

# British Cactus & Succulent Society

## Southampton & District Branch Newsletter

April 2006



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## Editorial

Last month I mentioned daffodils flowering in March – well, I wasn't expecting to have to wait until the 27<sup>th</sup> for mine to open! The sustained cold weather at the start of March certainly put a hold on the development of many plants. Even now, many tree branches are still completely bare and not showing much sign of life.

I watered my plants four times during March - twice on sunny days in the early part of the month, and more recently at the weekends when the weather has warmed up. The plants were looking very shrivelled initially but most have now started to plump up. There are hardly any signs of flower buds on the cacti though, so I think the cold weather has delayed flowering by a few weeks, compared to recent years.

## Announcements

Most of you will be aware that Jim Roskilly's wife Bett was undergoing medical treatment for cancer. It is very sad to report that she passed away on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> March. The funeral will be held on 11th April at Hollybrook Cemetery. I am sure all of our thoughts are with Jim.

Next month's meeting will take the form of a **Cultivation Evening**. If you want any specific topics discussed, please let Margaret and David know beforehand. Also, you are welcome to bring along any plants (well, cacti & succulents!) which need identification. Finally, if you picked up and sowed the seeds which Ivor handed out at the corresponding meeting last year, perhaps you can

bring in the results of your efforts for comparison with how others have fared.

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Please make a correction to your calendars and programmes regarding the date of the **Garden Event** at Whiteley Village - this has been moved to the first bank holiday in May. The Whiteley Village Shopping Outlet is signposted from Junction 9 of the M27, and if you have some spare time that weekend, please do come along and lend a hand. Parking is free and the shopping outlet has over 45 stores selling branded goods at discounted prices.

The BBC have recently been showing David Attenborough's latest series of documentaries, titled **Planet Earth**. If you missed the latest program which covered "Deserts", the show will be repeated on BBC2 next Saturday (8<sup>th</sup>) at 6:05 pm.

Portsmouth Branch have set up a group on Yahoo, which allows people to post questions and discuss cacti and succulent plants :  
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## Last Month's Meeting

### Plants of Interest

Ivor Biddlecombe had brought along some *Plants of Interest*. He said that he nearly always has something in flower throughout the year, but struggled this time because everything was still dormant.

First was *Crassula* cv. "Celia", which is a hybrid of *C. mesembryanthemopsis* and *C. susannae* which was also featured by David Corina last month. Apparently this hybrid is easier to grow than either of the parents.

With the worry of hosepipe bans, Ivor mentioned that there are quite a few succulents with low water requirements which you can grow outside without heat. He had brought along some plants that he had been growing outdoors for a few years.

*Mestoklema tuberosum* produces quite a big tuber which helps the plant survive dry conditions. It can take the cold if kept dry. Where it grows, it is called the Donkey mesemb, and it is used as fodder and fed to cattle. In the wild it grows to 3 feet high. It has pink-red flowers and makes a nice miniature bonsai plant.

*Bergeranthus scapiger* produces yellow flowers all through the summer. The plant is hardy, but his clay pot obviously wasn't – the rim was cracking. He had used the plant for some of our summer displays. It's been growing outdoors in a sheltered position for three years.

*Delosperma nubigenum* has no covering on the seed capsules, so the seeds are exposed when the capsules open. He has found that the plant is frost hardy when grown in well drained compost. It can trail over the edge of pots and over walls. The plant has thick fleshy leaves and produces yellow flowers.

Other bonsai-type plants included a *Crassula sarcocaulis* grown in a sheltered, well drained border. This is a good plant for cold greenhouse but had also proved itself to be hardy over the last three years.

Next was a very dark-leaved *Sempervivum* cv. "Edge of Night" which looked like it was made from bronze. The plant had over 30 heads. In the summertime this has ordinary green leaves like the common *S. tectorum*, but in the winter it goes almost black. Ivor said it was worth collecting a

few of the different varieties which are available, and mixing the light and dark ones makes a good display. They are easy to grow and require very little attention.

Next was a Christmas Cactus (*Schlumbergera*) which he had cross pollinated. The plant had produced several pods and he was curious to see if it would produce seeds. The plant had started flowering before Christmas and was still flowering in March. The dirt all over it was not intentional – another plant has fallen on it in the car.

A final couple of plants were for the table show, in case there weren't enough entries. A cristate *Echeveria* was quite unusual and a novelty. A *Dudleya* had done well in shows but last year he decided to clean off all the old leaves and ended up with a plant with just three leaves. After a year, the plant had recovered quite well. He said it was well worth taking a risk and the plant should go on to make a beautiful plant eventually. 7-8" across.

Moving on to the talk - the wife of the intended speaker Neil Oakman had called Margaret and David the day prior to the meeting to say that he had lost his voice and would be unable to give his talk. So a last minute change was hastily organised - Margaret and David Corina agreed to pull together a talk on their visit to South Africa (in the company of David Neville) in 2003.

### Kokerboom Country

The talk started with a slide titled "Kokerboom Country". Kokerboom is the local name for the quiver tree, *Aloe dichotoma*. David mentioned that the title slide had been scanned in from a book and then photographed from a computer screen.

We saw a picture of Margaret with one of the *Aloe dichotoma* plants, followed by a sketch map showing the region in which they travelled, the Northern part of Cape Province. Vanrhynsdorp is situated a couple of hundred miles north of Cape Town, and Springbok is regarded as the capital of the north with the smaller towns of Pofadder, Port Nolloth and Alexander Bay (diamond mining area) all within a couple of hours of driving. Up until the change of government, the term Cape Province covered the whole area but now the northern part is known as the "North West Province", and "Cape" covers the Southern area. So one has to be careful when interpreting references to these areas in older books.

The land was scrubby, but there had been rain recently and therefore some of the plants were flowering. A mesemb species with pink flowers was perhaps a *Drosanthemum*. When in flower, the plants were much easier to spot. David mentioned that they were uncertain about the identity of several of the plants, but the names had been checked with Derek Tribble. *Crassula montana* had flat leaves in crossed pairs. A *Conophytum uviforme* was growing near a *Cephalophyllum*. They saw some perfect plants but also many distressed ones. David mentioned that two features were promising when looking for plants in this region (the Knersvlakte) - rocky hills and passes, and quartz patches. Indeed, growing in a quartz patch at the side of the road was *Argyroderma delaetii*, so this could be considered the equivalent of a wild flower in Britain. They came across *Conophytum calculus* and an enormous *Pelargonium crithmifolium* which was a yard across. *Conophytum minutum* was very different from the previous one. Most of the Conophytums had managed formed many-headed clumps and they did stand out.

Next was *Euphorbia tuberculata*, identified as such on account of the white/red flowers. The plant colonies were small. *Sarcocaulon salmoniflorum* are lovely things but impossible to identify without flowers. Other than the dichotomas and one or two others, there weren't any nice looking aloes around although they did come across a nice colour / form of *Aloe falcata*. Aloes can be difficult to identify and Ian Acton said that one really needed to see the flowers.

The most widespread argyroderma is *A. fissum* and David this was a form of parallel evolution with argyroderma in the north matching gibbaeum in the south. The featured plant had a red flower and seed capsules. *Conophytum sufenstratum* was visible, but a few weeks later it would disappear in its own sheaths. *Antimima fenestrata* (*Ruschia pygmaea*) was a shrub with individual heads 2-3 mm across and it was very attractive. It was spread over ¼ mile on one hillside, and they never saw anywhere else, so it was plentiful in just a small area. Plants of *Dactyloopsis digitata* were smaller but lusher than the ones they saw on their 2005 trip.

The next picture was not of goat or rabbit droppings but the dark brown ¼ inch stems of *Tylecodon pygmaeus*. *Oophytum nanum*'s dark red bodies also showed up well in the quartz. They came across *Crassula columnaris* in flower. Gordon Rowley's book only mentions cream or

yellow flowers, but they found plants with orange flowers.

They saw a plant and thought it might be a *Tylecodon* but the flower buds did not seem right for a member of the Crassulaceae. It might be a newly described *Othonna* (wrinkleana or intermedia). Next was a plant described as the "Churchill plant" because of the angle of its upright succulent leaves. *Monilaria* is a winter grower and soon the leaves would die off. David said he had one which was growing quite well. He then found a book describing how to grow it and after following the instructions ended up killing it!

*Bulbines* are now becoming popular. They are small like *Haworthia*, and with *Bulbine fallax* one could see the family resemblance to haworthia and aloe. In the same place was *Adromischus filicaulis*, growing in a rock crevice and with a bit of sunburn. *Lachenalia kliprandensis* has white flowers with purple tips. An important plant is *Crassula muscosa* which deserves a medal - it is one of the most widespread plants in the west of the country. It varies considerably in closeness of leaf, shape of plant and how large or small it grows. Everyone should own one, but pray it doesn't have flowers since they stink!.

They found *Pelargonium alternans*, and a large *Othonna euphorbioides* which was 7-8 inches across. This was the plant that Anthony Mitchell handed out to members at one of our meetings in 2004. David retained the leftover plants so if anyone wants one, do let him know.

*Lapeirousia silenoides* grows from underground bulbs and has striking flowers - it is a member of the iris family. The leaves of *Crassula tomentosa* were very red. There were acres of *Cheiridopsis denticulata* and they saw thousands of this. There were not many in flower, but they managed to find one to photograph. They also found *Stomatium niveum* which was a surprise. At Springbok, they met up with Derek Tribble and Chris Rogerson. One morning they were virtually blindfolded and taken to a secret location. The target was a hill, they were looking for a gravel pan amongst low mounds, and they found *Conophytum stevens-jonesianum*. The day after, David Neville was kidnapped and taken on another mission which proved to be unsuccessful.

They found *Conophytum auriflorum*, *Conophytum bilobum* and *Mesembryanthemum barklyi*. The latter has 4" long leaves and is attractive when small. They found very few haworthias amongst

their travels, but here was *H. arachnoidea*. It was hiding in a sheltered crevice, and they were lucky to have found it. *Orbea namaquensis* has short stout stems. They found their first *Anacampseros* (now *Avonia*) *papyracea*, followed by the smaller *A. albissima* with over 20 stems. They also found *Anacampseros baeseckeii* – a form with brown bristles, and then the normal form without the bristles.

*Euphorbia rudis* is poisonous, and they came across *Crassula deceptor* – this was the golf ball rather than columnar form. We also saw the kokerboom which Margaret was hugging in the early picture in the introduction. Next was *Lithops marmorata*. You tend not to find large examples of lithops and they rarely make more than two heads in the wild. *Dinteranthus microsperma puberulus* was a one-off discovery. As they headed further north, the vegetation was getting sparser and more scrubby. One exception to the rule about lithops was a 20-headed *Lithops olivacea* – it was growing in the shade at the foot of a rock and nothing else was there to take a share of the available moisture.

*Haworthia tessellata* was not easy to photograph since it was sheltering in the shade in a rock crevice - facing south away from the sun. *Anacampseros* (*Avonia*) *recurvata* ssp. *minuta* was found amongst lots of *Anacampseros* growing quite close together - the best was *A. alstonii* (*Avonia quinaria*) some 4 inches long. Unfortunately it was too early in the season for them to be in flower. *Euphorbia brakdamensis* was a member of the caput medusae group. They didn't see any other Euphorbias for miles around. They also found *Bulbine mesembryanthemoides* ssp. *namaensis*.

After the mid-meeting break, we continued with a view of Mcdougalls Bay. There were several plants of *Fenestraria aurantiaca* on the beach, although they were growing flush to the ground and would have been impossible to spot without their yellow-orange flowers. A view from the South African side of the border with Namibia, at Khubus Road. In the distance was the Orange river. They stopped in the hope of finding a pelargonium and Margaret had to put up with a couple of sulking Davids who were not as interested in this genus. They found *Psammophora modesta* which only occurs near the Orange river. David Neville had said there should be lithops here, and they couldn't see any until David Corina spotted a *Lithops herrei* right between his feet.

More plants resembling rabbit droppings were actually *Tylecodon shaeferianus*. You can see more of the plant if you dig around the visible part. They also found *Conophytum saxitanum* and a creeping Senecio, *S. sulcicalyx*. It creeps all around and has yellow flowers typical of the compositae. *Othonna furcata* looked like a dwarf tree.

They weren't expecting to find *Cheiridopsis verrucosa* this far north. *Pelargonium cortusiflorum* growing in this light and conditions was incredibly tight and short jointed - it also had unusual flower buds. A Sarcocaulon with pink flowers and red blotches at the base was *S. multifidum*. There were some baby plants but unfortunately no seed. Trichocaulons were well camouflaged, but once you see one, you could see the others. There was a picture of *T. marlothii* with 3 heads (grandson) - and granddad had 8 heads, including one cristate. They rushed back to the car to put some new film in the camera and then couldn't find this plant again for half an hour!

The next plant was subsequently identified by Derek Tribble as *Tylecodon bucholziana* – it looked just like a load of twigs. A photogenic Aloe might have been *A. falcata*. The next plant was not upside down, it was just a very stressed plant growing in a crevice and casting an unusual shadow – *Adromischus montium-klinghardtii*. It was a lot greener in greener in their green house!

*Sarcocaulon patersonii* has a waxy stem and is known as Bushman's candle since it burns well. It has pink flowers. At Beauvallon, there are 20 acres of ostrich farms (the majority of the farms are further south). They found a tall aloe - *Aloe khamiesbergensis* which must have been quite an old plant. In a typical rock crevice, they found a mixture of conophytums, lichens, mesembs and crassulas.

*Pelargonium klinghardtense* was found at the edge of the Klinghardt mountains. It is a nice pachycaul with chunky stems and pink flowers. The leaves will die off through the summer. In this country, imported plants are fine initially but soon go leggy. Just inland from Port Nolloth is Augrabies Hill, and there are lots of interesting plants here. They found *Tylecodon racemosus*. *Conophytum stephanii* grows here, but it's at the top of a cliff and only David Neville managed to photograph it. There were many plants of *Mitrophyllum grande* on the mountain side, with 3-4 inch long leaves. These went squelch when stepped on and managed to stain Margaret's jeans. They found a *Tylecodon*

*bucholziana* with a marbled stem and *Anacampseros namaquensis*. In a cleft in the rock was *Crassula montana* and *Conophytum meyeri* (possibly *C. bilobum*)

*Tylecodon racemosus* in flower was rather a sad plant. *Quaqua parviflora* was suggested by Derek Tribble for the next plant. A *Cephalophyllum* might have been *C. rigidum*. They also found a big clump of *Conophytum bilobum* with over 100 heads. An unknown flower might be *Sarcocoulon flavescens* – it was a big plant 2-3 feet across. A hill they nicknamed “Big Yellow Hill” was covered with yellow and pink flowers. The pink flowers were due to *Meyerophytum meyeri* and the yellow flowers were *Cheiridopsis pillansii*.

*Crassula sericea* is quite localised and scarce in Northern Namaqualand, so was quite a find, according to Derek Tribble. A bulbous monocot looked like it was a member of the genus *Ornithoglossum*, perhaps *O. vulgare* but the dark flower colour was unusual. *Lachenalia carnosia* had red flowers and was growing well in the light. *Euphorbia filiflora* had a nice red-green colour and was relatively common. *Cotyledon orbiculata* was in flower, with colours ranging from pale pink through yellow to dark orange. Another *Anacampseros* found here was *A. lanceolata*. A comment from the audience about flecks of gold in a photo of *Crassula namaquensis* brought the response that it was just reflections of sunlight in the quartz. *Cheiridopsis carolii-schmidtii* has grey leaves.

Margaret’s favourite place was just north of Steinkopf, on the way to Namibia. There was no sign of human habitation. They had been forewarned that the border crossing can take quite some time and were pleased to just beat three coachloads of tourists. They spent three days of sightseeing in Namibia. Fish River Canyon is the best in the Southern hemisphere. At Luderitz, on the coast, one can see the sea mists rolling in.

*Pelargonium ceratophyllum* was very nice, with succulent leaves. This is impossible to grow in greenhouse and it must have been a really old plant. At the coast, the weather can be quite extreme and they were also warned that sandstorms can strip the paint off cars. A 6 inch lizard was beautifully camouflaged. They found a one headed *Lithops optica*, which was also well camouflaged in the dirt. A baby *Othonna furcata* was 6-8 inches tall. *Pelargonium cortusifolium*. had smaller leaves and was more wrinkled than the plant they had seen before – it was growing even

harder. The plants leaning away from the wind and were sloping inland. A brown *Crassula elegans* v. *namibiensis* was very well camouflaged. Between Aus and Rosh Pinah (a mining dormitory town), they were at the edge of the Namib desert. They walked around the base of a rock outcrop and found *Crassula mesembryanthemopsis*. It was very different in appearance to the ones we grow in cultivation.

They found *Aloe hereroensis* and what was possibly the northern version of *Aloe variegata*, *Aloe sladeniana* which is smaller and more difficult to grow. There was nice fan of leaves on *Boophone disticha*, the plant was some 2 feet across. The flower are similar to those of an alium. They found an *Ebracteola* in the middle of nowhere and were puzzled about how it might have got there. There was a strange sound in the background which they were unable to resolve this until they spotted a troop of baboons barking at them, from the top of a ridge. This was quite threatening, rather like a scene from *Planet of the Apes!* There was a 6 foot fence between them and the baboons and they thought they could make it back to the car before the baboons could reach them, but it was an uncomfortable experience.

Heading back towards the South African border, they found *Hoodia gordonii* and *Hoodia bainsii*. There was a nice flower on a large specimen of *H. gordonii*. *Commifera* also grow in this area and when they spotted a chunky plant, they thought they had found one, but it turned out to be *Tylecodon paniculatus* at its northern extreme. The plant was several feet tall. It is poisonous so farmers tend to kick it out. They also found two similar species of *Euphorbia* – *E. hottentotta* and *E. vivosa*. Both are attractive and grow large in no time. The last stop before heading back to Springbok was to photograph a baby kokerboom. They were back where they had started – and not a cactus in sight!

Vinay Shah

**Table Show – March 2006**

There were 17 entries in the March table show.

	<b>Cacti – Rebutia Group</b>	<b>Succulents – Echeveria Group</b>
Open	(1) P Clemow Rebutia heliosa	(1) B Beckerleg Echeveria lilacina
	(2) B Beckerleg Sulcorebutia rauschii	(2) T Grech Echeveria lilacina
	(3) T Grech Rebutia sp.	(3) J Roskilly Echeveria species (F042)
Intermediate	(1) P Clemow Sulcorebutia tuberculata	(1) J Roskilly Echeveria sp.
	(2) B Beckerleg Weingartia riograndensis	(2) J Burnay Dudleya thraskii (?)
	(3) P Clemow Weingartia erinacea	(3) B Beckerleg Echeveria lauii

*Ivor Biddlecombe*

**Next Month's Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on 2nd of May and will take the form of a cultivation evening. Different topics likely to be of interest to anyone growing cacti and succulent plants will be discussed by David Neville and David Corina, and the audience will be welcome to share their own experiences.

If you have any specific items which you would like to see covered, please let Margaret or David Corina know ahead of the meeting. And if you've been growing plants with unknown names or where the labels have faded, bring them in and our experts will try and identify them for you.

**Forthcoming Events**

Sat 15 <sup>th</sup> Apr	Portsmouth	Bring and Buy Sale
Sat 15 <sup>th</sup> Apr-	Romsey	Spring Flower and Garden Show, Broadlands, Romsey
Mon 17 <sup>th</sup> Apr		
Fri 21 <sup>st</sup> Apr	Isle of Wight	"Alpines in Chile" – John Hughes
Sat 29 <sup>th</sup> Apr-	Whiteley	Display and Sales @ Outdoor Home & Garden Show,
Mon 1 <sup>st</sup> May		Whiteley Village, M27 Junction 9
Tue 2 <sup>nd</sup> May	Southampton	Cultivation Evening
Fri 12 <sup>th</sup> May	Isle of Wight	Pre-show preparations @ Peter Collard's
Sat 20 <sup>th</sup> May	Portsmouth	"Looking Back - C & S growing since 1965" – John Hughes
Sat 20 <sup>th</sup> May	Isle of Wight	Branch Annual Show – Church Hall, Town Lane, Newport
Mon 22 <sup>nd</sup> May	Southampton	(TBC) Committee Meeting (@79 Shirley Avenue)
Sat 27 <sup>th</sup> May	Portsmouth	Branch Annual Show – Wickham Community Hall, Wickham
Tue 6 <sup>th</sup> Jun	Southampton	"Rebutias and Sulcos" – John Pilbeam

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Next was a very dark-leaved *Sempervivum* cv. "Edge of Night" which looked like it was made from bronze. The plant had over 30 heads. In the summertime this has ordinary green leaves like the common *S. tectorum*, but in the winter it goes almost black. Ivor said it was worth collecting a

few of the different varieties which are available, and mixing the light and dark ones makes a good display. They are easy to grow and require very little attention.

Next was a Christmas Cactus (*Schlumbergera*) which he had cross pollinated. The plant had produced several pods and he was curious to see if it would produce seeds. The plant had started flowering before Christmas and was still flowering in March. The dirt all over it was not intentional – another plant has fallen on it in the car.

A final couple of plants were for the table show, in case there weren't enough entries. A cristate *Echeveria* was quite unusual and a novelty. A *Dudleya* had done well in shows but last year he decided to clean off all the old leaves and ended up with a plant with just three leaves. After a year, the plant had recovered quite well. He said it was well worth taking a risk and the plant should go on to make a beautiful plant eventually. 7-8" across.

Moving on to the talk - the wife of the intended speaker Neil Oakman had called Margaret and David the day prior to the meeting to say that he had lost his voice and would be unable to give his talk. So a last minute change was hastily organised - Margaret and David Corina agreed to pull together a talk on their visit to South Africa (in the company of David Neville) in 2003.

### Kokerboom Country

The talk started with a slide titled "Kokerboom Country". Kokerboom is the local name for the quiver tree, *Aloe dichotoma*. David mentioned that the title slide had been scanned in from a book and then photographed from a computer screen.

We saw a picture of Margaret with one of the *Aloe dichotoma* plants, followed by a sketch map showing the region in which they travelled, the Northern part of Cape Province. Vanrhynsdorp is situated a couple of hundred miles north of Cape Town, and Springbok is regarded as the capital of the north with the smaller towns of Pofadder, Port Nolloth and Alexander Bay (diamond mining area) all within a couple of hours of driving. Up until the change of government, the term Cape Province covered the whole area but now the northern part is known as the "North West Province", and "Cape" covers the Southern area. So one has to be careful when interpreting references to these areas in older books.

The land was scrubby, but there had been rain recently and therefore some of the plants were flowering. A mesemb species with pink flowers was perhaps a *Drosanthemum*. When in flower, the plants were much easier to spot. David mentioned that they were uncertain about the identity of several of the plants, but the names had been checked with Derek Tribble. *Crassula montana* had flat leaves in crossed pairs. A *Conophytum uviforme* was growing near a *Cephalophyllum*. They saw some perfect plants but also many distressed ones. David mentioned that two features were promising when looking for plants in this region (the Knersvlakte) - rocky hills and passes, and quartz patches. Indeed, growing in a quartz patch at the side of the road was *Argyroderma delaetii*, so this could be considered the equivalent of a wild flower in Britain. They came across *Conophytum calculus* and an enormous *Pelargonium crithmifolium* which was a yard across. *Conophytum minutum* was very different from the previous one. Most of the Conophytums had managed formed many-headed clumps and they did stand out.

Next was *Euphorbia tuberculata*, identified as such on account of the white/red flowers. The plant colonies were small. *Sarcocaulon salmoniflorum* are lovely things but impossible to identify without flowers. Other than the dichotomas and one or two others, there weren't any nice looking aloes around although they did come across a nice colour / form of *Aloe falcata*. Aloes can be difficult to identify and Ian Acton said that one really needed to see the flowers.

The most widespread argyroderma is *A. fissum* and David this was a form of parallel evolution with argyroderma in the north matching gibbaeum in the south. The featured plant had a red flower and seed capsules. *Conophytum sufenstratum* was visible, but a few weeks later it would disappear in its own sheaths. *Antimima fenestrata* (*Ruschia pygmaea*) was a shrub with individual heads 2-3 mm across and it was very attractive. It was spread over ¼ mile on one hillside, and they never saw anywhere else, so it was plentiful in just a small area. Plants of *Dactyloopsis digitata* were smaller but lusher than the ones they saw on their 2005 trip.

The next picture was not of goat or rabbit droppings but the dark brown ¼ inch stems of *Tylecodon pygmaeus*. *Oophytum nanum*'s dark red bodies also showed up well in the quartz. They came across *Crassula columnaris* in flower. Gordon Rowley's book only mentions cream or

yellow flowers, but they found plants with orange flowers.

They saw a plant and thought it might be a *Tylecodon* but the flower buds did not seem right for a member of the Crassulaceae. It might be a newly described *Othonna* (winkleana or intermedia). Next was a plant described as the "Churchill plant" because of the angle of its upright succulent leaves. *Monilaria* is a winter grower and soon the leaves would die off. David said he had one which was growing quite well. He then found a book describing how to grow it and after following the instructions ended up killing it!

*Bulbines* are now becoming popular. They are small like *Haworthia*, and with *Bulbine fallax* one could see the family resemblance to haworthia and aloe. In the same place was *Adromischus filicaulis*, growing in a rock crevice and with a bit of sunburn. *Lachenalia kliprandensis* has white flowers with purple tips. An important plant is *Crassula muscosa* which deserves a medal - it is one of the most widespread plants in the west of the country. It varies considerably in closeness of leaf, shape of plant and how large or small it grows. Everyone should own one, but pray it doesn't have flowers since they stink!

They found *Pelargonium alternans*, and a large *Othonna euphorbioides* which was 7-8 inches across. This was the plant that Anthony Mitchell handed out to members at one of our meetings in 2004. David retained the leftover plants so if anyone wants one, do let him know.

*Lapeirousia silenoides* grows from underground bulbs and has striking flowers - it is a member of the iris family. The leaves of *Crassula tomentosa* were very red. There were acres of *Cheiridopsis denticulata* and they saw thousands of this. There were not many in flower, but they managed to find one to photograph. They also found *Stomatium niveum* which was a surprise. At Springbok, they met up with Derek Tribble and Chris Rogerson. One morning they were virtually blindfolded and taken to a secret location. The target was a hill, they were looking for a gravel pan amongst low mounds, and they found *Conophytum stevens-jonesianum*. The day after, David Neville was kidnapped and taken on another mission which proved to be unsuccessful.

They found *Conophytum auriflorum*, *Conophytum bilobum* and *Mesembryanthemum barklyi*. The latter has 4" long leaves and is attractive when small. They found very few haworthias amongst

their travels, but here was *H. arachnoidea*. It was hiding in a sheltered crevice, and they were lucky to have found it. *Orbea namaquensis* has short stout stems. They found their first *Anacampseros* (now *Avonia*) *papyracea*, followed by the smaller *A. albissima* with over 20 stems. They also found *Anacampseros baeseckeii* – a form with brown bristles, and then the normal form without the bristles.

*Euphorbia rudis* is poisonous, and they came across *Crassula deceptor* – this was the golf ball rather than columnar form. We also saw the kokerboom which Margaret was hugging in the early picture in the introduction. Next was *Lithops marmorata*. You tend not to find large examples of lithops and they rarely make more than two heads in the wild. *Dinteranthus microsperma puberulus* was a one-off discovery. As they headed further north, the vegetation was getting sparser and more scrubby. One exception to the rule about lithops was a 20-headed *Lithops olivacea* – it was growing in the shade at the foot of a rock and nothing else was there to take a share of the available moisture.

*Haworthia tessellata* was not easy to photograph since it was sheltering in the shade in a rock crevice - facing south away from the sun. *Anacampseros* (*Avonia*) *recurvata* ssp. *minuta* was found amongst lots of *Anacampseros* growing quite close together - the best was *A. alstonii* (*Avonia quinaria*) some 4 inches long. Unfortunately it was too early in the season for them to be in flower. *Euphorbia brakdamensis* was a member of the caput medusae group. They didn't see any other Euphorbias for miles around. They also found *Bulbine mesembryanthemoides* ssp. *namaensis*.

After the mid-meeting break, we continued with a view of Mcdougalls Bay. There were several plants of *Fenestraria aurantiaca* on the beach, although they were growing flush to the ground and would have been impossible to spot without their yellow-orange flowers. A view from the South African side of the border with Namibia, at Khubus Road. In the distance was the Orange river. They stopped in the hope of finding a pelargonium and Margaret had to put up with a couple of sulking Davids who were not as interested in this genus. They found *Psammophora modesta* which only occurs near the Orange river. David Neville had said there should be lithops here, and they couldn't see any until David Corina spotted a *Lithops herrei* right between his feet.

More plants resembling rabbit droppings were actually *Tylecodon shaeferianus*. You can see more of the plant if you dig around the visible part. They also found *Conophytum saxitanum* and a creeping Senecio, *S. sulcicalyx*. It creeps all around and has yellow flowers typical of the compositae. *Othonna furcata* looked like a dwarf tree.

They weren't expecting to find *Cheiridopsis verrucosa* this far north. *Pelargonium cortusiflorum* growing in this light and conditions was incredibly tight and short jointed - it also had unusual flower buds. A Sarcocaulon with pink flowers and red blotches at the base was *S. multifidum*. There were some baby plants but unfortunately no seed. Trichocaulons were well camouflaged, but once you see one, you could see the others. There was a picture of *T. marlothii* with 3 heads (grandson) - and granddad had 8 heads, including one cristate. They rushed back to the car to put some new film in the camera and then couldn't find this plant again for half an hour!

The next plant was subsequently identified by Derek Tribble as *Tylecodon bucholziana* – it looked just like a load of twigs. A photogenic Aloe might have been *A. falcata*. The next plant was not upside down, it was just a very stressed plant growing in a crevice and casting an unusual shadow – *Adromischus montium-klinghardtii*. It was a lot greener in greener in their green house!

*Sarcocaulon patersonii* has a waxy stem and is known as Bushman's candle since it burns well. It has pink flowers. At Beauvallon, there are 20 acres of ostrich farms (the majority of the farms are further south). They found a tall aloe - *Aloe khamiesbergensis* which must have been quite an old plant. In a typical rock crevice, they found a mixture of conophytums, lichens, mesembs and crassulas.

*Pelargonium klinghardtense* was found at the edge of the Klinghardt mountains. It is a nice pachycaul with chunky stems and pink flowers. The leaves will die off through the summer. In this country, imported plants are fine initially but soon go leggy. Just inland from Port Nolloth is Augrabies Hill, and there are lots of interesting plants here. They found *Tylecodon racemosus*. *Conophytum stephanii* grows here, but it's at the top of a cliff and only David Neville managed to photograph it. There were many plants of *Mitrophyllum grande* on the mountain side, with 3-4 inch long leaves. These went squelch when stepped on and managed to stain Margaret's jeans. They found a *Tylecodon*

*bucholziana* with a marbled stem and *Anacampseros namaquensis*. In a cleft in the rock was *Crassula montana* and *Conophytum meyeri* (possibly *C. bilobum*)

*Tylecodon racemosus* in flower was rather a sad plant. *Quaqua parviflora* was suggested by Derek Tribble for the next plant. A *Cephalophyllum* might have been *C. rigidum*. They also found a big clump of *Conophytum bilobum* with over 100 heads. An unknown flower might be *Sarcocoulon flavescens* – it was a big plant 2-3 feet across. A hill they nicknamed “Big Yellow Hill” was covered with yellow and pink flowers. The pink flowers were due to *Meyerophytum meyeri* and the yellow flowers were *Cheiridopsis pillansii*.

*Crassula sericea* is quite localised and scarce in Northern Namaqualand, so was quite a find, according to Derek Tribble. A bulbous monocot looked like it was a member of the genus *Ornithoglossum*, perhaps *O. vulgare* but the dark flower colour was unusual. *Lachenalia carnosia* had red flowers and was growing well in the light. *Euphorbia filiflora* had a nice red-green colour and was relatively common. *Cotyledon orbiculata* was in flower, with colours ranging from pale pink through yellow to dark orange. Another *Anacampseros* found here was *A. lanceolata*. A comment from the audience about flecks of gold in a photo of *Crassula namaquensis* brought the response that it was just reflections of sunlight in the quartz. *Cheiridopsis carolii-schmidtii* has grey leaves.

Margaret’s favourite place was just north of Steinkopf, on the way to Namibia. There was no sign of human habitation. They had been forewarned that the border crossing can take quite some time and were pleased to just beat three coachloads of tourists. They spent three days of sightseeing in Namibia. Fish River Canyon is the best in the Southern hemisphere. At Luderitz, on the coast, one can see the sea mists rolling in.

*Pelargonium ceratophyllum* was very nice, with succulent leaves. This is impossible to grow in greenhouse and it must have been a really old plant. At the coast, the weather can be quite extreme and they were also warned that sandstorms can strip the paint off cars. A 6 inch lizard was beautifully camouflaged. They found a one headed *Lithops optica*, which was also well camouflaged in the dirt. A baby *Othonna furcata* was 6-8 inches tall. *Pelargonium cortusifolium*. had smaller leaves and was more wrinkled than the plant they had seen before – it was growing even

harder. The plants leaning away from the wind and were sloping inland. A brown *Crassula elegans* v. *namibiensis* was very well camouflaged. Between Aus and Rosh Pinah (a mining dormitory town), they were at the edge of the Namib desert. They walked around the base of a rock outcrop and found *Crassula mesembryanthemopsis*. It was very different in appearance to the ones we grow in cultivation.

They found *Aloe hereroensis* and what was possibly the northern version of *Aloe variegata*, *Aloe sladeniana* which is smaller and more difficult to grow. There was nice fan of leaves on *Boophone disticha*, the plant was some 2 feet across. The flower are similar to those of an alium. They found an *Ebracteola* in the middle of nowhere and were puzzled about how it might have got there. There was a strange sound in the background which they were unable to resolve this until they spotted a troop of baboons barking at them, from the top of a ridge. This was quite threatening, rather like a scene from *Planet of the Apes!* There was a 6 foot fence between them and the baboons and they thought they could make it back to the car before the baboons could reach them, but it was an uncomfortable experience.

Heading back towards the South African border, they found *Hoodia gordonii* and *Hoodia bainsii*. There was a nice flower on a large specimen of *H. gordonii*. *Commifera* also grow in this area and when they spotted a chunky plant, they thought they had found one, but it turned out to be *Tylecodon paniculatus* at its northern extreme. The plant was several feet tall. It is poisonous so farmers tend to kick it out. They also found two similar species of *Euphorbia* – *E. hottentotta* and *E. vivosa*. Both are attractive and grow large in no time. The last stop before heading back to Springbok was to photograph a baby kokerboom. They were back where they had started – and not a cactus in sight!

Vinay Shah

**Table Show – March 2006**

There were 17 entries in the March table show.

	<b>Cacti – Rebutia Group</b>	<b>Succulents – Echeveria Group</b>
Open	(1) P Clemow Rebutia heliosa	(1) B Beckerleg Echeveria lilacina
	(2) B Beckerleg Sulcorebutia rauschii	(2) T Grech Echeveria lilacina
	(3) T Grech Rebutia sp.	(3) J Roskilly Echeveria species (F042)
Intermediate	(1) P Clemow Sulcorebutia tuberculata	(1) J Roskilly Echeveria sp.
	(2) B Beckerleg Weingartia riograndensis	(2) J Burnay Dudleya thraskii (?)
	(3) P Clemow Weingartia erinacea	(3) B Beckerleg Echeveria lauii

*Ivor Biddlecombe*

**Next Month's Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on 2nd of May and will take the form of a cultivation evening. Different topics likely to be of interest to anyone growing cacti and succulent plants will be discussed by David Neville and David Corina, and the audience will be welcome to share their own experiences.

If you have any specific items which you would like to see covered, please let Margaret or David Corina know ahead of the meeting. And if you've been growing plants with unknown names or where the labels have faded, bring them in and our experts will try and identify them for you.

**Forthcoming Events**

Sat 15 <sup>th</sup> Apr	Portsmouth	Bring and Buy Sale
Sat 15 <sup>th</sup> Apr-	Romsey	Spring Flower and Garden Show, Broadlands, Romsey
Mon 17 <sup>th</sup> Apr		
Fri 21 <sup>st</sup> Apr	Isle of Wight	"Alpines in Chile" – John Hughes
Sat 29 <sup>th</sup> Apr-	Whiteley	Display and Sales @ Outdoor Home & Garden Show,
Mon 1 <sup>st</sup> May		Whiteley Village, M27 Junction 9
Tue 2 <sup>nd</sup> May	Southampton	Cultivation Evening
Fri 12 <sup>th</sup> May	Isle of Wight	Pre-show preparations @ Peter Collard's
Sat 20 <sup>th</sup> May	Portsmouth	"Looking Back - C & S growing since 1965" – John Hughes
Sat 20 <sup>th</sup> May	Isle of Wight	Branch Annual Show – Church Hall, Town Lane, Newport
Mon 22 <sup>nd</sup> May	Southampton	(TBC) Committee Meeting (@79 Shirley Avenue)
Sat 27 <sup>th</sup> May	Portsmouth	Branch Annual Show – Wickham Community Hall, Wickham
Tue 6 <sup>th</sup> Jun	Southampton	"Rebutias and Sulcos" – John Pilbeam

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