

# British Cactus & Succulent Society

## Southampton & District Branch Newsletter

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## Editorial

Well we are into a new year, and it's supposed to be the middle of winter, but the weather continues to be extremely mild. The extent of this unseasonal weather must be very confusing for animals and birds, especially those which hibernate or emigrate. Average temperatures have been several degrees higher than one would expect at this time of the year, and my day lilies are putting out fresh new growths, as if it's spring time. We also had strong winds in December, and we used to get these in October, so I wonder whether the seasons are shifted by a couple of months, or whether we'll get by with hardly any winter. Time will tell!

## Announcements

The **Branch Programme** for **2016** has been prepared and copies are available from the front table. Our branch website has also been updated to show the 2016 programme, and the website also allows you to view the programme of events for the other Zone 11 branches.

Don't forget to renew your **BCSS membership** – this can be done using the form included with the CactusWorld Journals which were sent out to members in December - or you can also renew from the BCSS website, at:  
<http://www.bcsc.org.uk/paypal.php>

I noticed that Lidl will be offering a selection of succulent plants for sale this week (starting Tuesday). It is unlikely that there will be anything really rare or choice, but their plants are usually quite well sized and offered at a fraction of the price you would pay elsewhere.

## Last Month's Meeting

### 2015 AGM

Dot England and David Neville mentioned we had received apologies from some members who were unable to attend the AGM. Adrian Bailey was due to have an operation on his eye, Mark Larter and Sue Wilson were away on holiday, and Alec Mant, who supplies cake for our meetings was also away.

Dot mentioned that Jim Roskilly had sent a card to the branch – he's been ill and isn't well enough to attend meetings. David asked for any Christmas cards that people had for Adrian, Mark and Sue, and Geoff Card to be handed to him, and he'd send those on in a group.

Dot continued her address and thanked the committee and also people such as Ted Smith who help set up the hall before the other members arrive. She also thanked the members for coming along to the meetings. A copy of her report was in the December newsletter.

Next was our secretary, David. He mentioned his report was also in the newsletter. It had been another good year for the branch. People often ask him why we have such a healthy branch - he didn't know why, but our attendances and membership are healthy and stable. Ted Smith joked that it might be David's personality. David said when he visits other branches across the country, attendances were going downhill. Glenn suggested perhaps it might be his catering, prompting David to ask him if he'd had too many beers already!

Some of the BCSS national officials had been in touch with him to ask him what our secret was to maintain a stable membership and David said we don't really have a secret - but our meetings are friendly and welcoming, and because we have good numbers present, there's a real buzz, especially near the sales table. Some branches have less than 10 people and so the meetings are a bit flat.

He hoped we can carry on doing what we are doing. We have a number of number of new members who attend regularly – and Miranda and Peter were here

for their first AGM, and they had been coming through the year. Alec from Ringwood also comes regularly, after having found out about us at the New Forest show in July. He has even taken to supplying cakes for the meetings since then, so please be nice to him! Jane Williams was not at the AGM, but she lives locally and she has also attended most of our meetings through the year.

David mentioned that he had handed out the 2016 branch programme to the attendees at the AGM, and he would also be emailing it to members. Going through the programme, January is a month when it's difficult to book speakers and the weather can be dodgy, so we traditionally have a members meeting, allowing our own members to present and give a variety of talks. People seem to enjoy that meeting almost as much as any of the other meetings.

February can also be bad for weather, and indeed we had to cancel the meeting in 2015 due to snow on the day of the meeting. So we have decided to look back at the 2012 National Show - most of the committee and many members had attended the show in 2012, so between us, we have quite a few photographs from the event. It's a chance to see the top plants in the country - and David encouraged those who have not been before, to make the trip in up to Huntingdon in August 2016.

In March, Cliff Thompson will talk about Patagonia, and in April, Stuart Riley who owns the Plantlife nursery in Eastbourne will talk about 'What's New' - new plants he's found on his travels to the US and elsewhere. Stuart also always brings nice sales plants along.

In May Suzanne Mace - who is known for her expertise on mesembs - will talk about succulents 'other than mesembs'. In the same month we will also organise a car share trip to Havering Cactus Mart, which is held in Romford every other year, and this will be followed soon after by us putting on a display at Sparsholt College's Countryside Day. In June, we will have a Mini-show with judging explained, just for Miranda - she had been asking David 2-3 months ago how plants in the table shows were assessed. June will also see a Branch visit to Lullingstone Castle Gardens and, this will be followed by an Open Day at Dot England's. Apart from a collection of cacti and succulent plants, Dot also has a garden filled with a large variety of interesting plants, and she mentioned that the beach was nearby.

In July we would have a talk by David Minion on Southern California - David believed this was the first time we had a speaker cover this part of the

USA. In July we would also arrange a visit to the Oxford Branch Show, which is the best show in the country, other than the National. This year, the Show was being held in association with the Mammillaria Society. Later in the month Alice would again be hosting a Garden Party at her home in West Moors, and this would be followed shortly after by the New Forest Show, which is our busiest event of the year.

In August we would have another cultivation and propagation evening. August was also when the National Show would be held. Portsmouth Branch will be arranging a coach to travel up to the National Show, and they have kindly offered Southampton members a free ride. (The coach will leave from Cosham and there may be one or two other pick up points) - we will have more details later.

In September we will have Trevor Way speaking about plants from Baja, California - despite the name, this is actually a strip of land owned by Mexico. We will also have a display at Romsey Show, and there will be a branch visit to the Mesemb Study Group Show in Banstead - this event is held every two years.

In October we will have Terry Smale, who will speak about Mesembs in cultivation. In November, we will have Alice Vanden Bon give us the talk that was cancelled in 2015 - this will be a travelogue covering her visits to South Africa and it should cover a different range of plants than the ones Terry will speak about. November will also see Portsmouth host the Zone 11 Quiz. In December we will have the AGM and Christmas Social once again!

This ended David's report and we moved on a report from our treasurer, Alice. She mentioned that for once, we actually had the accounts ready in time for the AGM. Overall, the year was similar to previous years, although plant sales more successful and we also received more donations. We made a profit of £45 for the year, and this compares with last year's loss, where we incurred extra costs due to extra spending to celebrate the Branch's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Our funds were healthy, with over £7000 on deposit in our savings and current accounts. The 2015 accounts were adopted, and Colin Bielckus also agreed to do next year's accounts for us.

Our Display Manager Ivor mentioned that his report was in the newsletter. He stated that he would like more people to join in the monthly table shows.

For the newsletter / website, there was not much to report. There was one month when we had a high

attendance at the meeting and the printed newsletters ran out, however, they are all available for download from the branch website. Once the AGM was completed, I would update the branch website to feature the 2016 programme.

There weren't any other reports and after getting agreement that all committee members were willing to be re-elected, the committee was elected en-masse.

The final act of the evening – before we began tucking in to the food which members had brought in – was to present the Table Show trophies. Peter handed out the trophies and he repeated Ivor's call for more support, and suggested people try and enter just for a month, if they didn't have plants for every month.

This year, all 4 of the main trophies (Cactus open, Cactus intermediate, Succulent open, Succulent intermediate) were won by Ivor Biddlecombe. The Solent Cup, awarded for most points in the flowering plant class was won by Bruce Beckerleg, and the Ladies Cup, awarded for most points won by a female, was won by Sue Wilson.

*Vinay Shah*

## Some Cactus & Succulent articles

Some websites to while away the hours ....

**<http://northants.bcss.org.uk/>**

The BCSS Northants website features lot of articles, although I've not managed to find a single comprehensive index to all their articles yet.

**<http://www.oxford.bcss.org.uk/>**

The BCSS Oxford website has numerous articles which can easily reached from their archive page.

**<http://www.cactusexplorers.org.uk/>**

This is the home of the high quality Cactus Explorer's magazine – numerous editions are out there now, and they've recently also produced a special issue on the genus Echinocereus.

*Vinay Shah*

## Next Month's Meeting

Our next meeting will be held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February and will feature David Neville talking about the BCSS National Show from 2012, and he will be showing us pictures from that event. The 2012 Show was held at the same venue as this year's show, so this talk will provide a good indication of what to expect later in the year.

The February Table Show will consist of the **Eriosyce & Copiapoa** groups (cacti) and the **Crassulaceae** group (succulents). Please note that members can submit more than one entry in any of the classes, and that points will be earned for each placed entry.

The table show classes use the classifications from the *Guide to Shows 10<sup>th</sup> Edition* (contact me if you don't have a copy of this).

The Eriosyce and Copiapoa groups include *Austrocactus*, *Chileorebutia*, *Eriosyce*, *Horridocactus*, *Islaya*, *Neochilenia*, *Neoporteria*, *Pyrrhocactus*, *Rodentiophila*, *Thelocephala*, *Copiapoa* and *Pilocopiapoa*

The Crassulaceae group includes plants from the *Adromischus* Subgroup, *Aeonium* Subgroup, *Crassula* Subgroup, *Echeveria* Subgroup, *Sedum* Subgroup and *Sempervivum* Subgroup.

## Forthcoming Events

|     |                  |     |               |   |
|-----|------------------|-----|---------------|---|
| Sat | 9 <sup>th</sup>  | Jan | Isle of Wight | No Meeting                                  |
| Sat | 16 <sup>th</sup> | Jan | Portsmouth    | Short talks & discussions by Branch Members |
| Tue | 2 <sup>nd</sup>  | Feb | Southampton   | The 2012 National Show (David Neville)      |
| Sat | 13 <sup>th</sup> | Feb | Isle of Wight | Plant Auction, Members' Slides              |
| Sat | 20 <sup>th</sup> | Feb | Portsmouth    | Mesembs (Eddy Harris)                       |
| Tue | 1 <sup>st</sup>  | Mar | Southampton   | Patagonia (Cliff Thompson)                  |
| Sat | 12 <sup>th</sup> | Mar | Isle of Wight | Branch Quiz & Members' Talks                |
| Sat | 19 <sup>th</sup> | Mar | Portsmouth    | South Africa Part 1 (Tony Roberts)          |
| Tue | 5 <sup>th</sup>  | Apr | Southampton   | What's New (Stuart Riley)                   |

Branch website: <http://www.southampton.bcsc.org.uk>

Facebook : <https://www.facebook.com/southamptonbcsc>