

British Cactus & Succulent Society

Southampton & District Branch Newsletter

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Editorial

Although we have seen a couple of frosts during the past month, the weather continues to be mild for the time of year. As expected, some dahlias in my garden went completely black at the first hard frost, but four of my roses continue to bloom. Interestingly, the colours of the flowers on these bushes are all pale versions of the flowers that opened in the summer months.

In my conservatory, there are still some lingering signs of flowers on a few of the mesembs. *Aloe* 'Lizard Lips' is in flower, but the most eye-catching item at the moment is *Clivia caulescens*. The plant was given to me by David and Margaret Corina earlier in the year and it is now carrying over 15 pendant, tubular flowers. These are about 2 inches long, and deep orange with a green tip. It would be interesting to cross this with *Clivia miniata*, but the latter tends to flower in the late spring, so to achieve this, one would need to store pollen from one species and use it when the other comes into flower.

Announcements

Today's meeting is of course the **Annual General Meeting**. Before we move to the recreational part of the evening (and the food and drink!), reports will be delivered by the main officers. Those reports, and others, are included in this newsletter.

The **2005 Branch programme** will be available from the front table. I think you'll find that we again lined up a varied and interesting selection of talks and events for next year. The Zone 11 programme is being prepared, and should be available by the time of our next meeting.

Next month's meeting will consist of a number of short talks presented by branch members. If you would like to talk for a few minutes about any of your plants or plant-related experiences, please do let one of the committee know.

This edition of the newsletter is due to be mailed to all branch members who do not attend our monthly meetings. Of course we would be very pleased to see all members in person, but if you are unable to get to our meetings, then I would like to remind you that the newsletter can be download from the branch's website.

Finally, Reading & Basingstoke Branch will hold a **Convention and Mini Mart** at Viabes Craft Centre, Basingstoke on Sunday, March 13th 2005. The speakers will be Graham Charles (Highlights of Brazil), Jon Miller (Mexico) and Terry Smale (Winter growing succulents from the Cape). Plant sales will include Richard & Wendy Edginton, John Pilbeam, Doug Sizmur, Stuart Riley, Phil White, Terry Smale, Graham Charles and members of Reading Branch. Tickets are £10; further details available from: <http://www.reading-and-basingstoke-bcss.co.uk/>

Last Month's Meeting

Plants of Interest

For this meeting, there were two contributors to *Plants of Interest*. David Corina had brought along a large collection of miniature and dwarf

varieties. There were too many plants to talk about, so he suggested that people examined them during the break. The one plant he did mention was *Gasteria armstrongii*. He found it very hard to remove the old dried-up leaves, and suggested the use of some fine tweezers. David gave me the names of all the plants, so if anyone is into growing miniatures, they might want to look some of these up:

Adromischus marianae v herrei, *Meyerophytum meyeri*, *Antiminima sp.*, *Dichrocaulon sp. Nova*, *Delosperma sphalmanthoides*, *Conophytum publicalyx*, *Conophytum swanepoelianum ssp. proliferans*, *Agave filifera compacta*, *Sinocrassula yunnanensis*, *Frithia pulchra minor*, *Kalanchoe rhombopilosa* (green form), *Crassula socialis*, *Orostachys minutus*, *Anacampseros subnuda*, *Glottiphyllum pygmaeum*, *Gasteria liliputana*, *Dudleya 'Little Sprite'*, *Sansevieria sp. Crassula cv. 'Pagoda Village'*, *Monanthes polyphylla*, *Aloe rauhii x saundersae*, *Aloe 'Pepe' (descoingsii x haworthioides)*, *Neohenricia sibbettii*, *Haworthia parksiana* (small form), *Haworthia nigra v. diversifolia* "nana" and *Gasteria armstrongii* (miniature form).

The second group of *Plants of Interest* consisted of four flowering aloes, brought along by Ian Acton. First was *Aloe bakeri* which comes from Madagascar. His plant had been obtained from Karlheinz Uhlig of Waiblingen, a small town north east of Stuttgart. It produces typical tubular flowers, which are quite small, on strong stems. Offsets are formed below soil level close to the main stem and these can usually be detached with their own roots. Ian mentioned he had donated a plant of this to the raffle.

Aloe bowiea comes from the Eastern Cape Province, around Port Elizabeth in South Africa but it is an endangered species due to urban sprawl. It is commonly (and incorrectly) known as *Chamaealoe africana*. The individual plants are small, forming clumps which eventually become dense mats. The leaves are thin and wiry, growing upwards unlike most aloes. The flowers are very small and uninteresting. Plants can easily be propagated by dividing up clumps.

Aloe descoingsii comes from Madagascar. This plant had been obtained from Clive Innes, who started Hollygate Cactus Nursery, now run by tonight's guest speaker, Terry Hewitt. The plant has delicate bell-like flowers on slender stems, unlike most other aloes. The plants form clumps which can be divided. It has a tendency to lose its

roots if over-watered, but he has managed to get them up to a 5" size pot.

Aloe ellenbeckii is named after a German botanist and it occurs in the area where Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia meet, although it is rare on Ethiopian soil. These are tribal bad lands which are not likely to be visited by tourists. On a visit to Ethiopia last February, Ian was unable to get to this area despite having a 4WD, driver and guide! This plant had been obtained from Rodney Sims when he spoke at our branch last year. It is related to *Aloe maculata* and produces typical tubular aloe flowers on a strong stalk. It produces offsets by underground stolons, and looks as though it could become rampant if given space.

Thanks are due to Peter Down for providing the following write up of last month's talk.

The Hollygate Cactus Garden

The Hollygate Collection was set up over 40 years ago by Clive Innes at Ashington, about 10 miles north of Worthing, with glasshouses big enough to have the plants bedded out. It soon became internationally known and many plant introductions to Britain came through Hollygate. Terry Hewitt has been involved in the running of the collection for most of that time and he has won many prizes at Chelsea for his displays.

Terry started by showing us an idea of what the nursery was like. There was an enormous glasshouse for the desert plants, a smaller one for the jungle cacti and epiphytic plants, and yet others for seed raising and propagation, and a considerable space for sale plants. For seed raising and propagation, he said that high level shelves got better results than side benches. For those of us with much smaller greenhouses, high shelves are difficult to water and the resultant drain-off can also be a problem. While showing us around the collection with general views, we saw some outstanding clumps of Mammillarias, a fine grouping of Sulcorebutias and some equally impressive old Copiapoas.

We were next shown individual plants from the Mammillaria group. The most popular plant with the general public is *M. Zeilmanniana*, quickly forming clumps and covering itself in pink flowers. *M. hahniana* forms impressive solitary plants with varying amounts of hair in the axils topped off with reddish flowers. The unusual *M. plumosa* has feathery spines and produces creamy

white flowers in mid-winter. Next, we saw a large clump of *M. compressa* which splits dichotomously (1 head becomes 2, the 2 becomes 4, the 4 becomes 8 etc). This was from the collection in California of Woody Minnich, which Terry had visited while his daughter was working in Los Angeles for a year. *M. compressa* is very variable in spination and there are some very attractive forms available. Then we saw 3 miniatures; *M. goldii*, a small plant with big flowers, *M. albiflora* (formerly *M. herrerae* v. *albiflora*) and *M. lenta*, a very neat white-spined plant bearing pink flowers.

These were followed by *M. lindsayi*, *M. candida*, and *M. poselgeri* (possibly labelled *Cochemiea poselgeri* in our collections) with distinctive bright red flowers. The yellow flowered and yellow spined *M. marksiana* makes a welcome colour change in a group of mamms. Back to Woody's collection, we saw a large clump of *M. crucigera* which Terry estimated must have been at least 100 years old. *M. matudae* is a hanging mammillaria and I have seen several collections where it is hung upside down in its special pot, hanging down about a foot (0.3m). Another yellow flowered plant was previously classified as *Dolichothele*; this was followed by an oddity, a strange form of *M. spinosissima* called "Pico" which has curiosity appeal.

Terry then moved on to the big cacti. The golden barrel *Echinocactus grusonii* which few of us grow big enough to flower was followed by the giant *Echinocactus ingens* (*E. platyacanthus*) which can grow to a height of 7 feet. *Echinocactus texensis* (used to be *Homalocephala texensis*) is a much smaller, flattened plant with strong spination, giving it the common name "horse crippler". This may flower in a 5" pot and has attractive frilled pink flowers. Then on to ferocacti, we saw a fine *F. stainesii* (*F. pilosus*) with very attractive spination, *F. fordii* was a smaller species which can be flowered in a 5" pot, and this was followed by *F. scharwzii*.

Next were some Stenocacti which used to be called Echinofossulocactus. For once the taxonomists were on the side of the collectors. Many of the stenocacti are distinctive because of their wavy ribs. We saw *S. coptonogonus*, *S. lloydii*, *S. rectispinus*, *S. multicostatus* and *S. vaupelianus*. Some of the plants had dull pale yellow flowers but several had attractive pink flowers, with a darker midstripe to the petals.

And now for something completely different, a few agaves and aloes. *Agave mitis* has unusual flowers. *Aloe dichotoma* can grow large, forming big trees in habitat in Africa. *Aloe plicatilis* has fan-shaped growing heads. We were then shown a few bromeliads, before returning to cacti.

There are roughly two sorts of Echinocereus; sprawling plants with widely spaced areoles and compact ones, often with pectinate spination in a variety of colours. *E. pentalophus* is a sprawling plant but rewards the space given to it by producing large purple flowers. *E. enneacanthus* is another sprawler with magenta flowers, and is similar to *E. stramineus* and *E. polyacanthus*. Next was the quite distinctive *E. delaetii* which has long hair, rather like a small *Cephalocereus senilis*. A couple of pectinate types *E. weinbergii* and *E. primolanatus* have close areoles and attractive spines. *E. knippelianus* is quite different again, small bodied with minimal spination. *E. lindsayi* has attractive spination. *E. pensilis* (formerly *Morangaya pensilis*) has a completely different form, the stems being long and thin. We finished the Echinocereus with *E. Barthelowanus* from Baja California, but not well known in cultivation.

We returned to succulents again, with a couple of trailing Hoyas. The first was a hybrid with an interesting purple flower and the next was a cross between *H. carnosae* and *H. kerrii*, with an unusual leaf form. Then just one sample from the vast crassula genera - *Crassula* cv. "Morgan's Beauty" with big clumps of pink flowers. Then we saw a selection of Cotyledons, Echeverias and *Pachyphytum oviferum* (the Sugar Almond Plant).

We returned to cacti, with 4 examples of Thelocactus, all nice forms and good flowering plants. Terry then showed a selection of Rebutias. *R. muscula* (*R. nivea*) looks like white fluffy balls. We also saw forms of *R. minuscula*, *R. marsoneri*, *R. tuberosa* and *R. fabrisii* with yellow flowers (usually they are red). *R. espinosae* has pink and white flowers and the hybrid cultivar "Pipes of Peace" has flowers with shades of orange/pink. Included in the Rebutia group is *Weingartia neocumingii*. Weingartias usually have yellow flowers but there are some nice forms of *W. trollii* with orange or red flowers. Sulcorebutia is also under the same umbrella. We saw *S. arenacea*, *S. canigueralii*, *S. polymorpha*, *S. tiraquensis* v. *bicolorispina*, and *S. mentosa*. These had a lovely range of flowers, some bicolored red and yellow, some purple, and all worth growing.

Next was a *Pereskia*. These form large bushes or small trees with succulent leaves and spines and have lots of flowers but have to grow too large for most greenhouses before they bloom. We then saw a couple of *Oreocereus* plants, ceroids with lots of hair producing strange red flowers when about a foot high. *Matucana haynei* is a globular plants with lots of spines and bright red flowers. We also saw another form of *M. haynei* known as *M. hystrix*.

Lophocereus schottii (now grouped in *Pachycereus*) is another ceroid which is well known in its montrose form as the “totem pole” cactus. *Haageocereus* are sprawling ceroid plants with attractive spination and colourful fruit if you grow them for long enough.

Next was a golden spined hanging plant, with a collection of names, *Hildewintera aureispina* being the best known. It has beautiful flowers and owes its name to Hilde Winter, the sister of South American cactus explorer Friedrich Ritter. Her husband ran Winter’s nursery in Germany. Still with the “Borzicactus” group, *Cleistocactus varispinus* has white flowers with greenish tips.

Then onto *Echinopsis*, which has recently been expanded to include *Lobivia*, *Trichocereus* and several other genera. We saw *E. ritteri*. *E. (Trichocereus) pachanoi*, and *E. (Soehrensia) smrziana*. *E. huascha* is usually found with yellow spines and red flowers but also occurs with red spines and yellow flowers; both forms are spectacular. *E. (Soehrensia) formosa* is a big globular plant with heavy spination and red orange or yellow flowers. Hollygate do a lot of hybridisation and we were shown hybrid *Echinopsis* with pink, apricot and striped flowers.

We returned to succulents and saw a large clump of *Lampranthus primivernus*. A tiny *Frithia pulchra* was covered in purple flowers. *Argyroderma* has yellow or purple flowers and *Lapidaria margarethae* had “sculptured” stems. An *Aloinopsis* had creamy yellow and pink flowers and *Titanopsis primosii* has warty leaves. We were shown a close up of a lithops window, which is composed of calcium oxalate which acts as a diffusion screen to get the sunlight from the leaf tips into the body of the plant to perform the chemical reactions necessary for survival. *Lithops divergens* showed deep fissures which makes it distinctive from most other lithops. Next we saw a selection of miniature conophytums; *C. uviforme*, *C. meyeri*, *C. cuprea*, *C. wettsteinii* with purple

flowers, *C. calculus* with yellow flowers and *C. minutum* which is just that.

More cacti next, and we saw *Copiapoas* which are very slow growing plants. *Gymnocalycium bruchii* has pinkish flowers, not blue ones as illustrated in one of the Lamb’s books (a printing slip up). *Oroya* has lovely spination and bicolored flowers which are yellow with red tips. *Coryphantha minima* is a tiny cactus with purple flowers, which has been through several name changes since I started growing cacti. Some fine *Ariocarpus* were next, followed by a neat *Epithelantha* with tiny bodies, tiny spines and pink flowers, and *Strombocactus disciformis*, a small plant threatened in habitat by illegal collection.

Terry finished by showing a magnificent *Obregonia denegrii* in the collection he had visited in California.

It was a very interesting talk, well balanced cacti and succulents, well presented, good photography and appreciated by everyone.

Peter Down

Table Show – November

These are the winning entries in the November table show. The overall trophy winners for the year are shown on the back page.

	Cacti – Echinocereus Group	Succulents – Lithops
Open	(1) B Beckerleg <i>E. hancockii</i>	(1) B Beckerleg <i>L. optica</i> ssp. <i>Rubra</i>
	(2) I Biddlecombe <i>E. pulchellus</i>	(2) I Biddlecombe <i>L. hookeri</i>
	(3) G Finn <i>E. obscuriensis</i>	(3) J Roskilly <i>L. dorothaeae</i>
Intermediate	(1) P Clemow <i>E. russanthus</i>	(1) I Biddlecombe <i>L. olivacea</i>
	(2) B Beckerleg <i>E. dasyacanthus</i>	(2) J Roskilly <i>L. bromfieldii</i> cv <i>Sulphurea</i>
	(3) I Biddlecombe <i>E. rigidissimus</i>	(3) B Beckerleg <i>L. bromfieldii</i>

Ivor Biddlecombe

Committee Reports - 2004

Chairman's Report

Our Golden Jubilee Year! What a year this has been. So many firsts; our first display at Whiteley Village Shopping Outlet, our first at the New Forest Show at Brockenhurst, and a first at the Harold Hillier Gardens at Braishfield. All very successful.

In March we celebrated our 50th birthday (the branch that is!) with a special cake and refreshments at the branch meeting followed on Sunday the 7th with a very special convention at Nursling Village Hall. We were lucky enough to have Gordon Rowley, the Society President in one of his last appearances as president before handing over to a younger man. He did the opening address and we were off with a flying start.

Graham Charles who is a leading authority on South American cacti gave us the latest classification of *Gymnocalycium*s (as will appear in the new lexicon, coming out soon) demonstrated with live plants. Then, Ernst Specks from Germany took us to the horn of Africa (Somalia and Ethiopia) with a slide-illustrated talk. Later Graham showed some pictures of his visit to Argentina. Over a hundred people came to the convention from all over the south of England. Several nurseries were in attendance, with Specks bringing a wonderful selection of unusual and rare succulents to choose from. A great time was had by all. We shared another cake and there was also a special one for Gordon.

At Easter we did the Romsey Show and had hundreds of children doing our 'Prickly Potting' sessions. Later we joined the Bonsai enthusiasts at their show in Bournemouth. This year we did not do the Romsey Show in August as many of us travelled to Spalding for the National Show, which was a great day out.

It has been an extremely busy year for the committee and anyone who is prepared to put in a bit more effort than just attending meetings is very welcome to join us.

I want to thank all of the committee for their untiring efforts for our branch, especially this year. We are really blessed with those who help. However we are getting older and the branch needs younger people to get involved, follow on and take over the reins.

We have welcomed several new members to our ranks this year, and we frequently have visitors from other branches. This means we get good attendances at our monthly meetings which is so encouraging for the visiting speakers. So thank you to everyone and anyone who has helped the branch in any way this year.

Best wishes for 2005,

Peter Down

Secretaries Report

(See Pots & Sundries about multitasking!) In the absence of a volunteer to take over as Branch Secretary, the post vacated by Richard White has been split between Margaret and David Corina - on a temporary basis, we hope! Perhaps not the ideal year to have taken on these duties as we have had our busiest year in the branch, participating in seven major events - it would have been eight were it not for the National Show clashing with the August show at Broadlands. It is perhaps not really appropriate for me to draw your attention to my 'other half' in both secretarial (I am writing this on behalf of both of us) and domestic roles, but Margaret was the prime mover behind our very successful 50th Anniversary Convention, and has been very much involved in the organisation of our other events this year. I, and the branch, thank her for these efforts - it relieves me of some of the task! The Branch meetings programme also has fallen in her lap, and here I thank also David Neville for dragging us around to many other events in the cactus world and introducing us to many cactus worthies, whose arms we promptly twist to come and give us a talk. This makes the organisation of the next year's branch programme much easier, and, all being well, for the programme to be ready for the December meeting.

After all that, what have I done? Actually accepted the invitations to participate in our new ventures this year, after consultation with our 'sales force' and the branch committee, where as minutes secretary (one job!) I can make sure that verbal volunteering has been committed to paper. And formally thank all our helpers for all their hard work in subsequent minutes! Not being 'connected' electronically, I must also thank my colleagues David Neville and Vinay Shah for being the email contacts on our behalf, and special thanks to Vinay for organising and maintaining our superb branch website. [This is beginning to sound like an Oscar acceptance

speech!] Through this and other sites we have gained a number of new members (five) this year; it is up to all of us to persuade new people to come to branch meetings - and to make them welcome so that they keep coming. On a rough count about 40% of the BCSS members allocated to our branch (about 60) do come to meetings. Our meeting hall is easy to find and there is ample parking. The branch looks forward to welcoming more of our local members to branch meetings.

May your plants flourish in 2005!

David Corina (and Margaret Corina by proxy)

Show Manager's Report

This year was the first time since I have been Show manager that we have not had a Branch or Zone Show, but it has still been a busy year for me, since we put on a record number of displays.

Our first major event of the year was the 50th Anniversary Convention on 7th March. This was held at Nursling Village Hall, and I am pleased to say it was very successful, due to the hard work put into the event by Margaret and David Corina, the Branch Committee and all the Branch members that helped on the day.

On 11th and 12th of April we were invited to put on a display of Cacti and Succulents at the Spring Garden Show at Broadlands, Romsey. This was similar to last year, with the sale of plants and Prickly Potting. A lot of hard work was put in before and during the Show by Margaret and David Corina in packing the compost and seed, and David Neville for supplying most of the plants. This event was very successful, with nearly 500 packs of plants and seeds given to the children that tried their hand at potting up the plants I again wish to thank my brother Peter for helping me with the back cloth and plants, and also all the branch members that gave their help during the three days of setting up and manning the Show.

On the 9th May the branch was invited to put on a display of cacti and succulents at the Bonsai Show at the Littledown Sports Centre in Bournemouth. Unfortunately I was unable to attend, but I supplied a few plants which David Neville, David and Margaret Corina kindly put on the display. They also manned the sales table, and I am pleased to say all their hard work was worthwhile as the event made a profit to help our branch funds.

On the 29th and 30th of May, the Whiteley Village Shopping Outlet invited us to put on an external display of Cacti and Succulents in the Shopping precinct. This was a first time we had tried this type of display. I made a small background of waterproof material just in case we had rain and this, along with a new gazebo which Margaret purchased for the branch worked out very well as we did have a few rain showers. We were also fortunate with the position of the display as we were partly under a fixed canopy in front of a unoccupied shop and this kept off most of the rain. We had a lot of interest in our display from the shoppers but plant sales were quite slow. At least we covered our expenses and added a few more pounds to branch funds. It was very good publicity for our branch and well worth doing again. I hope next year a few more members will be able to help out with this event.

On 3rd & 4th July we put on our regular display as the Southampton Festival (formally The Balloon and Flower Festival) on the Common. The Show was again organised by the Event Management Services of Southampton City Council, with Kathy Bailey as Floral & Gardening Marquee co-ordinator. The format was similar to last year with sales table and competitive Cacti and Succulent classes. This was the first time Kathy had organised the show but I thought she made a good job of it. The marking out of the marquee was spot on all, and all Peter and I had to do was put up the back cloth and cover the tables which was all finished in a very short time. I was a bit disappointed with the show entries as only committee members had taken the trouble to enter the competitive classes. This is a shame, as for many years, this show was our Branch's main source of income. I hope next year, on 25th and 26th June 2005, I will see you all at this show.

On the 27th – 29th July, the branch was invited to put on a display of Cacti & Succulents at the New Forest Show at Brockenhurst. When I arrived at the venue on Monday afternoon, I found the display stand was 16 feet wide instead of the 12 feet I had asked for, and this did not allow enough room for a sales table. After contacting the organisers, we were told it would be alright to reduce the display stand to allow space for the sales table. We were in an ideal position, right by the main entrance to the Flower Show, so everyone that came into the Marquee had to pass our display. We were also fortunate with the weather as it was dry and sunny for the three days, and the only problem was the dust in the car park at the end of each day – my car was grey

instead of blue and I had to clear the windows just to be able to drive home.

The last display of the year was at the Hilliers Visitor Centre on 7th & 8th August (another first). We were fortunate to be able to put our display at the entrance to the Arboretum. This was a nice clean bright area which gave visitors to the garden a chance to walk around the display and buy plants. We were quite surprised that several visitors had found out about this event from the Internet. Sales of plants over the two days were slow, but the event made a useful profit.

The monthly table show was again very poorly supported, with only 8 branch members entering during the year (and two of these only entered once). I hope next year everyone will make an effort to support as many events as possible and help to make 2005 a really successful year

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year,

Ivor Biddlecombe

Treasurer's Report

It seems impossible that it is a year since I sat down at the computer to write about financial statements. The time has gone so quickly. Perhaps it is because the branch has been so busy and participated in or organised so many events that the time seems to have flown by.

This, our 50th anniversary year, has been one of the best years, financially speaking, that we have had. Every single event in which we participated (and there were seven of them) made a profit however large or small. This means that we have enough in the kitty to keep on hiring the hall and paying for our speakers, which is one of the reasons we all work so hard at the shows we attend.

The branch has made a trading profit of £814 this financial year. Our accumulated fund now stands at £5758. The Committee has spent a considerable amount of money on assets. We have acquired one new book for the library, two new trophies for the Southampton Common show, two new banners, a laser pointer for our speakers to use and a gazebo. The latter was for use at the Whiteley Garden Market where we had a stand in the open. We were very grateful for the cover it gave us during the May bank holiday weekend as we experienced some of the usual wet bank holiday weather.

Many people have made donations to the branch this year and this gives me an opportunity to record the branch's thanks. We are grateful to Linda and Roger Labbett and Mrs. Corbin for the donation of plants for us to sell. Margaret Price made a cash donation. Bruce Beckerleg has donated his black cloths for stand dressing now that New Forest Cacti is no longer trading. Peter Down has donated a new trophy to the branch to celebrate the 50th anniversary. I also have my usual thanks - to Colin and Lorraine Bielckus for auditing the books for us and to June Purseglove for selling raffle tickets at the meetings. I must also thank those members who bring donations for the raffle, we are grateful, it all helps branch funds.

The branch received a letter of thanks from the National Secretary of the Society, expressing gratitude for all those branch members who spend time and effort in manning stands at shows and displays. It brings the Society before the public and hopefully attracts new people to the hobby. These events also fund all the activities of the branch. Without this hard work we would be charging members to attend meetings. Although the raffle and the catering make a small profit we could never cover the cost of our monthly meetings without this income from shows.

I wish you all a relaxing Christmas, and hope you come back full of energy to support the branch at the meetings and the six events we have planned for next year.

Margaret Corina

Librarian's Report

There has been a welcome increase in readership. 20 books were borrowed, as compared with 12 last year.

All the most important books are available at meetings. As we do not have storage space for our books at the Hall, we have had to rely on members of the committee to find room for them at home. I am particularly grateful to Bruce Beckerleg, Ivor Biddlecombe and Glenn Finn who bring along the books to branch meetings. A full list of the contents of the Library is available at Meetings. Any book not on display can be brought to the next meeting on request.

During the year "A Sulco Gallery" by John Pilbeam was added to the Library.

Total revenue for the year was £17.30, made up as follows:

<u>Source</u>	<u>2003/04</u>	<u>2002/03</u>
Lending	£ 9.80	£ 3.20
Sale of surplus books	£ 7.50	£ 130.50
Total	£ 17.30	£ 133.70

We have a very well-equipped library and although many of our members have their own copies of the more important titles, there is scope for more use of this facility. The reader gets a month's interesting reading for less than the price of a cup of tea at one of our meetings!

Philip Clemow

Plant Sales Manager's Report

This year has been a very busy one for plant sales since we have been to three new events as well as the ones that we have done in previous years. I did not attend the Whiteley Village or the Hilliers sales but I gather they went off reasonably well. The biggest new event – the New Forest Show was very successful and we sold a little over £1000 of plants, a figure which was much the same as at our two other main events which are the Southampton Balloon festival and the Broadlands Spring Show.

This year the Branch Show which is usually held as part of the Broadlands August show did not take place as it clashed with the BCSS National Show.

Sales at Branch meetings were similar to last year.

On behalf of the branch I would like to thank all of those of you who brought plants for sale and helped out on the sales table at the various events. David Neville in particular deserves our thanks for all those plants he brings over from the continent and which boost our takings and commission considerably.

Plants sales are one of the attractions of the monthly meetings, particularly for the new members we are always trying to encourage, so if you have some spare plants or seedlings bring them along. Everyone is entitled to bring plants for the sales table, we charge 10% commission at branch meetings and 15% at shows. Don't forget to include a separate label with your initials and the price.

Bruce Beckerleg

Newsletter Editor's / Website Report

It is pleasing to note that each month's print run of newsletters now tends to "sell out". I would like to thank all those of you who acted as scribes to write up branch meetings, and also those of you who provided articles for inclusion in the newsletter. I will repeat my request for contributions - large or small - from all members because the one thing the newsletter sometimes lacks is some variety.

The branch's old website used to be maintained by Richard White on the University of Southampton web servers, but following his move to Cardiff, this was no longer appropriate. A new website was established in February, just before our Anniversary Convention. I have increased the site content steadily (as time permits) and I hope members and casual visitors find it to be of interest. We have already had a number of enquiries thanks to the site.

The final task of the year involved the design and production of a commemorative CD containing pictures taken at the Anniversary Convention, and the 2004 National Show. This took a lot of my time and effort, but hopefully the final result was worth it. I'll soon know, since the CD is due to be distributed to all Branch members. My thanks are due to all those who helped to review and check the material on the disc.

Vinay Shah

Pots and Sundries Manager's Report

I am not sure whether 'multitasking' is still a buzz word in industry, but it seems to still exist at branch meetings. Due to other duties often beckoning at branch meetings I have not been able always to devote my full attention to manning the pots and sundries stall. Like much in the high street, it is at times a case of self-selection of pots from a large box! I thank branch members for their patience. My saviour this year has been the sales of our green Cactus Cultivation booklet (commonly known as the 'Green Booklet'). Having acquired a plastic display stand to keep them tidy and 'up in the faces' of the customers, sales have at least quadrupled this year, contributing much to the profit of £36 for 2003-2004. This is lower than last year, and in comparison with other branch income, is but a small contribution to branch funds. It is a service to members.

However, the manufacturers of the BEF-type pots keep changing, the price to me has risen sharply since I last restocked, and the pans are no longer available in suitable colours. This is perhaps a warning that when current stocks are exhausted (probably some years away!) we may not restock. Sundries tick over slowly, so that the ever popular pens, labels, tongs and insecticides will continue to be stocked as long as there is a demand from members.

David Corina

Publicity Officer's Report

There was a better response from the media this year than there has been for some time. We were mentioned in the *Echo*, the *Advertiser* and the *Winchester Chronicle*. Our good friends, the *Romsey Advertiser* and *Radio Solent Information Exchange* responded to every request as usual.

Especial thanks to Ivor Biddlecombe, David and Margaret Corina and David Neville for staging and manning several displays around the area. I'm afraid I do not get to as many as I used to due, mainly, to the health problems that come with starting to get a bit long in the tooth. I would also like to thank all those who have fostered branch publicity by manning or providing plants for displays, entering shows or merely by talking to non cactophiles about our hobby and branch activities.

Finally, seasonal wishes to all and good growing and showing in 2005.

Jim Roskilly

Branch Committee Meeting

A committee meeting was held on 15th November. The accounts for the year were discussed. The branch has recorded a good profit, thanks principally to the Spring Show at Broadlands, the Balloon and Flower Festival and the New Forest Show. Other events also made useful contributions.

Branch membership was also discussed. Currently we have 61 members who renewed their subscriptions or joined during 2004.

The Branch programme for 2004 was finalised, and copies will be printed in time for the December meeting.

Ivor was disappointed by the lack of entries in the monthly table shows. He wondered whether it was worth carrying on. Members will be reminded that they can enter more than one plant if they wish. If anyone has alternative ideas on how to attract more entries and improve the response from members, please do discuss them with Ivor or any member of the committee.

Plans for the content of the Anniversary CD were finalised. It was hoped that the CD would be prepared before the end of the year.

The design of the shirts for helpers at Branch events was confirmed and these will be ordered shortly.

Vinay Shah

Table Show 2004 – Overall Results

The overall results for the table shows held during 2004 are as follows:

Open Section – Cacti (The Challenge Cup)

I Biddlecombe	35
G Finn	19
B Beckerleg	17
P Clemow	12
J Roskilly	6
D Neville	1

Open Section – Succulents (The Gateway Vase)

I Biddlecombe	35
B Beckerleg	21
J Roskilly	21
P Clemow	9
G Canton	3

Intermediate Section – Cacti (The Bangor Cup)

B Beckerleg	28
I Biddlecombe	25
G Finn	21
P Clemow	15
J Roskilly	5
T Grech	3

Intermediate Section – Succulents (25th Anniversary Paperweight)

I Biddlecombe	35
B Beckerleg	26
P Clemow	17
J Roskilly	15

Ivor Biddlecombe

Branch Programme 2005

4 January	Members Evening
1 February	Curt Lamberth Habitats
1 March	David Lambie Cacti, North to South
26-28 March	Spring Flower & Garden Show, Broadlands (Easter Weekend)
5 April	Stirling Baker Interesting Haworthias
3 May	Cultivation Evening
28-30 May	Display and Plant Sales @ Garden Market, Whiteley Village
7 June	Terry Smale Cacti in Northern Mexico - Part 1
11-12 June	Display and Plant Sales @ Sir Harold Hillier Arboretum, Ampfield
25-26 June	Display and Show @ Southampton Festival, The Common, Southampton
5 July	Peter Down and Geoff Card Argentina 2004
26-28 July	Display and Plant Sales @ The New Forest Show, Brockenhurst
2 August	David Kirkbright Madagascar 1993
20-21 August	Zone 11 Show (Sat) + Display (Sun) @ Summer Flower & Garden Show, Broadlands, Romsey
6 September	Paul Klaassen South American Cacti
4 October	Eddy Harris A Walk on the Wild Side – Part 2
1 November	Zone 11 Quiz
6 December	AGM & Christmas Social

Next Month's Meeting

Our first meeting of 2005 will be held on January 4th, and will feature a number of short talks by branch members. If you have a subject that you would like to talk about (even if only for a few minutes), this would be most welcome - please let a Committee member know as soon as possible.

The January table Show will consist of the **Neoporteria** and **Copiopoa** Groups (cacti) and the **Adromischus** Subgroup (succulents). Please note that you are allowed to enter more than once in any of the classes.

The Neoporteria group includes *Neoporteria*, *Austrocactus*, *Chileorebutia*, *Eriosyce*, *Horridocactus*, *Islaya*, *Neochilenia*, *Pyrrhocactus*, *Rodentiophila* and *Thelocephala*. The Copiopoa Group includes *Copiopoa* and *Pilocopiopoa*.

The Adromischus subgroup includes *Adromischus*, *Brophyllum*, *Cotyledon*, *Crassula*, *Kalanchoe*, *Kitchingia*, *Rochea*, *Tillaea*, *Tylecodon*, and *Vauanthes*.

*Best Wishes for a
happy Christmas and
a merry New Year!*



Forthcoming Events

Fri 17 th	Dec	Isle of Wight	AGM and Christmas Social / American Supper
Tue 4 th	Jan	Southampton	Members' Evening (Short talks by Branch members)
Sat 15 th	Jan	Portsmouth	"Argentina" – Peter Down
Mon 17 th	Jan	Southampton	Committee Meeting @ 79 Shirley Avenue
Fri 21 st	Jan	Isle of Wight	Plant Auction and Members' Slides
Tue 1 st	Feb	Southampton	"Habitats" – Curt Lamberth
Fri 18 th	Feb	Isle of Wight	Branch Quiz and Members' Talk
Sat 19 th	Feb	Portsmouth	"Stones of the Desert" – Jonathan Clark

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