

BRITISH CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting, held on Saturday 5th December 2015 at 11.00 a.m.
at the Holiday Inn, Milton Keynes, Bucks.

Present:	Dr Alasdair Glen (AG)	Chairman
	Dr Jim Gibbs (JG)	Vice Chairman
	Mr David Kirkbright (DK)	Treasurer
	Mr Eddy Harris (EH)	Secretary
	Mr Tony Morris (TM)	Membership Secretary
	Mr Al Laius (AL)	Journal Editor
	Mrs Alice Vanden Bon (AVB)	Technical Editor
	Dr Tony Mace (TMa)	Publications Officer
	Mr Bill Hildyard (BH)	Forum & Website Administrator
	Mr John Arnold (JA)	Legal Advisor
	Mr. Barry Tibbetts (BT)	Shows Committee Representative
	Mrs Suzanne Mace (SM)	Committee
	Dr Roland Tebbenham (RT)	Committee
	Mr Peter Arthurs (PA)	Committee

AGREED VERSION

15/38 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

15/39 MINUTES OF THE B.O.T. MEETING HELD ON 22nd AUGUST 2015

These were formally signed by Dr Glen.

15/40 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE LAST MINUTES

15/25 Journal Librarian – The additional boxes of journals would be delivered to Dr Saorsa later this month (AL).

15/30/1 R.H.S. Meeting at Wisley – Dr Glen attended this behalf of our Society and gave a short resume of our current position and future expectations/plans to the attendees. He said that it had been a useful exercise.

Mr Harris had received notice of another event to be held next March and as it was a sales event with the opportunity to publicise the Societies taking part, Mr Harris had passed the information to the Woking branch who normally undertook this and it was said that another participant would also try to provide suitable publicity.

15/30/2 August D.O.M. Awards – The certificates had been prepared but no accompanying c.v. had yet been received by Mr Harris. He asked who was preparing these and Messrs Kirkbright and Morris agreed to provide information so that a suitable c.v. could be compiled (DK/TM/EH).

15/32 Web Branch Information Updating – Mr Harris had composed a suitable letter on this and this had been circulated to all branch secretaries by himself and Mr Morris. Mr Harris said that he had had received a suggestion that this also appear in the journal so that branch members were made aware of the problem and perhaps could then ensure that their branch information was kept current. This was thought to be a good idea and would be implemented (AL).

15/41 ELECTRONIC DECISION MAKING

Two nominations for R.H.M.A.'s had been circulated in advance of this meeting and approved by a majority of this committee. These were approved unanimously by this meeting.

15/42 COMMUNICATIONS

1. Branch Innovation Award – Mr Harris said that no applications for this had been received to date. It was suggested that a reminder for next year's award applications be included in the branch secretaries packs sent out by Mr Morris in March,

2. Awards – One D.O.M. award was agreed.

15/43 REPORTS OF OFFICERS

1. Vice-Chairman:

Zone Reps Meeting – Dr Gibbs reported that there had been a reduced number of Reps. at the October meeting. Mrs Minors was welcomed as the new Zone 3 Rep. and tribute paid to Mr Burton, the outgoing Rep. for his hard work over the years. It was generally reported, like last year, that branches either remained at a set level or that some branches had had small increases in membership, although the warning signs were, as before, that committees were run by aging, long-standing members without any new people coming through. It was felt that Reps. should be encouraging office bearers, particularly secretaries, to try to at least share the work load so that expertise was passed on. There seemed to be a lack of external events this year, perhaps due to weather or fewer willing organisers, this resulting in a reduced earning capacity. Zone 3 brought up the forthcoming Chatsworth event and although Sheffield branch was willing to take the lead on this, it might struggle as it did not have sufficient big plants and manpower as it was a 4 day event. It had asked Nottingham branch if it was interested in participating, but the venue might be too far away for them, so Sheffield had asked if there was any possibility of help from the main Society, such as anyone willing to come along to help just for a day, as it was aware of the importance of getting in at the beginning of a new event and wanted to do it properly or not at all. It was said that we needed to find out what form the event would take and what limitations, if any, there would be on sales, etc. It was also said that a simple give-away cultivation leaflet should be produced by the Society for giving away with plants. Dr Gibbs said that the tabards had not been very popular although they were effective in identifying the Society and future ones should be less bulky, but the banners were considered excellent and it was said that smaller table sized banners would be of greater use and considered for future orders. However, it was agreed that branch specific ones should be the responsibility of that branch. There was discussion on

specific or potential problems among the branches, such as the disappearance of the affiliate branch in the Zone 12 area, but most branches seemed to be coping. It was said that the Zone 19 Rep. had resigned and a replacement was to be sought and that the Crawley branch currently had problems and had reduced their number of meetings/year. Zone 15 had held a show at Hyde Hall R.H.S. Gardens with very good public attendance (around 1,100) and Mr Baker, the Zone Rep., had requested both manpower and financial support next year, the latter in the form of purchasing plants for next year as starter packs of cacti/succulents for new members. It was said that any unused plants purchased by Society would remain the property of the Society. It was suggested that this process could come under the province of the Shows Committee. There was also discussion on the identification of specific collections to assist in the disposal of collections, but as no new information had been gathered, it looked like Zone Reps. would just have to try to dispose of them as best they could, using their own knowledge. It had been suggested that another entry in the branch newsletters that Zone Reps. were available for this, might help publicise this. There was also discussion on branch programme content in that mainstream branches appeared to be exclusively speaker based, whereas those in less accessible area were much less so. It was said that it would be useful to compile lists of different types of events for branch use as speaker availability diminished. Whilst an electronic updated Speakers List was available, a paper copy was still very much in favour and the Reps. felt that a more frequent printing, perhaps annually, to cope with those not on email or preferring a paper copy, would be useful. It was suggested that a print on demand system could be set up to cope with this. The Reps. were also asked to ensure that their branch websites were kept updated and reminded that help was available if the branches were unable to do so. Comments on the current version of the Society calendar were that it was much improved and the colour was better but not right yet, but nobody was aware of any results of the associated photo. competition being published/circulated and this might reduce entries for next year (*see 15/44*).

2. **Membership Secretary:**

Mr Morris stated that since August 2015 he had enrolled 70 new members, 9 of whom had also subscribed to Bradleya. This compared with 69 at this time last year. These comprised 48 Full, 14 Senior, 3 Associate and 5 Junior. Of these, 4 were from overseas (1 each from Canada, China, Poland and U.S.A.) and 7 had joined using the Welcome Pack reduced price offer (currently a total of 64). He had also reinstated 6 former members. He said that he had sent all branch secretaries a membership list, a request for events notification from John Foster plus the website letter composed by Mr Harris. He had been speaking to Dr Gibbs about the Lancaster branch as he felt that we need to decide if it was possible to encourage local members to either make this an active branch again or resurrect the defunct Preston branch. If this was not possible, then we might have to remove it from our branch listing as he had recently had to allocate a member who lives in Lancaster to North Fylde branch which really made little sense to a new member. Dr Mace confirmed that the independent East Sussex branch would be closing at the end of this year.

3. **Treasurer:**

- a) **Membership** – Mr Kirkbright reported that the current membership compared with the same time as last year was: Full 1,538 (-16), Senior 1041 (+43), Junior 37 (+13), which when added together, the Journal taking membership total was 2,616 (+40). Associate membership was 204 (-9) and 79 Full members had switched to Senior and 52 the other way. Bradleya takers were 543 (+7). This was a direct comparison with the same date last year and was the first time since 1999 that we had ended the year with an increase.

He said that of those who were members at 31st December 2014 and received an invitation to renew, 2410 had now done so. Broken down, 338 (87.3%) of overseas members had renewed, whilst 2072 (90.4%) of U.K. members had renewed. PayPal and credit card subscriptions, including Bradleya, accounted for 45.3% of receipts so far (45.1% last year) and that donations as a percentage of subscriptions received via PayPal amounted to only 2.7% (2.4%), whilst those paid by cheque/cash amounted to 15% (11.8%).

- b) **CactusWorld Mailing** – He said that the new system of using the Royal Mail tariff D.G.1 for our overseas copies seemed to be working with no complaints received to date. However, Mr Morris said that he had recently had an email from a New Zealand member stating that he had only just received his September journal. It was said that the acid test would be the mailing of the December journal which contained the seed list.
- c) **Books** – Income from direct sales of the *Agave* and *Stapeliads* books had reduced to a trickle, but both had now reached their break even points. The **Baja** book was moving much slower than previous publications and had only recovered a third of its costs so far. Previous publications had usually reached around 50% of their costs within the first months and we needed to sell around 450 more copies to break even.
- d) **Calendars** – He said that sales of the 2016 one were disappointing and with the losses due to VAT and PayPal charges we needed to sell a further 137 to break even.
- e) **Society Finances** – He had now produced the Society annual accounts and these had been examined by our auditors. A copy of these plus his report to the Charity Commission were attached to his report and showed a final surplus of £6,447 compared with last year's £13,003. Most of this reduction was due to losses on the calendar, increased subsidies on show stationery, the purchase of the tabards and banners and the fall in the market valuation of our investment fund. He said that the dramatic drop in the financial market had enabled him to move £150,000 from the C.O.I.F. Deposit Account to the C.O.I.F. Investment Fund which currently had a yield of 3.25%. Mr Harris said that he had had an enquiry as to why the membership lists and new member notifications were sent out to branches by post rather than by email and Mr Morris said that it was more convenient that way and many branches preferred it. It was also said that not all branch secretaries had an email address. He also had slightly more confidence in the postal system's reliability. The accounts were approved by this committee and the necessary copies signed by the authorised Trustee signatories.
- f) **Accommodation Payments** – One additional person was added to the current list and the current payments were agreed to remain unchanged.
- g) **National Show Sponsorship** – He said that only 57 of the 137 classes remained unsponsored.

4. **Shows Committee:**

- a) **Judges Course** – Mr Tibbetts reported that the final attendance figure had been 44 and had been a really enjoyable event. This was agreed by all attendees which included a South African couple who had made a special trip to be there. 16 had passed the

cactus section, 4 of whom were newly qualified judges and 17 the succulent section. There had been no new succulent judges.

- b) 2016 National Show – He reported that all the extra sales tables in the annexe had been sold to nurseries at no extra cost from Wood Green and should add considerably to our income and that all 125 table deposits had now been paid. Final invoices would be sent out early in the New Year. 7 specialist plant and society stands had now been booked. Class sponsorship letters were being sent out to previous individual, branch and zone sponsors, cost £15 as previously. A meeting with Cambridge branch would be arranged for early spring with a follow-up meeting with Wood Green in May.

5. **Conservation & Research Committees:**

- a) Conservation Committee – Alan Hill, in a written report, said that agreement of funding of signs at Pichidangui, Chile, had been previously reported to BoTs. The recent congratulatory email to Mr Harris from B.C.S.S. members who had seen the signs confirmed that the signs had been erected and were making an impact. Roger Ferryman's article on the project was still awaited and Mr Arnold would now contact him about it. Mr Kirkbright did express concern that following the receipt of the congratulatory email, received and circulated by Mr Harris, no Trustee seemed to recognise that we had discussed the project at the August meeting. Mr Harris said that he had not associated the email with the project due to the way the email was worded, hence the confusion. Mr Hill said in his report that no further projects requesting financial support had been received since this one. He also said that no applications for the 2015 Bill Maddams B.C.S.S. Travel Award had been received and the committee would investigate possible reasons for this and then start advertising the 2016 Award. He also said that the Nagoya Protocol which was part of the U.N. Convention on Biological Diversity and to which the U.K. had signed, came into force in October 2015. Its intent was to provide a framework to ensure that the benefits of the use of genetic resources were fairly shared with 'owners'. In practice it appeared that users would be expected to be able to demonstrate that they had exercised 'due diligence' with regards to acquisition and use of genetic resources. This meant that it was important to record from where one had legitimately obtained seed or a plant and keep that information. Material should only be exchanged in line with the agreement made when the plant was collected and all collectors' numbers retained. In other words one should ensure there was a paper trail and both the user and receiver were now to be responsible. A consultation on implementing the Nagoya Protocol in the U.K. was held by D.E.F.R.A. (with no information to us) and a summary of responses and the government reply was published in March 2015 (www.gov.uk/defra). The document gave some reassurance such as a registered collection would not be penalised for the actions of one of its customers and customers would be liable for their own actions. D.E.F.R.A. confirmed that there would be non-reactive application of the Protocol, i.e. new uses of previously accessed genetic resources would not be in the scope of the Regulation. Civil sanctions were available in the first instance of non-compliance with obligations related to due diligence, whilst criminal sanctions might be used for further infringements, or if the officers were obstructed in their work. It was not clear how much of the Regulations would affect most B.C.S.S. members (probably very little if any), but concerned B.C.S.S. members should consult the documents themselves.
- b) Research Committee – Alan Hill reported that although there had been a query, no new applications for financial help had been received. He also said that the funding of projects previously reported concerning a French student had not come to fruition as it would appear that he had found financial help from elsewhere. The student was apparently carrying out some projects in the field.

6. **Advertising Officer:**

- a) Advertising – Mr Quail's written report said that the 4th quarter advertising income was £347 (£573 last year), making a total of £1,705 for the year compared with £1,789 for 2014.
- b) CactusWorld Production Trainees – He said that the potential new trainee had still not progressed.
- c) 2016 Journal Printing Plans – He said that there had been some further administrative problems during Warners' second printing run in September, but the print quality had been very good. These problems had been discussed in detail at a meeting with them and as a result we would invite them to quote for printing next year, together with Swallowtail. Subject to satisfactory quotations, which we would invite from them very shortly, we intended to offer each printer two quarters, with Warners printing March and September and Swallowtail June and December.
- d) Marketing Officer – He hoped that this would be discussed again and action to appoint one be progressed at this meeting.

7. **Bradleya Editor:**

Mr Charles in a written report said that after a slow start, papers for Bradleya 33 had flooded in during August and September and the edition published on 20th October (a month earlier than Bradleya 32). It comprised 23 papers and the lack of cactus papers had prompted him to encourage prospective authors to write papers for next year. It had been printed by The Lavenham Press a company previously used by the B.C.S.S. with mixed results, but their competitive quote had encouraged him to award them the contract and they had bound the volume in-house using the superior P.U.R. perfect method. He had attended the printing of the cover and the first section in order to set the colour standard, it had been produced within schedule and he thought the quality was most acceptable. The contributors had been happy with the quality and he hoped they would be encouraged to choose Bradleya to publish their future work, but he was yet to hear what subscribers thought.

He concluded his report with 4 queries:-

- a) He assumed that Bradleya would continue to be sent to the Web of Science for them to make the content available to their readers. This committee confirmed this.
- b) He assumed that authors might include their papers published in Bradleya on their institution's open access repository, viewable by any interested persons. This committee also confirmed this.
- c) He assumed that Mr Laius was investigating the inclusion of Bradleya on JSTOR and would advise him how to submit the issues to them as soon as they are published (*See item 15/43/8 below*).
- d) He had been asked by Daniel Schweich (Francophone Digital Library) if Bradleya 9 (1991) could now be included in their library, since it was out of print, as it appeared that the B.C.S.S. policy was to allow out-of-print editions to be included for free access on-line when the printed version was out of stock. He wanted this confirmed. This committee agreed that they would supply nos. 9 for this purpose, but that we would be using JSTOR to digitise Bradleya thereafter and that any further issues would appear on the B.C.S.S. website to encourage Society publicity and membership. It was said that Northampton & Milton Keynes branch was disbanding its library and would donate what Bradleyas it had back

8. **Journal Editor:**

Mr Laius reported that receipt of articles had increased recently. He currently had 5 articles which were ready, 4 were with the Production team awaiting design and layout and 9 were 'work in progress'. He said that there were currently sufficient for the March 2016 issue and probably enough for the June one as well. He was still waiting news from JSTOR as to when they would start their new round of digitising journals, etc and as soon as this happened, he would ensure that the relevant copies of Bradleya (digital files and hard copies) were supplied to them, so that Bradleya could become available as soon as possible on their website. He said that slowly but surely some journals were beginning to fall by the wayside, with reduced publication frequency and content and gave examples of these. Fortunately, we still had authors, both domestic and international, who were willing to write for CactusWorld and with the help of our very competent production team he was able to produce a substantial journal each quarter with a balanced variety of interesting and informative articles. He had also appointed another person to compile the journal index as the current one was no longer available. Mr Arthurs asked if the journals sent to JSTOR had now been digitised and on being told they were, asked if it was possible to download the articles for our own digital library as he currently did not have access to do so from JSTOR, but was willing to download these himself.

9. **Technical Editor:**

Mrs Vanden Bon reported that the December journal and inserts were with the printer by the agreed date of 12th November and although the agreed mailing date should have been 7th December, it had in fact been ready and mailed a week earlier. Corrections to the seed list had been completed and the list sent to Messrs Arthurs and Hildyard for inclusion on the website, so that the extra habitat detail (for which there had not been room on the hard copy version) could be viewed by members when they selected their seed. Mr Quail had produced the illustrated National Show Schedule and Entry Form and these would be available in early 2016. He had also produced new versions of the Robert Holt Memorial Award and the Diploma of Merit certificates. These had now been printed off and some 120 of each were passed to Mr Harris by Mr Kirkbright together with another batch of 100 R.H.M.A. badges.

10. **Publications/Internet Server Officers:**

a) **Publications** – Dr Mace reported that publication sales had not been spectacular and that it was difficult to compare the sales of books and journals immediately after publication. The *Echeveria* book was launched at the National Show and initial sales were very rapid, whilst with other books the use of pre-print sales leaflets in journals took time until publication, but resulted in a backlog of orders. **Baja** was launched at E.L.K. where sales were not very large. Sales in the U.S.A. were good, but less so in Europe, plus review copies were not sent out as promptly as they should, for its September launch coincided with his busiest time of the year. He also said that we needed more people to take the Society Calendar around branches for face-to-face sales as we got £6 this way without any overheads. He also said that if we were to have a 2017 calendar it would be ideal for it to be ready in time for sale at the National Show. In view of the current demands on their book/magazine storage space we needed to consider this when reviewing any future publications.

b) **Internet/Forum** – Dr Mace said that over the last few months the server had had many hacker attempts on accounts (not B.C.S.S. ones) and on 2 occasions these had been successful. These had usually been due to out-of-date versions of content management software. These had been reasonably promptly dealt with, but had resulted in the server I.P. addresses being blacklisted, resulting in the consequent bouncing of emails from B.C.S.S. accounts (among others). These took time and work to get off these lists. He said that we were currently spending some £100/month on Google advertisements advertising the B.C.S.S. website and he was unsure of its effectiveness and wondered whether we should continue with this. It was agreed that we stop this at the end of this year. He would also like to flag up some trends with which he was not currently entirely happy and which needed to be watched, in that the finances of the server were becoming less favourable due to a number of factors. The first factor was currency in that the current spend was approximately £5,000/year mostly in U.S.\$ (which was currently strong against the £) and income was mostly in £ or Euro (which was weak against the £). The second factor was that the number of users (nurseries and clubs) was declining (albeit slowly) as was advertising revenue, trends that would be recognisable in other B.C.S.S. figures.

Mr Hildyard said that there had been no issues with the Forum day to day running and that updating work of the site had now been completed. This had not been an easy task and with the problems discovered during the task, the site had been given an entirely new look. There were still some minor tweaks to be made and the next stage would be to move it to its new home.

11. **Update on the Society Digital Programmes:**

Dr Tebbenham said that he had made no progress since his last report, but that Dr Gibbs was working on the Doug Donaldson bequest. He said that an advertisement would appear in the December 2015 journal asking for a volunteer as his successor.

12. **2018 Convention:**

Mr Arnold said that he had been in contact with a number of possible list of speakers and gave examples of these. Other people had been suggested by this committee and he said that he would start compiling the final list and inviting them. He hoped to have 4 speakers in place by our next meeting.

13. **Seed Purchaser:**

Mr Arthurs said that he had thought that he had sufficient envelopes for this year's seed distribution, but would need to obtain a suitable supply for next year. Various suggestions were made on possible sources of these.

15/44 **2016 PHOTO. COMPETITION AND SOCIETY CALENDAR**

Dr Mace said that sales of the 2016 calendar were not as bad as the reports mentioned with more sales already in the system, but more sales would be preferred. It was said that competitive pictures were not necessarily suitable for a calendar and Mr Hildyard said that he had ended up with help from another person to just choose those pictures that were suitable, hence, as he had not used a judge, there had been no competition winners and therefore no announcement of these. It was agreed that Mr Hildyard would now choose the winners from those who submitted the pictures used in the 2016 calendar. It was also agreed

that for the 2017 calendar pictures, there would be no competition, but members would be invited to submit pictures suitable for a calendar and the owners of the pictures chosen would get a free calendar. It was suggested that we order a batch of 750 at a significantly reduced cost compared with the 500 ordered for previous calendars, ensure that the calendars were available for the National Show and in order to publicise the calendar better, to give one to all foreign nurseries, together with the method of ordering, at both the National Show and E.L.K. Mr Hildyard said that this timing was possible, although it might not allow so many Society and branch events to be included. It was also emphasised that face-to-face sales gave better results (*see also 15/43/10(a)*). We would need to alter the current rules.

15/45 **SECRETARY'S PACK UPDATING**

Dr Gibbs said that he would have the updated version ready for discussion at the next meeting. He said he would welcome comments on what should be included and would email the current content for review and suggested additions. He also said it would be in electronic form although some branches still wanted a hard copy version for various reasons.

15/46 **SOCIETY WEBSITE UPDATE**

Messrs Arthurs and Hildyard said that with the Forum problems now sorted and the site going live, the rest of the work on the website update should be completed in a few weeks. It was planned to update all but the external email systems, which would remain unchanged. Mr Hildyard said that he planned to transfer the new look used on the Forum to the updated website. It was re-emphasised that information was required from branches to keep websites updated.

15/47 **REAPPOINTMENT OF SOCIETY TREASURER, ANCILLARY OFFICERS AND CONSERVATION AND RESEARCH COMMITTEES' MEMBERSHIP**

All current post holders were willing to continue for another year and were reappointed en masse.

15/48 **FUTURE PUBLICATIONS**

Mrs Vanden Bon said that she had started work on the picture files for part 2 of the new Rowley book, but that some of these were old and needed replacing. Various suggestions and offers of alternative pictures, especially cultivars, were made by members of this committee and although she felt that to replace too many might upset Mr Rowley, Mr Arthurs felt otherwise and would speak to him about this to see if this was so. She said that the text for part 2 of the book was ready for layout, although there were several line drawings which might require re-drawing if the originals were unavailable. She had yet to see the text and pictures for part 1 of the book and Mr Arthurs said that although he had typed this up, he was unsure where to find it on his server and might have to retype it. It was said that, if possible, without degrading its quality, it should be aimed for publication prior to the forthcoming National Show. There was discussion on other books that might be possibilities, but it was also felt that as our storage space was now completely full, no further titles could be considered for the next 24 months.

15/49 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 1) **Hampshire/Dunn Memorial Lecture** – Two possible speakers were suggested for this at the April A.G.M. Enquiries would be made about their availability and willingness to do this (**EH**).
- 2) **Publicity** – Dr Mace showed an coloured document which one of his members had produced giving information and the location of the branch plus its programme of meetings. This had then been printed and a quantity of these displayed in each of a number of garden centres local to the branch. Stuart Riley was also enclosing a copy with all plant orders he was sending to local people. He said that as a result he estimated that about 5 new members had joined the branch. It was said that perhaps a proforma could be produced for branches so that they could then add their own branch information and do a similar thing with the completed document. Dr Mace also said that there had been an overprinting of the sheets for the recent reprint of the cultivation leaflet packs and these extras were available free to anybody wishing some. Several of the committee expressed interest in taking some.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 4.05 pm.

NEXT MEETING: 6th February 2016 at the Holiday Inn, London Road, Newport Pagnell, MK16 0JA (just off junction 14 of M1). It would start at 11a.m. and a buffet lunch would be served at 1 to 1.30 p.m.