have another Judge in the Midlands.

So I suppose it was a success after all for the Midlander’s who travelled.

We were all by now a bit show weary by the time we get to the Members show held in The Sports and Social Club

Kenilworth, but as you will see in another article it was another success, with new novices coming to the fore which can only be good for the long term success of The Midlands Society. To finish I would like to say a big thanks to our dinner committee for the excellent evening they organised for our annual dinner and presentation, again I think there is a report elsewhere in the Midahl.

New Year Greetings from Ted Collins

What a year 2009 turned out to be! Extraordinary! What changes occurred in the Dahlia World! In the end the Dahlia went sailing on, as did the National Dahlia Society.

A lot of dahlia folk in 2009 learnt a lot about other dahlia folk as well as about themselves, mostly for the better.

The year really began with the NDS Special GM. What we learnt there was that Members wanted amongst other things an AGM venue readily accessible to the majority of members. One that was welcoming and friendly.

So where better than Kenilworth! The NDS is lucky to have found what many members believe and hope is an AGM venue safe for the foreseeable future.

The AGM showed that the Constitution needed a complete overhaul which has been done, thanks to a group of 5 who laboured many hours.

The executive now has new members and there is currently a good mix of both new and former members. There is still room for other volunteers.

There was concern that the Annual NDS Show Shepton Mallet might not continue. A new 5 year contract with the site owners is promised for 2010.

What no one knew earlier in the year was that the RHS was set for upheaval in 2009.

In the previous 5 years the RHS profits were around £4.5M each year but their forecast for 2009 was a miserly £1.5M. So with their financial commitments for 2010 and beyond they started shedding jobs like leaves in the autumn gales! Mostly at Wisley and mostly the gardening staff.

So after 90 years the trials at Wisley are no more. That is, not trials as the NDS members understand they should be, entitled "Diosplays".

With the gardeners that are left the dahlias grown at Wisley in 2009 were not disbudded or de-branched. They were really good plants but with giants grown 12 up. The Executive hope that sense will prevail some time in the future for the Dahlia trials, and other specialist cultivars, as all the other specialist trials normally held at Wisley have been and will be for the foreseeable future treated similarly as displays.

What of the Dahlias and local shows. The good news is that all are doing splendid thank you very much, because quality was up and quantity holding its own.

My first show attendance in any capacity was at the Midlands Show.

I think this must have been one of your best for many years.

David Gillam however swooped in from Essex to mop up most of the trophies as he did this year at most shows, but at a price, in costs of time and Money. David won 40 Dahlia trophies in 2009.

Next day it was off to the Welsh National, in the rain of course, a good show held for the first time in Rhonda Valley, with Midlands judges and a successful day as the local Council, suitably impressed nearly doubled their generous sponsorship.

Next day, at the Thames Valley Dahlia Show in the midst of Littlewick Green. A Bank Holiday general Show, both well supported once again in quality and quantity by Thames Valley Dahlia Growers. Also a financial success.

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It really is a mad Dahlia world as three days later it was the National Show at Shepton Mallet. This year with trepidations, as we had to share the Showering Pavilion with the Area Floral Art Show. Well done Ken our Show manager for making it work.

Too well really, as it now looks a permanent feature.

Congratulations Midlanders, for once again in 2009 winning the Herbert Brown Trophy. Well it would not be the same at the National if you did not win it.

By my reckoning you are well ahead in wins than any other Society but watches out there are one or two vagabonds out to steal your Crown.

Well done also to President Leslie Jones, winner of the Large Decorative trophy.

Cannot hang about, next day High Wycombe Show, home of some very good exhibitors, not to mention excellent dahlia exhibits.

Are Bill Hawkins' Bryn Terfels real?

Then back on Sunday to Shepton Mallet where several diehard executive members are still raising money with the tombola and taking new members at the Bureaux.

Blessed relief as next there is more than a week before Harrogate. The Harrogate Exhibits were probably the best for years. A really excellent show with most winners from the North.

Just time to cheer Chelsea on their way at Stamford Bridge to what some of us hope will be a successful season. I do not mind your United coming second Frankie, actually looking forward to it!

Nearing the end of the season, I cannot get to Malvern, but June Nash and her team once again perform well. The NDS stand getting a Silver Gilt Medal and £250 prize money. Well that was 2009 and the end to the noughties.

Not really as Jean and I sample the real hospitality of the Midlands Society at its Annual Dinner at the Kenilworth Golf Club. What a really smashing event. Good food, good company. What more could you want.

Nearly did not make it though. Only arriving through the good offices of Angela and Ronnie and getting back through Audrey and Leslie.

Our white Astra estate car never let us down over 15 years of going hither and thither until the day of the dinner.

Our first job of the day after breakfast is to take our two dogs up to the common for their walk. To ensure that day no later trouble I put my mobile on charge just before leaving, and had a mini service done on the car three days before. We got to the common all right but returning to the car it was dead as last weeks cold potatoes.

Good lot the dog walkers. One insisted on going home and coming back to take Jean and the two dogs home. Another lent me his mobile with which to contact my daughter and then the AA. They arrived 5 minutes before my Daughter who brought coffee and biscuits.

The AA man made temporary repairs but forbade using the car until proper repairs were made. Hence Ronnie and Lesley becoming chauffeurs.

Cannot thank them enough

There were other hiccups' in the NDS world during 2009.

For reasons too long to explain, the normal publication date for the Classified Directory was not met. There was a great debate then as to whether it should be published in its then content or be left to 2011. A brave decision was taken to make minor amendments and publish and be damned and to sort it all out for 2011.

A long look at the show schedules has taken place, thanks to Ron and Brenda Thomas.

Regrettably or otherwise, to reduce the extraordinary number of classes in 2009 and down size the prize money, taking into account the current financial situation

The way ahead in 2010 and beyond looks interesting not just for Dahlias.

Well that really is it except to wish you all a healthy, happy and successful 2010.

NDS President

Have Dahlias, Will Travel. [Frank Newbery](#)

60 years of exhibiting.

Many of today's exhibitors do not realise how easy it has become to load their blooms into a vehicle and travel to shows all over the country. Years ago many exhibitors never had their own transport so had to rely on various means such as buses and trains to travel to shows.

I recall that one local exhibitor who probably did not need to count the cost, used to hire a taxi to transport his blooms to the then prestigious Bristol Downs show and on one occasion had helped out a fellow exhibitor by insisting he used the taxi to collect some blooms he had left behind, only to be placed in second place by these very blooms. This was true sportsmanship which is lacking in many instances of today's hurly-burly exhibition situation.

I was fortunate after the war to own a pre-war Morris series E car from which I used to remove the back seat to load blooms to exhibit at local shows. That "cheeky chappie," Bruce Watson will no doubt say that I probably started with a horse and cart, but ignore this as the usual Bruce windup.

Gorge Robbins was one of our early pompon exhibitors and the first to exhibit at the National at the R.H.S.Halls, Westminster, as George used to work on the railways. He and his son Percy, were able to arrange to load their blooms into a guards van at Keynsham station and travel overnight with the blooms on a stopping train to Paddington, then get a taxi to the R.H.S halls.

My old friend Cyril Gardiner started in a similar way to exhibit at the National show, most of the exhibitors at that time would pick and allow the blooms to soak in water for a few hours before packing them dry into florist boxes, then rolls of tissue paper were placed under the rows of blooms to avoid damage to separate and anchor the blooms in place.

When exhibitors arrived at the show venue the blooms would be plunged into water to revive them, any blooms that were going soft on the back were revived by plunging them into hot water to remove any air lock in the stem, then put back into cold water to see if this would revive the blooms.

I remember my early visits to the National seeing numerous exhibitors with primus stoves boiling water mainly for reviving soft blooms but also for the odd cup of tea to revive the exhibitors.

As methods of transport progressed with the advent of estate cars we began to see more exhibitors transport blooms in water. In the meantime I had constructed a box with hurdles to mount the individual blooms on with a small drinking cup of water for each bloom; the box was then strapped to the roof of the car. This was a very effective way of transporting blooms and which you still see employed at shows today. The problem as far as I was concerned was that it doubled my vehicle petrol consumption and considerably reduced my top speed which meant it put much more travel time on any long journey.

Another aspect of exhibiting at shows some distance from home was the advent of motorways. For many years before the M4 (Bristol-London) motorway was constructed, we had to travel via Marlborough, Reading with many restricted speed sections through towns to negotiate, so it took some 4 hours to complete the 120 miles to London. Today 2 hours would be an average time to complete this journey. Having to travel the country on business I was always aware of travel times being reduced as more and more motorways were constructed.

This allowed us to consider travelling to the northern National at Harrogate in the early 1970s. This was possible as the cross pennine M62 was constructed, so via the M5/M6 we were able to travel from Bristol to Leeds by motorway, so a 250 mile journey in a reasonable travel time was then possible.

Today we travel to the Scottish National at Sterling, which is a 400 mile journey taking us some 7 hours to complete but again it is virtually all possible on motorways. The only problem with such long distance exhibiting is that you have to realise that with so much travel time, it means you have less staging time so any traffic delay can leave you struggling to complete your entries. That is when planning and keeping to strict projected times is of utmost importance.

Mentioning long distance exhibiting, many of us have travelled to the international shows that have been held in Toronto, Canada over the years. By constructing travel boxes, we have been able to successfully travel blooms to arrive in perfect condition. We only ever had one box damaged and that was by a stupid driver of the transport company who pushed the box off the tailboard of his van when he arrived at the show venue in Toronto from the airport. Sadly it had to be the box with all our pompon blooms so we were unable to enter the pompon championship which would have been our first priority.

In Australia, Grenville Thomas who lives in Perth, Western Australia regularly travels to Sydney and Melbourne etc which means some 3,000 miles by air. I always thought it is a pity that our season did not correspond with the Australian season, as it would be a pleasure to put those uppity Aussies in their place in a Dahlia "Ashes" series, especially when you have Australian relatives who never fail to inform me how good their teams are and how poor we are in comparison.

The special garden festival shows held at various venues over several years encouraged many exhibitors to travel further than they possibly had before and so provided a wide mix of exhibitors from all parts of the country.

How do we see the future? I cannot see much more change in the travel arrangements but a personal helicopter would certainly cut down the travel times. I often thought that shows could be arranged so that exhibitors could stage during the day with judging in the evening so the show then opens early the next day. This is very unlikely to happen. When did committees ever consider the exhibitor, vital to any show but never given a second thought?

An interesting period to have observed this development in travel and methods of transporting blooms and to have played a small part in this important development to bring Dahlia exhibiting to a wider public.

POT TUBERS by Dave Reid

Dahlia growers are guilty at times of failing to preserve properly their stock of varieties in the way of pot tuber form.

Pot tubers have several good advantages over field tubers when over wintering. Every opportunity should be taken to successfully carry out this procedure.

There appears to be two aspects by growers how they go about this important task.

1. A proper planned procedure in producing them during the propagating season.
2. Haphazardly using left over plants after planting out.

Pot tubers also have the added advantage of resting the stock, especially varieties that are prone to breaking down with virus infection. Some nurserymen have been known to rest them for more than one year. They also take up less space in storage and when boxed up and are easy to handle. They also on many occasions produce quantities of easily rooted cutting material.

When possible the best procedure when taking the cuttings for the production of pot tubers, is to use the Irishman's cutting method. This is done by pulling the cutting material from the field tuber so that you have a piece of the tuber as well. This will ensure that as the pot tuber develops, it will produce a good crown area where the growth will commence during the following propagating season.

After rooting, the cuttings should be potted on preferably in John Base No.3 potting compost, if possible. This compost fertiliser has a longer life and will assist better in preventing drying out during the growing season, whereas soilless dries out more quickly and the fertilizer content has a short life,

Polythene bag type pots are ideal for potting on as it gives a certain amount of flexibility when the tubers develop.

The pots can be placed in a cold frame or immersed up to the brim in a spare piece of ground. During the growing season, feed regularly with a high potash liquid fertiliser and also apply an insecticide spray.

When the first bloom appears, check it with the plant label to ensure correct identification. Then secure the label to the stem as it can easily become removed in storage. Then do not allow any more blooms to develop so the plant energy is directed into the production of the tuber.

Around mid October or at the first hard frost forecast, remove the pots to a greenhouse or shed. After removing the top growth, store horizontally under the staging or a convenient spot. Do not remove the compost from the pots as this will assist in preventing them from any possible frost damage.

Virus Diseases of the Dahlia

Les Jones

By far the greatest threat to the Dahlia grower is the prevalence of Virus Diseases. For most gardeners, who grow but a few dahlia plants, their existence is probably not even known. This is fortunate, to say the least, because only by selected destruction of affected plants can this threat be eradicated. To make matters worse, even the keenest grower sometimes has difficulty deciding if a plant has a virus disease or not.

Plants that are badly affected by Red Spider Mite, or Thrips can give the appearance of virus through losing Chlorophyll. Quite often plants are left in the hope that they will 'grow out of it!' Of course they do not, and the possibility of passing on the infection is left for a whole season, thereby endangering the whole planting, and that of the neighbour's as well. The only course open, if virus is suspected, is for the plant to be pulled out and burnt.

There are a number of types of Virus Disease; the most common is Dahlia Mosaic. The most common symptom of Dahlia Mosaic is a stunting of the growth. The distance between the joints is very short, the whole plant looks cramped and stands a few inches high. Another name for the cramping is called 'Stunt'. For Dahlia Mosaic or Stunt the only remedy is incineration.

The trouble is that the virus does not follow a set pattern. Some plants can even produce desirable blooms! These can be called 'Symptomless Carriers', and are probably more dangerous than the known effects, since they are allowed to 'live' with the healthy plants as a latent, non obvious, danger.

Other means of identification of infected plants are yellow markings on the leaf veins, yellow banding and lighter green circles on the leaf. Leaves may also show a waved or distorted edge, the leaf structures may be stunted on one side only.

Some believe that Virus infected plants over wintered, will grow healthy the following year. I sincerely wish to dispel this suggestion for all time. A plant showing obvious signs of Virus Infection will carry that infection into the next season, and far from getting rid of it, will be a menace to all other stock during spring propagation.

State of the Art by Dave Reid

As I edited the Countrywide Round Up for the N.D.S Winter Bulletin 2010 it was interesting to note the winning varieties across the country at Affiliated Societies shows.

In the giant decoratives, **Sir Alf Ramsey** and **Bryn Terfel** remain firm favourites and dominate the shows outside the national ones. But there are several new ones in the pipeline which will be of interest to the section. The N.D.S. Leeds Trial winner, **June Shaw** will be a welcome addition when released in 2011. It is a well formed bronze with lowish growth habit it should be in demand. I also liked Gordon Armstrong's latest one, named Silverhill. This is a big bloom and will come up to the size of Sir Alf Ramsey and Bryn Terfel. Gordon is a perfectionist when it comes to producing new giants, and many of his raisings do not get released. I hope he can be persuaded to release this one.

During my recent visit to the U.S.A. national show at Snohomish, near Seattle, I was impressed by **J.H. Tangerine** in a local garden. It reminded me a lot of **Amaran Relish** raised by Roger Stevens, one that the Classification committee had problems deciding whether it was of decorative or semi cactus form due to the tapered petals that finished up with a broad base. I also believe it is time for some of the present giant decoratives to be reclassified, such as **Gemma Darling**, **Almands Climax** and dare I say it **Kenora Wildfire**. They would be more appropriate in the large decorative class, which could benefit from an injection of additional ones.

Kenora Challenger maintains its consistency as the best large semicactus, though some stocks give rise to failing vitality.

Narrow's Tricia is becoming a winner in this section and we are going to see a lot more of this variety. I was impressed by **Craigowan** when seen at Harrogate shown as a large semi cactus. It was released as a medium but I believe it is naturally a large and should do well as such.

Ruskin Splendour is becoming established as a large semi cactus, needs an early stop as it tends to bloom late in the season. A robust grower that needs a bit of space.

There was a spate of medium semi cactus varieties from the Ruskin stable, **Harmony**, **Limelight** and **Sensation**. **Harmony** needs severe restriction to make the top size to compete. **Limelight** did well in the Leeds trials and was amongst the awards. But the one I consider the best is **Sensation**. Not to be forgotten after a disastrous start is **Ruskin Sunshine**, when it was entered in the Classified Directory as a medium decorative. So, if you have difficulty with the damping off and spotting of the Eastwood varieties there is plenty to choose from. And as a bonus you could try **Peach Delight** now becoming established after a slow start when it won the Overseas seedling class a few years ago. It needs to be restricted to around four to five up. It is early to bloom.

Kiwi Gloria and **Trelyn Kiwi** remain firm favourites in the small cactus classes, though it is noted that the parent is gradually rivaling Trelyn with some of the top exhibitors. But **Ruskin Myra** is still preferred by many exhibitors who have not come to terms with the growing needs of the Kiwis. **Ruskin Lisa** and **Ryecroft Zoe** are gradually being preferred but they don't have the petal count to be competitive at national level. In the small semi cactus classes, **Cherwell Goldcrest** and **Oakwood Goldcrest** are becoming well established with their very good form, but many growers have difficulty in getting them started into life in the propagating period.

Weston Pirate retains its spot as the top miniature cactus, despite the many other 'Westons' available. Tom McLelland's final raising **Weston Cream** has yet to make its debut, and it will be rated as good as any of the best he produced.

Good to see the miniature cactus/semicactus raisings is to continue in the Midlands as Marie Jane Roberts of Barford produced her first success at Shepton Mallet with a well formed white miniature cactus, aptly **Avon Snowflake**'.

Small decorative exhibitors continue to rely on **Ruskin Diane** and its sports, especially **Windholme Diane** as the banker varieties. **Gateshead and Amber Festival** remain popular with certain growers, but again some exhibitors find them difficult to produce for the showbench. **Joan Walker**, unfortunately did not do well in its first year of release which was during the very hot summer when the centres were a problem. It has now settled down and is one to be considered. Amongst the new introductions I found **Ryecroft Brenda T** lacked refinement and the jury is still out on two recent red varieties **Marion Storer and Ruby**. The possibility of fading is always present when using this colour. Phil Watson's pink **Leopold Chloe** looks a good prospect and I like his latest small decorative **Leopold Sophie**, a white one with very robust form which reminded me of the white **Jimmy Meredith**, raised by Terry Clarke in the early 1970' which got me my first red card for dahlias. To highlight the falling off of the popularity of this class no entries were staged in their championship at Harrogate in 2009.

We have waited patiently over many years for a really good medium decorative. **Charlie Two and Mascot Maya** and their sports remain the bankers along with the tallish grower **Andrea Clark**, which needs looking after to prevent it easily marking. John Clark, the raiser has produced another yellow one, **Charlie Clark** which won its seedling class at Harrogate and looks the part. The one that I consider to be the best so far is **Dikara Moon**, in pale yellow on release from Halls of Heddon in 2010. This has been well tried before release and will make an excellent addition. It has very good form along with good depth. For the future Ken Shaw from the Durham area and raiser of the 2009 Leeds trials winner **June Shaw** has also a very good, medium decorative, which could be a large when also seen at Leeds, but we will have to be patient for this one to be released.

Miniature decoratives maintain their popularity with highly contested classes at national and local shows. New varieties are queuing up for release and they are in demand. I liked John Digweed's **Marston Suzanne**, a very well formed red when seen on the showbench. Of all the ones that Roy Rogers produced, **Dikara Superb**, a pink one and aptly named will in demand. Available from Ridgeview Nursery for 2010 at the very modest price of £2, 50 a plant. The new release **Rossendale Lewis** didn't perform well with me at the beginning of the show season, but improved later on. If you want to try something different the white **Brian's Dream** performs well and has very good form and depth of bloom. **Blyton Royal Velvet** did very well in the Leeds trial and was awarded a gold certificate. The maroon /purple blooms are plentiful on a bushy type plant have good form and we will be seeing a lot of this on the show bench. If you have grown **L.A.T.E.** and liked it, you want to try the sport **L.A.T.E. Nite** which has slightly darker blooms than the parent, but only just and has the same form. **Lavender Divine**, the sport of Hillcrest Divine produced by R.Milsom is on release in 2010 from Station House Nurseries. Its immaculate form is similar to the parent, but be careful, just like the parent it can very easily go oversize.

I was highly impressed with a new yellow giant semi-cactus seen in the U.S.A named **Trooper Dan** by the raiser Richard Parschal, who normally uses the 'Clearview' prefix for his raisings. I really rate this one as a rival to **Janal Amy** with its excellent form. It will be an exciting new one when generally available in the UK. There is limited stock here at present. The same raiser has a very good white large semi cactus which was the best seedling at the 2009 U.S.A. National. This one could even be as good as Kenora Challenger when grown to its full potential.

A big talking point in the Pom world in 2009 was the variety **Nessit Mina**, reputed to be a sport of Gurtla Twilight which was originally a sport of Hallmark. There are certain experienced Pom growers who are of the opinion that this one is a reversion to the parent Hallmark. Definitely not one for the distinct varieties classes.

The dahlia wherever grown in the world continues to produce, I would argue, more new varieties than any other flower as it has done for around two hundred years since its introduction into Europe. The new varieties seen in the U.S.A. and Holland recently indicates that the trend continues apace and in the near future we will see many new ones worthy of the showbench here in the U.K.

Midlands Dahlia Society, 51st Annual Show – report

by **Rob Cheetham**

Wow....Wow.... Wow.... was the expression of a visitor to our 51st Annual Show this year. She was overwhelmed by the variety, colour and number of dahlias on show. The show was certainly a success; we even had the local paper's photographer taking some pictures. 43 exhibitors took part showing 250 vases. Overall the entries were of good quality.

Dave Gillam is the **Midlands Champion** for 2009. His winning entry for the **Mawby Trophy** used: Kenora Challenger, Ruskin Diane, Mary's Jomanda and Alf's Mascot.

He beat Ron Guest into second place, with last year's champion June Davis third. **Ron** was awarded a **NDS Bronze Medal** for Second Best Exhibit in Show. **June** won the **George Woodfield Trophy** for Best Giant in Show for her Sir Alf Ramsey vase in the championship; the bloom was round, had depth and was clean. Roger Turrell was fourth.

Dave also won the **NDS Silver medal** for the Best Exhibit in Show, the **Violet Davies Premier Award** for the Best Vase in Show - the Kenora Challenger vase in the championship, as well as the **Leslie Jones Perpetual Challenge Trophy** for the same vase. He also won the **Decorative Cup** for the Best Vase of Medium, Small or Miniature Dec in Show for the vase of Alf's Mascot. Given all of these it is not surprising that Dave also won the **Evening Telegraph Cup** for most points in the Trophy classes.

Dave lives in Essex and has taken a year out to grow 900 plants - 600 under cover. 12 months ago he started with a plot covered in grass. He has taken 5 months off work, put in 14 hour days, built a greenhouse, put up covers etc. He has grown many different varieties of dahlias and he says "learnt a lot". He is not new to dahlias - 10 years ago he grew poms. All his hard work has paid off and he can be really pleased with his success at the Midlands Annual Show. With 5 entries in a strong class, **Frank Bolsover** won the **Lady Godiva Trophy** showing White Charlie Two, Grenidor Pastelle, Kiwi Gloria and Winholme Diane. Roger Turrell showed a new small dec – Avoca Swan Pool in his entry. This has good petal formation but seems a little large for a small dec.

Mr A Eden from Andover, Hants won the **Philip Damp Trophy** for 6 Giant Decs. One of the Blooms - a Sir Alf Ramsey was unlucky not to have been chosen for the best bloom in show. A very popular class with 9 entries was the **Leicester Challenge Cup**. Midlands' member **Brian Caswell** won with a good set of Janal Amy which seemed to have withstood the recent Midlands weather of wind and rain. Surprisingly all 9 entries showed this variety!

Controversy was encountered in the **Irish Challenge Trophy** for 3 large Decs. **Brian Carter** won with 3 blooms of Kenora Valentine the reclassified Kenora Wildfire. Les Jones was second showing Silver City, Elma E and Grace Kendall; L. Graham was third. **Brian** also won the **Gordon Steel Trophy** with 2 vases of Alf's Mascot. Alf's Mascot was also shown by the second place – June Davis, and third place Richard Vickers from Gainsborough. There was a large entry in this class – 10 exhibitors showed in the class.

The **Christy Brookes Challenge Cup** had a strong set of 6 entries. **Dave Gillam** won with Kenora Challenger and Narrows Tricia. Fred Wilson was second with B Carter third. The Midlands society had chosen Citizen as a potential new large bloom after seeing it at Geerlings in Holland on their 50th anniversary trip last year. However it was not placed in this class, its form is not right. It is more a straight cactus rather than semi cactus, also it grew excessively tall – blooms were above 6 feet. Ah well, we will have to look out for another....

Two excellent vases of Rycroft Jan also won **Dave Gillam** the **Pam Parsons Challenge Cup**. There were 8 strong entries in this class. Frankie Taylor was second with Marston Lilac, and Marston Suzanne; Frank Newberry was third with Marston Suzanne and Loretta.

Dave also won the **Friendship Trophy** with Jomanda and Mary's Jomanda – the latter being awarded the **S & E Braddock Perpetual Challenge Trophy** for the Best Vase of Small /

Miniature Ball Dahlia in Show. Ron Guest was second and Frank Newberry third. Only Jomanda or Mary's Jomanda varieties were shown in this class.

Paul Harvey won the **Dennis Watson Challenge Cup** with two excellent vases of Susan Gilliot. These were grown without covers - astonishing given the weather in the previous few days. Paul admits to having been unable to sleep much, wondering what the wind and rain were doing to his prize blooms. Paul lives near Derby and has been aiming to enter the Midlands for some time. He now intends to take a couple of years off to do some more travelling, particularly to Nepal. He intends to come to the Midlands Society annual dinner in November, so if you are there you can ask him what he will be up to on his travels. **Paul** also won the **Cactus Cup** for this entry, the best of 10 good sets of vases, which included many varieties.

Peter Clubb was second with Als Pastelle and Grenidor Pastelle. Dave Gillam was third showing Peach delight and Cream Moonlight.

In an unusually small entry of 3, **Frankie Taylor** made the trip from Manchester worthwhile by winning the **Pauline Eales Award** for two vases of Small Decs showing Primrose Diane. Ron Guest was a close second with Gateshead Festival and Marion Storer with Peter Clubb third showing his very own Clubby Boy and Gateshead Festival.

Frank also won the **Stella Trophy** with Marston Lilac and Barberry Pip. This ever popular class, for growers of small and miniature dahlias, attracted 9 entries. Dave Gillam was second showing Rycroft Jan and Ruskin Diane. Roger Turrell was third with Mary's Jomanda and Avoca Swan Pool.

Another visitor – **Peter Bateson** from Wokingham won the **Styvechale Trophy** with Kiwi Gloria and Ruskin Myra. This exhibit also won **Peter** the **Eddie Durrant Memorial Trophy** for Best Small, Miniature Cactus / Semi Cactus in Show. Peter Clubb was second showing Lemon Elegans.

Roger Turrell won the **John Griffiths Senior Cup** for two vases of small ball dahlias, showing Blyton Softer Gleam and Jomanda. Ron Guest was second with Jomanda, Brian Caswell third with Jomanda and Elmdon Superb – a seedling from the late Arthur Ross.

Roger also won the **Best Seedling Class** with Mary Crichton. Not many new Medium Decs are being released and Roger likes the form, centre and colour of this one.

It was nice to see our friend **Dave Skelton** back showing at the Midlands after a gap of a few years – he won the **George Irvine Perpetual Challenge Cup** with three varieties of poms – Moorplace, Hallmark and Whales Rhonda. Les Jones was second with two vases Gilwood Violet and one of Moorplace. Mr R Elliott was third.

Norman Johnson won the 2 Vases of Collerettes with Don Hill. Surprisingly Don Hill was the choice for all collerette entries.

Paul Fulford won the Intermediate Class 16, with Kenora Valentine. This class was well supported by members, Frank Bolsover was second with Alvas Supreme and R Cotterell third with Kenora Challenger. **Frank Bolsover** won both the medium and small dahlia classes as well as class 20 – a vase of medium and a vase of small dahlias. He showed Grenidor Pastelle in one vase and two Winholme Diane and a Gateshead festival in the other vase.

This won **Frank** the **72 trophy** for the best exhibit in the Intermediate Section.

In the members section **Ray Cottrell** won the **William Daffern Trophy** for the best exhibit in the members section and the **H Dunkley Trophy** for the best vase of Poms in show with Rhonda.

The Novice section showed novice members coming on in 'leaps and bounds'. The quality of blooms and exhibits has improved and was of a high standard. **Paul Fulford** won **Best Novice exhibit** in the Giant Class with Kenora Valentine. Obviously the covers that Paul put up this

year are proving useful! He also gets an **NDS Bronze Medal** for his efforts. **Paul** also won the medium dahlia class with Avoca Amanda whilst **P Stanoch** won the small class with Jomanda, and **Rob Cheetham** won the miniature class also with Jomanda. **R Elliott** won the Pom class. The special class for the **Bruce Watson Trophy** had a strong set of 7 entries, the entries reflecting the varieties preferred by the growers. **R Vickers** from Gainsborough won showing mainly small / miniature – he had 10 Blyton varieties. Marie Jane Roberts showed all miniatures including 8 Weston varieties. Gabby Hayes was third, again with all miniature varieties. Ron Guest was fourth showing varieties across the classifications (except poms).

The **Elaine Fenton Trophy** for 3 varieties of 3 blooms was very well supported with 12 entries in this popular class. **Frank Taylor** won showing Marion Storer, Winholme Diane and the new Ruskin Respectable. Ron Guest came second with Ruskin Sunshine, Avoca Cheyenne and Mascot Mayo, whilst Les Graham from Essex showed Grace Kendall, Peach Delight and Mascot Mayo for third place.

The most popular class in the show, with 13 entries, was class 45 – three blooms of Dahlias. **Paul Harvey** won with Hillcrest Kismet, Susanne Gilliot and Rycroft Zoe. Fred Wilson was second with Alf's Mascot, Ruskin Respectable and Cryfield Asher – one of his new small dec seedlings (the colour is similar to Mary's Jomanda). Frank Taylor was third with Marston Suzanne, Winholme Diane and Ruskin respectable.

Marie Jane Roberts' basket entry won the **Lilian Hall Rose Bowl** ahead of Ken Smart (2nd) and Tim Williams (3rd). Marie certainly sets the pace for basket and bowl classes – she will go on to win at Shepton Mallet and Harrogate later in the year. **Marie** won the intermediate miniature class with Weston Miss and Weston Pirate.

Thanks go to **Bruce Watson** and his catering team for the lunches and refreshments, but does he know what they are up to behind his back?! (look on the Midlands website – www.dahlia-mds.co.uk to see what went on, as well as other photos of the show). We thank **Angela Guest** - not only for being an excellent show secretary, but also for putting on bacon butties early on Saturday morning - much appreciated by those staging vases.

Thanks also go to the judges who travelled from different parts of the UK and did an excellent job.

Final thanks go to the Midlands members who helped set up and clear down the show, without you we cannot hold the show.

THE MIDLANDS DAHLIA SOCIETY SHOW RESULTS 2009

THE MIDLANDS CHAMPIONSHIP FOR THE MAWBY TROPHY

1 st D. GILLAM	2 nd R..GUEST	3 rd Mrs.J.DAVIS	4 th R.TURRELL
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THE LADY GODIVA TROPHY

1 st . F.BOLSOVER	2 nd . R.L. JONES	3 rd . D.GILLAM	4 th . R.TURRELL
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THE PHILLIP DAMP TROPHY

1 st . A.EDEN	2 nd . B.CASWELL	3 rd N.JOHNSON
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THE LEICESTER CHALLENGE CUP

1 st . B.CASWELL	2 nd N.JOHNSON	3 rd . B.CARTER
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THE IRISH CHALLENGE TROPHY

1 st B.CARTER	2 nd R.L.JONES	3 rd L.GRAHAM
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THE CHRISTY BROOKES CHALLENGE CUP

1 st D.GILLAM	2 nd F.WILSON	3 rd . B.CARTER
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THE GORDON STEEL TROPHY

1 st B.CARTER	2 nd Mrs.J.DAVIS	3 rd . R.VICKERS
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THE DENNIS WATSON CHALLENGE CUP

1 st . P.HARVEY	2 nd . P.CLUBB	3 rd . D.GILLAM
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THE PAULINE EALES AWARD

1 st . F.B.TAYLOR	2 nd R.GUEST	3 rd . P.CLUBB
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THE STYVECHALE TROPHY

1 st . P.BATESON	2 nd . P.CLUBB	3 rd
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THE JOHN GRIFFITHS SENIOR CUP

1 st . R.TURRELL	2 nd . R.GUEST	3 rd B.CASWELL
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THE PAM PARSONS CHALLENGE CUP

1 st D.GILLAM	2 nd . F.TAYLOR	3 rd . F.NEWBURY
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THE FRIENDSHIP TROPHY

1 st D.GILLAM	2 nd . R.GUEST	3 rd . F.NEWBURY
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THE GEORGE IRVINE PERPETUAL CHALLENGE CUP

1 st . D.SKELTON	2 nd . R.L.JONES	3 rd R.ELLIOTT
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THE STELLA TROPHY

1 st F.TAYLOR	2 nd D.GILLAM	3 rd . R.TURRELL
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Section B Intermediate Classes.

THREE BLOOMS GIANT OR LARGE DAHLIAS ONE BLOOM PER VASE

1 st . P.FULFORD	2 nd F.BOLSOVER	. 3 rd . R.COTTRELL
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TWO VASES MEDIUM DAHLIAS THREE BLOOMS IN EACH VASE

1 st F.BOLSOVER	2 nd . n/a	3 rd . n/a
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TWO VASES SMALL BALL, SMALL CACTUS, SEMI CACTUS, OR SMALL DECORATIVE DAHLIAS, THREE BLOOMS PER VASE

1 st F.BOLSOVER	2 nd 3 rd R.COTTRELL	
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TWO VASES, THREE BLOOMS PER VASE, MINIATURE OR POM PON DAHLIAS.

1 st .M.J.ROBERTS	2 nd . R.COTTRELL	3 rd R.CHEETHAM
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TWO VASES, THREE BLOOMS PER VASE, ONE VASE MEDIUM, ONE VASE SMALL DAHLIAS.

1 st . F.BOLSOVER	2 nd R.COTTRELL	3 rd G.ELLIOTT
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Section C Members classes

THREE BLOOMS GIANT DECORATIVE DAHLIAS.

1 st R.A.GUEST	2 nd . T.WILLIAMS	3 rd . A.EDEN
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THREE BLOOMS GIANT CACTUS AND /OR SEMI-CACTUS DAHLIAS.

1 st n/a	2 nd . n/a	3 rd . n/a
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THREE BLOOMS LARGE DECORATIVE DAHLIAS.

1 st . R.L.JONES	2 nd K.SMART	3 rd . n/a
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THREE BLOOMS LARGE CACTUS AND/OR SEMI-CACTUS DAHLIAS.

1 st R.TURRELL	2 nd P.CLUBB	3 rd A.ALCOCK
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THREE BLOOMS MEDIUM DECORATIVE DAHLIAS.

1 st . N. GADSBY	2 nd . F.WILSON	3 rd R.L.JONES
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THREE BLOOMS MEDIUM CACTUS AND/OR SEMI-CACTUS DAHLIAS.

1 st . P.HARVEY	2 nd . P.HARVEY	3 rd N.GADSBY
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FIVE BLOOMS SMALL DECORATIVE DAHLIAS.

1 st . B.DAVIS	2 nd . T.WILLIAMS	3 rd . A.ALCOCK
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FIVE BLOOMS SMALL CACTUS AND/OR SEMI CACTUS DAHLIAS.

1 st . P.HARVEY	2 nd . D.GILLAM	3 rd R.TURRELL
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FIVE BLOOMS MINIATURE DECORATIVE DAHLIAS.

1 st . R.TURRELL	2 nd . R.CHEETHAM	3 rd C.WRAGG
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FIVE BLOOMS MINIATURE CACTUS AND/OR SEMI CACTUS DAHLIAS.

1 st . M-J.ROBERTS	2 nd T.WILLIAMS	3 rd . n/a
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FIVE BLOOMS SMALL BALL DAHLIAS.

1 st B.CASWELL	2 nd . A.T.HAYES	3 rd F.NEWBURY
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FIVE BLOOMS MINIATURE BALL DAHLIAS.

1 st M.J.ROBERTS	2 nd . R.A. GUEST	3 rd . A.ALCOCK
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SIX BLOOMS POM PON DAHLIAS.

1 st . R.COTTRELL	2 nd . D.SKELTON	3 rd . P.HARVEY
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FIVE BLOOMS COLLERETTE DAHLIAS.

1 st K.SMART	2 nd . n/a	3 rd n/a
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FIVE BLOOMS WATERLILY DAHLIAS.

1 st R.L.JONES	2 nd K.SMART	3 rd n/a
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THREE BLOOMS FIMBRIATED DAHLIAS.

1 st . n/a	2 nd . n/a	3 rd n/a
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THREE BLOOMS BI-COLOURED DAHLIAS

1 ST M.J. ROBERTS	2 nd R.CHEETHAM	3 rd
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Section D Novice Classes

ONE GIANT OR LARGE DAHLIA.

1 st . P.FULFORD	2 nd . R.ELLIOTT	3 rd . M.WILLIAMS
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THREE MEDIUM DAHLIAS.

1 st . P.FULFORD	2 nd . P,STANOCH	3 rd P.FULFORD
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THREE BLOOMS SMALL DAHLIAS.

1 st P.STANOCH	2 nd P.STANOCH	3 rd . P.FULFORD
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THREE BLOOMS MINIATURE DAHLIAS.

1 st R.CHEETHAM	2 nd . R.ELLIOTT	3 rd . P.FULFORD
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THREE BLOOMS POM PON DAHLIAS.

1 st . R.ELLIOTT	2 nd R.ELLIOTT	3 rd . M.WILLIAMS
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Section E Special Classes.

BRUCE WATSON TROPHY

TWENTY BLOOMS FROM TWENTY VARIETIES

1 st R.VICKERS	2 nd Mrs.M-J ROBERTS	3 rd . A.T.HAYES	4 th R.GUEST
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EILEEN FENTON TROPHY

NINE BLOOMS THREE VARIETIES THREE BLOOMS OF EACH VARIETY

1 st . F.TAYLOR	2 nd . R.A.GUEST	3 rd L.GRAHAM
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THREE BLOOMS OF DAHLIAS ONE BLOOM PER VASE THREE DISTINCT CLASSIFICATIONS.

1 st . P.HARVEY	2 nd F.WILSON	3 rd . F.TAYLOR
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TWO VASES, WATERLILY FIVE BLOOMS PER VASE

1 st . K.SMART	2 nd n/a	3 rd n/a
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TWO VASES, COLLERETTE FIVE BLOOMS PER VASE

1 st . N.JOHNSON	2 nd K.SMART	3 rd . n/a
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TWO VASES, MINIATURE CACTUS/ SEMI CACTUS FIVE BLOOMS PER VASE

1 st M.J.ROBERTS	2 nd R.A.GUEST	3 rd . T.WILLIAMS
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LILIAN HALL ROSE BOWL BASKET OF DAHLIAS.

1 st . M.J ROBERTS	2 nd K.SMART	3 rd . T.WILLIAMS
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Midlands Dahlia Society Seedling Classes**THRE BLOOMS SMALL OR MINIATURE DAHLIAS**

1 st . B.DAVIES	2 nd B.DAVIES	3 rd . M.J.ROBERTS
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THREE BLOOMS MEDIUM. LARGE OR GIANT DAHLIAS

1 st R.TURRELL	2 nd . P.BATESON	3 rd n/a
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THREE BLOOMS ANY OTHER VARIETY OF DAHLIAS.

1 st n/a	2 nd n/a	3 rd . P.BATESON
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ADDITIONAL AWARDS

M.D.S. SILVER MEDAL	D.GILLAM
PREMIER AWARD	D.GILLAM
N.D.S. BRONZE MEDAL	R.A.GUEST
N.D.S. BRONZE MEDAL	P.FULFORD
THE CACTUS CUP	P.HARVEY
EDWARD DURRANT MEMORIAL TROPHY	P.BATESON
THE DECORATIVE CUP	D.GILLAM
GEORGE WOODFIELD TROPHY	Mrs.J.DAVIS
LESLIE JONES TROPHY	D.GILLAM
S & E BRADDOCK TROPHY	D.GILLAM
H..DUNKLEY TROPHY	R.COTTRELL
WILLIAM DAFFERN TROPHY	R.COTTRELL
THE EVENING TELEGRAPH CUP	D.GILLAM
DON BRAWN TROPHY	P.FULFORD
THE 72 TROPHY.	F.BOLSOVER
THE BRUCE WATSON TROPHY	R.VICKERS
THE M.D.S. SEEDLING SHIELD	R.TURRELL
EILEEN FENTON TROPHY	F.B.TAYLOR
MOST POINTS MEMBERS	M.J.ROBERTS
LILIAN HALL ROSE BOWL	M.J ROBERTS

VARIETY ANALYSIS FOR THE 51st ANNUAL SHOW

collated by [Les Jones](#)

As usual in the following Analysis only vases containing one variety were counted. The most popular variety was Mary's Jomanda with 20, closely followed by Sir Alf Ramsey and Alf's Mascot with 19 vases. I must apologize I omitted to count the number of vases staged and how many different varieties were on display. The report does not take into account seedlings.

GIANT DECORATIVES

SIR ALF RAMSEY	19
KENORA VALENTINE	10
HAMARI GOLD	8
ALVAS SUPREME	4
JET FIRE	2
FAIRWAY SPUR	2
BRYN TERFEL	1
MABLE ANN	1
KIDDS CLIMAX	1

LARGE DECORATIVES

GRACE KENDAL	7
ELMA E	3
SILVER CITY	3
HILLCREST EMBERS	2
SPARTACUS	1

MEDIUM DECORATIVES

ALFS MASCOT	19
MASCOT MAYA	9
TREN. MILLENNIUM	4
MARY CRICHTON	3
ANDREA CLARK	2
AVOCA AMANDA	2
AVOCA CHEYANNE	1
LAKELAND AUTUMN	1
HILLCREST KISMET	1
SUNSHINE PAUL	1

SMALL DECORATIVES

G. FESTIVAL	10
WINHOLME DIANE	5
AVOCA SWANPOOL	2
RYCROFT BRENDA T	2
RUSKIN DIANE	2
TOY BOY	2
BARBARRY MELODY	1
CRYFIELD ASHER	1
NINA CHESTER	1
PRIMROSE DIANE	1

MINIATURE DECORATIVES

RYECROFT JAN	15
LILAC MARSTON	5
KARENGLEN	4
SUSANNE MARSTON	4
FERMAIN	2
BARBARRY PIP	2
LORETTA	2
AVOCA ANGIE	1
DIKARA KENT	1
ROSS. LEWIS	1
ROSS. NATASHIA	1
RUSKIN MARS	1

GIANT CACTUS & SEMI CACTUS

JANAL AMY	9
ROSE JUPITER	1

LARGE CACTUS & SEMI CACTUS

KENORA CHALLENGER	16
NARROWS TRICIA	3
CITIZEN	2

MEDIUM CACTUS & SEMI CACTUS

GRENIDOR PASTELLE	15
SUSAN GILLIOT	4
PEACH DELIGHT	3
CREAM MOONLIGHT	2
PRIMROSE PASTELLE	2
RUSKIN SUNSHINE	2
ALFS PASTELLE	1
OAKWOOD FOXFIRE	1
STALLEEN CONDESA	1

SMALL CACTUS & SEMI CACTUS

KIWI GLORIA	6
RUSKIN MYRA	5
TRELYN KIWI	4
RUSKIN RESPECTABLE	3
RYCROFT ZOE	3
CHERWELL GOLDCREST	1
DEBORAHS KIWI	1
HALEY JANE	1
KILMORIE	1
OAKWOOD GOLDCREST	1
RUSKIN ANDREA	1

MINIATURE CACTUS & SEMI CACTUS

WESTON PIRATE	9
WESTON MISS	5
WESTON BUCCANEER	1
WESTON SPANISH DANCER	1
WESTON SUNUP	1
WESTON TOLEDO	1

SMALL BALL

BLYTON SOFTER GLEAM	12
JOMANDA	9
ELMDON SUPERB	2
RYCROFT PUNCH	2
SCAUR TANGO	2
AMY CAVE	1
BLYTON ROYAL VELVET	1

MINIATURE BALL

MARYS JOMANDA	20
JOMANDA	7
BARBARRY MAVERICK	1
BLYTON ROMANCE	1
MEGAN DEANO	1

POM PONS

GILWOODS VIOLET	4
MOOR PLACE	4
HALLMARK	3
RHONDA	3
WHALES RHONDA	1

MINUTES –50TH AGM of MIDLANDS DAHLIA SOCIETY

Held at KENILWORTH SPORTS and SOCIAL CLUB on
Wednesday 18^h February 2009

PRESENT – The President , Mr L Jones , supported by members of the Executive Council of the MDS.

Opening the meeting the president asked all members present to stand for a minutes silence to remember those members who had passed away during the past year.

ITEM 1 – the secretary read the notice convening the meeting

ITEM 2 –APOLOGIES – Mrs D Cheetham , Mrs J Davis, Mr J Batton, Mr M Crump ,Mr D Davis , Mr F Newberry , Mr R Reeder. Mr G Russell, Mr F Taylor.

ITEM 3 – the minutes of the 49AGM had been circulated to all members via publication in Midahl. The chairman asked if they could be taken as read - carried

ITEM 4 –MATTERS ARISING –none

ITEM 5 –CHAIRMAN’S REPORT –follows

Proposed by Mr D Reid and seconded by Mr M Woodfield that this report be adopted – carried

ITEM 6 –SECRETARY’S REPORT – secretary confirmed that the programme of events for 2009 was as printed in Midahl. The Annual Show would again be held at Kenilworth School on 29th and 30th August 2009

ITEM 7 – TREASURER’S REPORT –see attached balance sheet

He was delighted that the Society in this our Jubilee year had made a profit of £89 – this being due to all the sponsorship and donations we had received from members, friends and other societies. He thanked all the ladies who had helped at the various functions and shows.

Proposed by Mr F Wilson and seconded by Mr C Wragg that the balance sheet be accepted-carried

ITEM 8 – ELECTION OF 3 NEW LIFE VICE PRESIDENTS

The President informed the meeting that the Honours committee were proposing that Mr J Digweed, Mr K Smart and Mr M Woodfield be made Life Vice Presidents of the Society -carried

ITEM 9 – ELECTION OF PATRON – **nominee** – Mr F Wilson

Proposed by Mr L Jones and seconded by Mr M Roberts .

ITEM 10 – ELECTION OF PRESIDENT - **nominee** - Mr L Jones – proposed by Mr R Guest seconded Mr R Turrell.

ITEM 11 – ELECTION OF OFFICERS

NOMINEES

Chairman - Mr R Guest

Proposed by Mr A Hayes seconded by Mr D Bates

Vice-chairman - Mr T Williams

Proposed by Mr K Smart seconded by Mr P Clubb.

Gen. Secretary- Mr B Caswell

Proposed by Mr T Williams seconded by Mrs A Guest.

Assistant secretary –post not filled

Show secretary - Mrs A Guest

Proposed by Mr F Wilson seconded by Mr M Roberts.

Treasurer - Mr B Watson

Proposed by Mr N Johnson seconded by Mr A Hayes

Midahl **Editor** - Mr R Turrell

Proposed by Mr B Watson seconded by Mr M Woodfield

Publicity Officer- Mr R Cheetham

Proposed Mr R Guest seconded by Mr R Turrell

All the above nominations were carried

ITEM 12 – ELECTION OF COUNCIL

NOMINEES

Mrs D Cheetham, Mrs A Jones , Mr T Bratcher, Mr P Clubb, Mr A Hayes ,Mr N Johnson, Mr R Reeder, Mr D Reid ,Mr K Smart, Mr M Woodfield.

Proposed by Mrs A Guest seconded by Mr T Williams -carried

New nominee – Mr P Fulford - proposed by Mr F Wilson seconded by Mr P

Clubb – carried

ITEM 13 –AOB Mr C Wragg asked if we would arrange a talk on “Judging” also if we could arrange a judging exam in the Midlands- Mr R Guest said that to provide a venue with adequate blooms, members to organise it could prove quite expensive. We would also require a minimum of 12 persons taking the exam.

Mr R Turrell referred to the forthcoming NDS AGM stating that it was most important that the Midlands be well represented.

Mr R Guest proposed a vote of thanks to the President for the way the meeting had been conducted.

Meeting closed at 21 10hrs

Midlands Dahlia Society Chairman's A.G.M. Report 18/02/09

It's hard to believe that its twelve months since I stood here and told you about the events that were to take place to celebrate our Fiftieth year. As a society we had a good year but dahlia wise it turned out not to be the year we had all hoped for. It all started to go wrong in the spring when we planted out , dodging the rain, but I must say that the plants settled in well and were looking quite good at the end of July early August.

Then came the cold nights the rain and the winds and everybody's timing went wrong.

Once again I can report that our winter programs were well attended, and that it was encouraging to see one or two new faces.

I will run through our activities for last year ;

JANUARY. We started the year with our annual Tuber sale her at the Kenilworth Sports and Social Club. As always it is the first of our two major fund raising events of the year.

It was a well attended sale and I asked those present to remember it was our fiftieth year and we needed to raise as much as we could as we had a lot planed for the year, and as you can see from the accounts we did not do to bad.

I thank all who supplied the tubers and more important those that purchased them.

FEBRUARY. We held the A.G.M at the Kenilworth Sports & Social Club and it was supported by our members. I know it's not a meeting that you look forward too, but its important that you take

the opportunity to voice your opinions on the way your society, is being run. A number of subjects were discussed, but generally those present were happy with the way the society was being managed.

I must thank our President for the way he conducted the meeting.

MARCH. We were given a talk by Roger Turrell and Terry Bratcher. They shared some of their secrets on the way they raise their new varieties from their walled garden in Somerset.
I think Terry did all the talking and Roger played with his computer.

The society also supported Roger and Terry with their DAHLIA EXTRAVAGANSA which they organized because the National decided to move the National AGM that far north it was virtually impossible for the members from the south to attend. I should add that it was such a success that they have been asked to do another one, I am told perhaps next year.

APRIL. We welcomed Mr Mark Roberts who gave us a talk on Six of the best. It was a detailed talk on how he produced his six best vegetables for his vegetables collections. Mark is now up there amongst the top growers. It was a very interesting to compare his methods to the way we cultivate the dahlias.

MAY. We held our annual plant sale on Sunday the 11th May, in the village hall at Wellesbourne. I think the date was better as we did not clash with the Bank Holiday Week End and again as you can see from the Accounts it was another major success.

I keep on saying this only happens because of the generosity of every one who helps, either by bringing plants, or to you the members and friends for purchasing them.

I did not think we had quite as many plants last year because most of us struggled to with the propagation due to the lack of sunshine in February and March.

Thanks to Sue and John Digweed for organizing the bedding and pot plants, and once more we have to say thanks to the ladies of the society for the cakes and sandwiches, these ladies work solid for two hours preparing it all, and again after the break in collecting the cups and saucers and plates.

We are very lucky to have in our society ladies who are prepared to give up their Sunday afternoon, without whose help we could not run the event.

At this stage I normally thank Bruce Watson our treasurer, who organizes the room for us and also has the onerous task of collecting and counting the money. It was great to have Bruce back in his normal chair collecting the monies and over his problems of the previous year.

Once again a thank you, to Freddie Wilson, and his gang, who sort, and collate the plants, so the auction runs smoothly.

Also thanks to those of you who do the running about with the plants to the purchasers.

I must stress that this task is very tiring and if any one could help for any of the afternoon it would be very much appreciated, also thanks to our friends, who are not members but turn up to help on the afternoon.

JUNE. We held the first of our special events celebrating our birthday. A skittles evening, here at the sports and social club. It was organized by our President with help from the committee members. The Buffet was provided by a lady from the sports club who does not usually get involved with such events, but offered to do so because the steward was on holiday.

I am told because I must admit I was not here but playing golf in Wales. The food and the evening was very good.

JULY. We were invited to a barbeque by Beryl and Brian Caswells country mansion at Tyso. I was disappointed that more members did not take part.

Those of us that did enjoyed the day, although the weather could have been kinder. Our thanks go Brian and Beryl letting us invade their Sunday afternoon and to Tim and Bruce for organizing the food and drink and for also doing the cooking.

Our council members gave up one of their Sunday mornings and made a range of new tiered staging for the show.

AUGUST. We held a one bloom show at the Kenilworth sports and social club on Tuesday the 12th. I am happy to report that despite the weather, it was again a success. We had 19 exhibitors who stage 139 vases and they were all worth a prize.

June Davis won the best bloom with Gabby Hayes a close second.

The judges were Ted Woodbridge and Maurice Woodfield and our thanks go to them.

Once again our novice section was well supported.

The venue for our main show was the Kenilworth Lower School on The Saturday and Sunday 23rd and 24th August. I think going back to a two day show for our 50th show was a correct decision, I felt the previous year when we only had it on the Saturday, it was all over before many of the committee had a chance to really see it, we were surprised how many of the general public turned up on the Sunday, in fact we had to stop them coming in so as we could start breaking it down.

On the Thursday evening when we were erecting the staging we had to squeeze more staging up to accommodate all the entries we had received. But then later on that evening and into the Friday the calls started to come in with the cancellations all with the same story, the blooms that looked as if they were going to right for picking were just not developing due to the cold and damp conditions. Having said all that we did have a good show with new exhibitors visiting for the first time, I hope we gave them enough hospitality too make them return again.

June Davis won the silver Medal for her exhibit in the Championship with Don Mosley taking the Bronze.

Most of the Major trophies were shared around with John Digweed Winning the Welsh Dahlia Societies Silver and Bronze Medals with the same Exhibit.

I must Congratulate Les Jackson who made the trip From Carlisle.

Thanks go to Bruce and his team of ladies who provided our judges and all our helpers and friends with lunches and the welcome cups of tea.

This part of our hospitality is pleasantly appreciated by the traveling exhibitors who this year were treated to Bacon batches early on the Saturday morning provided by Rachel and Angela

I am sure Sarah was there but being a vegetarian would not touch the bacon. I must say thank you to Dave Bates He came to the show to do a report for Garden News and ended up Judging at the expense of Alf Lawes whose car broke down on the motorway and had to be towed home.

Thanks also to Angela, and her friend Paula for the efficient way they produced the prize cards, and collated the prize monies.

Finally thanks to all who helped break down the show down on the Sunday, it could not be done without your help. If I have missed any one out of the thanks I am sorry.

SEPTEMBER .Once again we made our annual trip to Shepton Mallet and The N.D. S. Show in our attempt to win the Herbert Brown Trophy for the Society.

Tim Williams, Norm Johnson and new boy Rob Cheetham led the team, followed by Fred Wilson, Gabby Hayes and Les Jones. Under the circumstances we staged quite a good exhibit and as you all know by now we finished third.

I thought Second would have been correct.

Once again thanks to the people who supply the blooms and also those who travel on our behalf. I must also say thanks and those who helped pack the van.

It is pleasing to report that many of our members won with their own exhibits.

We never made it to the Show at Harrogate and the Northern National, the weather beat us we could not collect enough blooms to warrant the trip. We could not find any giant or large cactus any where.

Its only the second time we have not shown at Harrogate the first being due to the petrol drivers strike a few years ago.

Some of our members did travel and one or two of our members won tickets in their own names.

We again held our members show at the Kenilworth sports and social club in what is a friendly get together at the end of the season.

I have to admit I did not attend this one, but was told that again it was well supported.

It was good to see that the prizes were shared.

The recipient of the Silver Medal was a vase of Sir Alf Ramsey, staged by June Davis who also had the Bronze Medal with vase of Trelyn Kiwi. The Novice prizes were shared between Rob Cheetham, Brain Milward and John Bradbury, with Rob winning the Bronze Medal. The special class to encourage new members to show by giving them plants of the water lilly variety Pam Howden was a success. Thanks to the National Dahlia Society for sponsoring it. Dave Bates was our Judge for this.

Then as part of our celebrations Dave Reid organized a coach trip for our members to the Dutch Dahlia Nurseries. This was not with out its troubles as the channel tunnel experienced the lorry fire days before they were due to travel and right up to the last minuet travel plans were being changed. But miraculously every one caught the coach and enjoyed the few days in Holland. I do understand that we have a couple of Travelers who managed to travel there and back with out their passports. One forgot to take his and one lost it while there.

OCTOBER. We were given a talk by Dave Bates who shared his memories of his trip to the New Zealand and their dahlia shows. I am told it was a very interesting talk and slide show. I am afraid again it clashed with my holidays.

NOVEMBER. We held our Annual Dinner and Prize giving.

The Kenilworth Golf Club was chosen to be our host once again.

The dinner committee also decided to continue with the carvery style meal that has been successful for the last couple of years.

We were privileged to have as guest of Honour in this our Fiftieth Year Our President and his lady, Audrey and Les Jones.

I am pleased to report that it was very well supported by our members and friends that there were only a few spaces left.

Once again I say thank you to our Raffle ticket sellers Rachel and Sarah in persuading all in attendance to part with their money. Also I must thank all who donated raffle prizes; It seemed as if we had a prize for every one.

It was pleasing to see most of the winners were in attendance to receive the trophies from Audrey.

We tried something different this year with me giving a brief history of our Society.

All though I was the front man, the hard work was done by Sarah who chose most of the photos and then turned them digital so we could display them to you.
Frankie Taylor again gave us organ recital even though he had broken a couple of his fingers only a day or so before. I thank Frank for sharing his musical talents with us.
The Ladies who attended the Dinner were treated to a gift provided by Les as a token of our Fiftieth year.
I will add that we have booked the same venue for our dinner, next year due to popular demand.

DECEMBER, David Reid's talk is now a permanent fixture, with his slides on the new varieties, photographed from his travels up and down the country, along with his trip to Holland and New Zealand. The ladies once again supplied us with the mince pies, to start the festive season, thanks to all those who provided them.

I again thank Roger Turrell for another good MIDAHL, along with memories from the early MIDAHLs.

Throughout the year members of the society have given talks to various clubs and societies on behalf of the M.D.S. and to those concerned I thank you.

I would like to thank all who gave raffle prizes for the talks through out the year, and also Freddy & Edna for providing the refreshments and to Mike Crump for the cakes and Maurice Woodfield for his Sausage rolls.

I also say a thank you to all who gave so generously donating either prizes or money in some cases both towards last years show.

The internet web Site that Rob Cheetham designed has brought our Society to the forefront to many of the worlds of dahlia enthusiasts. He is receiving Emails from all parts of the compass. For those of you that have not already been on our web page if you type in the words Dahlia-MDS on Google or WWW.DAHLIA-MDS.CO.UK

And finally I must thank all the officers and committee for all their help and support over the past year, in which I have been proud and privileged to have been your chairman.

Midlands Dahlia Society Single Bloom Show

Midlands Dahlia Society single bloom show held in Kenilworth Sports and Social club, on the evening of Tuesday August 18th 2009, for members only.

There were many exhibitors in attendance who staged 212 vases of dahlias, no problem with vases this time.

The best exhibit was won by **Rob Cheetham** with the KENORA CHALLENGER. He also had second best with OAKWOOD GOLDCREST.

Results as follows

Class	1 st
1	Bruce Watson
2	T Williams
3	Bruce Watson
4	P Clubb
5	Les Jones
6	Les Jones
7	Ron Guest
8	Rob Cheetham
9	John Digweed
10	Marie Jane Roberts
11	John Digweed
12	Marie Jane Roberts
13	Ray Cottrell
14	Norman Johnson
15	Bruce Watson
16	Tim Williams
Novice	
Class	1 st
17	Rob Cheetham
18	Mark Williams
19	Rob Cheetham
20	Paul Fulford

Rob Cheetham had a wonderful show winning all the top prizes, not bad for a Novice!

K. Smart

MDS One Day Show

This was held in the Sports and Social Club at Kenilworth on Sunday September 20th.

Fourteen members turned up and staged 60 vases of Dahlias.

It was pleasing to have 5 novice members showing.

Dave Reid, our judge for the day must have overslept as he failed to appear, instead Ron Guest and Gabby Hayes stepped in.

Silver medal and best in show went to the secretary, Brian Caswell showing Janal Amy.

Bronze medal was won with Kenora Challenger, shown by the Peter Clubb. Best Novice was Zeba Winning.

Class	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
1	B Caswell	J Davis	N Johnson
2	B Caswell	N Johnson	
3	T Williams	L Jones	A Hayes
4	P Clubb	N Johnson	
5	A Hayes	L Jones	B Caswell
6	P Clubb	F Wilson	J Davis
7	P Clubb	L Jones	A Hayes
8	L Jones	A Hayes	P Clubb
9	R Cheetham	A Hayes	L Jones
10	L Jones	A Hayes	T Williams
11	B Caswell	N Johnson	A Hayes
12	L Jones	A Hayes	N Johnson
13	J Smith		
14	F Wilson	N Johnson	
15			
16	R L Jones	J Smith	

Novices

Class	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
17	P Fulford	R Cheetham	Z Winning
18	Z Winning	R Cheetham	P Fulford
19	P Fulford	P Waring	J Bradbury
20	P Fulford	R Cheetham	
21	Z Winning	P Fulford	J Bradbury

It was a good end of season show, good blooms, good company, and good friends, what more can you ask for?

Tim Williams

The Society Class Entries for 2009

The Herbert Brown Trophy is once again back in the Midlands, its rightful place!
The Thursday before the National Show started with a journey to Adderbury to pick up June Davis' blooms. From there we went back home to cut my flowers. In the evening we all met up at the Leek Wooton Barn to pack them in the van.
We had some quality blooms but there were less than normal.

Rob Cheetham and I set off to Shepton Mallet where other blooms had been left by other members. We arrived safely and it was decided eventually to stage Alf Ramsey, Kenora Challenger, Ruskin Sunshine, Alf's Mascot and Primrose Diane.
The exhibit did look good and we were victorious by one point.

1 st Midlands	84 points
2 nd Vagabonds	83 points
3 rd Monklands	79 points

Individual vases were pointed as follows

Alf Ramsey	13 points
Kenora Challenger	13 points
Ruskin Sunshine	17 points
Alf's Mascot	21 points
Primrose Diane	20 points
Total	84

Two weeks later we were all off to Harrogate for the Arthur Luck Trophy at the Northern National. Norm Johnson joined Rob and I for the overnight trip, with other members joining us early in the morning.

Some of the blooms could have travelled better especially the Giant Decs. After much head scratching and some swearing and some very late changes with the Large/Giants we decided to stage:

Alf Ramsey(2), Elma E (1), Janal Amy, Kiwi Gloria, Marion Storer, Mary's Jomanda.

It looked a good exhibit but the giants were not to the usual standard.

We were second to the Vagabonds by one point. Individual vase were pointed as follows;

Janal Amy	18 points
Kiwi Gloria	19 points
Marion Storer	13 points
Marys Jomanda	18 points
Giant/Large Decs	16 points
Total	84

We would like to thank all those members who donated blooms and travelling to help stage the exhibits. Let us hope that 2010 will be successful and that we can get quality blooms, even Giants!!

Tim Williams

Leeds Exhibition Trials 2009

By [Dave Bates](#)

The trials commenced in 1985 at Brackenhill Park in Bradford as the Northern Trials, and after a few years they transferred to the very popular Golden Acre Park at Bramhope near Leeds. They were later renamed to the Exhibition Trials to represent how varieties were judged and to distinguish them from those at Wisley which were trialed for garden use. During the life of the trials, Harry Howarth passed away and left a bequest to the society for the trials, and the Harry Howarth Memorial Medal was born, and awarded to the best performing variety each year. The trials are organised by the Exhibition Trials Committee of the NDS that is made up of four members each from the Executive Committee and the Northern Committee. These eight people along with help from members local to the area carry out planting, cultivation and maintenance of the trials (unlike the Wisley trials which were maintained by Wisley staff), and they also carry out judging at least three times each during August and September. During the season, most of the members travel over 2000 miles at their own expense to ensure the success of the trials, and without this commitment of the few, the NDS would have no trials.

The trials were visited by several members, especially on Harrogate weekend, as well as by the general public throughout the flowering period, and provided a good advertisement for the society.

Judging is based on a number of criteria, with 100 points being available per judging. This is made up of 40 for form, 20 for centre, 20 for stem and footstalk, 10 for bloom angle and 10 for colour. All the judges' scores are collated and an overall average is calculated for the season. The best performing varieties receive awards of Gold, Silver or Bronze standard, with the overall best variety also receiving the medal. A minimum number of judgings is required to be considered for awards, sometimes the plants received are rather small or late and they do not flower early enough to be judged the minimum number of times. In order to be fair to giant and large varieties which carry fewer blooms than smaller ones, the qualifying judging count is less. Giants and large are grown in a tunnel, while one plant of each medium is also grown there if room permits. In order to give adequate space to each variety, the number of varieties is limited to 56, with a normal limit of four varieties per raiser. Six plants of each variety are required so that the best four can be planted in the trial. Planting out took place on June 6th, and they were lifted on 24th October. The tubers were either returned to the sender or destroyed so that security was maintained.

For the first time in the history of the trials, the winner was a giant decorative. **Jean Shaw**, raised by Kenny Shaw of Shildon, Co Durham was awarded the Harry Howarth Memorial Medal and a Gold Certificate. The variety is well formed in bronze and orange blends, and grew to around 4.5 feet in the tunnel

This year a second Gold award was made. **Blyton Royal Velvet** from Les Stothard of Blyton, Lincs had masses of excellent purple blooms each time we visited. This miniature could provide a Jomanda-like dilemma for classification since it has the same ball shaped flower, whilst many of the petals are of decorative form. Regardless of how it is finally classified, this is an excellent addition to any exhibitor of miniatures, and the colour alone makes it worthy of any garden.

Another giant decorative received a Silver Certificate. **Wyn's Farmer John** was raised by Walt and Cory Wynne on their farm in Ferndale, Washington, USA and performed well throughout the trial. Predominantly white with a slight lavender flush at the tips and yellow at the petal bases, this variety could provide giant growers with yet another option. I grew it last year as a large, 6 up, and still had blooms that were too big, so it has no problem making giant size.

A second variety receiving a Silver Award was **Ruskin Limelight** from Stan Pennington of St. Helens, Lancs. A medium cactus in pale yellow, the blooms were all of excellent quality and well formed but slightly later than some of the other varieties.

Kilburn Fiesta, medium semi cactus raised by Graham Hill of Kilburn near Thirsk received a Bronze Certificate. This pink and yellow bi-coloured flower proved popular with the judges and the public. The well-formed flowers matched well and this would be excellent for both garden and exhibition, while arrangers would also benefit from this variety

A further Bronze award was made to **Citizen**, a large/medium semi cactus from H Plochaet in Belgium. This lavender and white blended variety had excellent blooms, although it was quite tall and may not be suited to exposed sites, but well worth a try as either medium or large.

Some other varieties also performed well including:-

Elmdon Superb, orange small ball raised by the late Arthur Ross of Solihull, which flowered later than the winning varieties and did not achieve the minimum number of judgments, but impressed the judges during September. **Ruskin Harmony** and **Ruskin Sensation**, both yellow medium semi cactus from Stan Pennington had quality blooms throughout the judging period. **Susan Carey**, yellow large semi cactus raised by Dr Dorothy McMaster in Northern Ireland had very high quality blooms early in the judging period and obviously has great potential.

Thanks are due to all the senders and raisers for their support. 2010 will see the 25th anniversary of the trials and the committee are looking to make them extra special. If you have any new exhibition variety worthy of the trials, please apply for an entry form from John Parkinson, 22 Stevenson Court. Kearsley, Bolton, Lancs L4 8BA.

Annual Dinner 2009

After an eventful start, we again had a very successful dinner this year.

All arrangements were in-hand when the chairman's wife, Angela, received a call from our guest of honour, Mr. Ted Collins. Ted was just about to start out to travel to the dinner when he found he had a problem with his car. Our chairman, Ron, was, as you of course might guess, on the golf course. Miraculously, Angela managed to contact him, collect him from the golf course and take him down to Marlow to pick up Ted and his wife Jean!

About sixty people sat down to an excellent carvery meal at Kenilworth golf club. This was followed by a talk by our guest of honour, Mr. Ted Collins, who spoke about changes that were affecting the National Dahlia Society, of which he is President, and also about the RHS.

This was followed by an illustrated talk by our computer wizz kid – Mr. Rob Cheetham –who showed us how he had put the Midlands Dahlia Society on the 'web'. This was very interesting, especially to those of us who are not 'computer literate'.

It was good to have several visitors attending the dinner, especially those who had won cups and trophies at our annual show. Mr. Tim Williams received a NDS silver medal for his efforts in staging the Herbert Brown exhibit, which the society won again at Shepton Mallet this year.

As usual we had an excellent raffle and we must thank everyone who contributed to this.

This year we were missing our keyboard specialist – Mr. Frankie Taylor – who was baby sitting! His place was taken by Mr. Dave Reid, who finished the evening off with some good old tunes on his piano accordion.

Ron and Angela accommodated Ted and Jean for the night, and society president Mr. Les Jones took them back to Marlow then next morning.

Audrey Jones

FOR THE NOVICE 2009

The Novice classes in all 3 shows were well supported with one or two new names on the prize cards. This year congratulations are due to :-

Paul Fulford who at the Annual show won the "Don Brawn" trophy for the best exhibit in the novice classes with a bloom of KENORA VALENTINE, other winners were Ralf Elliot, Rob Cheetham, and Paul Stannoch.

Frank Bolsover repeated his success of last year winning the "72 Trophy" for the best exhibit in the intermediate classes with vases of GRENIDOR PASELLE and WINHOLME DIANE.

At the Members show Zeaba Winning won the NDS Bronze medal for the best exhibit in the novice class with 3 yellow small decs that no one could name.

At the Single Bloom show Rob Cheetham won not only the best bloom in the show but also the runner-up to best in the show with OAKWOOD GOLDCREST and KENORA CHALLENGER.

With the Farmhouse up for sale, the Dahlia patch cleared and with the timber frame which supported the covers on the bonfire 2009 commenced with me not knowing if I would have a garden to grow dahlias. My first thought was not to grow any dahlias just take a year off which possibly would have been the most sensible thing to do, but what to do with my stock of tubers. As I had got a temporary greenhouse which I could leave in place until the end of March I decided to set the tubers up.

By early April most tubers had been split, potted on and put in a cold frame, luck was on my side and as I cannot remember any frosts of note during April and May the plants grew slowly and by the end of May were ready to plant out.

Our decision was to keep the dahlia part of the garden so I planted out 80 giant Decs, 20 giant Cactus (Janal Amy) and 60 small Ball most of which were from split tubers. Once the plants became established I used a fertilizer (seaweed based) I had purchased in Holland during the Society's Jubilee year trip. I continued to spray weekly and I thought my dahlias looked quite good. In late July Les Jones and Fred Wilson called round and they were very impressed. I would normally cover the week before the society's Annual show but as I had made the decision to show only at our show the rest of the blooms were for the society's use I covered any good blooms with umbrellas as and when they opened. So it was necessary obtain as many umbrellas as I could get. One thing that amazed me was that the likes of JANAL AMY did not mark up The National show at Shepton Mallet was abandoned due to the adverse weather but the following blooms both Ball and Giant were some of the best that I have ever grown. I have tried to analyse the reasons for last years success and would suggest the following

- 1) Most of the dahlias were grown from split tubers so already had an existing root formation which possibly gave a 2 week advantage over rooted cuttings.
- 2) The plants were strong not "leggy" or "pot bound"
- 3) A few years ago I wrote an article after a visit to an Organic farm in India and I well remember the farmer saying that in his view a healthy plant was like a healthy body it would fight any attack or infection. The only problem I had was wasps- I had to have 3 nests destroyed all within 50 metres of the dahlias.
- 4) I also believe that not permanently covering left the plants to grow naturally and gave the blooms more time to develop. I am now trying to design a set of covers that I can open and close to suit the prevailing weather conditions.

Last word on availability of the fertilizer mentioned earlier – this is still not available to the general public but with a local family contact in Holland hopefully further supplies will be forthcoming.

Brian Caswell 2010

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2010/20011

FEBRUARY -Wednesday 17th AGM
- Kenilworth Sports and Social Club

MARCH - Wednesday 17th -Mr R Cheetham- "A Coastal Walk" Kenilworth Sports and
Social Club

APRIL - Wednesday 21ST -Kenilworth Sports and Social Club
(TBA)

MAY - Sunday 9th PLANT SALE - Wellesbourne Village Hall

AUGUST - Tuesday 17th -Single Bloom Show - Kenilworth Sp. and Social Club
August 28th & 29th ANNUAL SHOW-Kenilworth School

SEPTEMBER NATIONAL SHOW

3RD - 5TH September - Shepton Mallet

17TH -19TH September -Harrogate

Sunday 19th MEMBER'S SHOW - Kenilworth S and Social Club

OCTOBER - Wednesday 20th - Kenilworth Sports and Social Club
(TBA)

NOVEMBER -Saturday 20th (**To be confirmed**) - ANNUAL DINNER - Kenilworth Golf Club

DECEMBER - Wednesday 8th - Dave Reid - NEW VARIETIES - Kenilworth Sports and
Social Club

2011

JANUARY - Wednesday 21st - TUBER SALE - Kenilworth Sports and Social Club

A GOOD TURN ?

This is the correspondence after a respected and conscientious committee member provided transport to and from last year's dinner for a vice-president. Only for him to demolish the garden wall when he reversed his own vehicle out of the driveway to return to his abode.

The committee member only provided transport out of the goodness of his heart as the vice president is elderly and infirm and gets easily lost.

The names have been deleted to protect the innocent.

7 Nov 2008

Dear Sir,

BOUNDARY WALL

We thank you for your enquiry regarding the re-building of boundary wall and have pleasure in quoting as follows:

Erect traffic lights and road signs. Erect pedestrian walkway around site.

Supply portable toilet facilities for workmen for duration of work.

Demolish remainder of wall after traffic accident and remove to council approved waste site.

Shore up large rockery with steel shuttering to prevent land slip.

Excavate foundations to a depth of 1.8 metres and supply ready mixed concrete to form base.

Rebuild boundary wall in genuine re-constructed Cotswold stone to match existing.

Remove steel shuttering and make good rockery.

Supply new heathers and various plants to rockery.

Remove lights, barriers, toilet, etc. on completion.

All in the sum of £3.195.00 + VAT

Hoping this meets with your consideration, and approval.

Yours Faithfully

xxxxxxxxxxx

25 Nov 2008

Dear Sir,

I have been unable to reply to your letter dated 17th November earlier, due to very heavy work commitments. I appreciate the inconvenience of having several misplaced bricks. Do accept my apology.

Unfortunately, due to the present financial climate the purse is empty but I am more than willing to supply the labour to replace the above mentioned bricks.

My elected person will not be requiring toilet facilities.

Should traffic or pedestrians be in the area my labourer will use stop and go signs and deal with any problems should they arise.

Removal of bricks can easily be dealt with in the back of our van.
Shoring up. I'm sure we have a few old doors about, do the job well.

Stone walling to match existing. No problem. I have noticed around and about several walls needing a few repairs. I'm sure some loose stones won't go amiss.

Supplying of second heathers is in hand. Job done.

Please contact me at the above address as soon as possible.
The work can be carried out promptly as my labourer (the wife) is busy sharpening her spade.

I feel consideration for the damaged tyre on my new car must
be taken into account. I am also wondering if the construction of the wall was a safety hazard.

Yours Faithfully,

xxxxxxxxxxx