

BRITISH CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting, held on Saturday 5th February 2011 at 11.00 a.m.
at the Holiday Inn, Milton Keynes, Bucks.

Present:	Mr John Arnold (JA)	Chairman
	Dr Alasdair Glen (AG)	Vice-Chairman
	Mr David Kirkbright (DK)	Treasurer
	Mr Eddy Harris (EH)	Secretary
	Mr Tony Morris (TM)	Membership Secretary
	Mr Roy Mottram (RM)	CactusWorld Editor
	Dr Colin Walker (CW)	Bradleya Editor
	Mr David Quail (DQ)	Advertising Officer & Journal
	Dr Tony Mace (AM)	Publications & Internet Officer
	Mr Barry Tibbetts (BT)	Shows Committee Representative
	Mrs Suzanne Mace (SM)	Committee
	Mrs Alice Vanden Bon(AVB)	Committee/Editorial Team
	Dr Roland Tebbenham (RT)	Committee
	Mr Bill Hildyard (BH)	Committee/Forum Moderator

AGREED VERSION

- 11/01 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
None.
- 11/02 **MINUTES OF THE B.O.T. MEETINGS HELD ON 4TH DECEMBER 2010**
These were formally ratified and signed after correcting 4 minor errors (minute 10/53/5(d) - 'from' not 'form', minute 10/53/5(f) third sentence - 'would' not 'will' (two instances) and minute 11(a) seventh sentence - 'Klaassen' not 'Klassen').
- 11/03 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**
10/54 **Possible Society problems** – Mr Arnold had made enquiries and said that the regulations concerning C.R.B. did not apply to Society/Branch meetings as they concerned people in sole charge of young people or vulnerable adults. It was agreed that this should appear in the Secretary's Pack.
- 11/04 **ELECTRONIC DECISION MAKING**
1. There had been some e-mail discussion about allowing digitising of Bradleya by Daniel Schweich of cactuspro.com but no conclusion had been reached. After further discussion it was agreed that we would allow them to digitise Bradleya 1 to 9 as most were out of print and may encourage sales of later issues. Discussion then centred on digitising in general and what material was available in this form in our archives. It would appear that there currently were many gaps and Castle Colour would be contacted to try to retrieve what missing files they might have (**DQ**).
- 11/05 **COMMUNICATIONS**
1. **April's A.G.M.** – Mr Harris had received 1 nomination for President, 2 nominations for Chairman and 1 nomination for Vice-Chairman. The ballot paper for Chairman would appear in the March CactusWorld. Frans Noltee would give the Hampshire/Dunn Memorial lecture but would be asked what equipment he needed and in what currency he wished his expenses to be paid (**EH**). A proposed amendment to the change of rule 6(b) would also appear in the March CactusWorld. A member had submitted a number of comments on the wording of the proposed rule changes but as these were not formal amendments and had been received after the cut off date, they would not form part of the April discussion and vote. Two letters against the suggested future of zones had been received and would be brought to the April meeting. It was suggested that in view of some comments, it needed to be made clearer what was proposed and this would be done prior to the April discussion (**DK/RT**).
2. **Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award** – A request had been received for somebody to act as referee for an applicant wishing to qualify for this. The applicant's qualifying project would be on Cacti & Succulents and he only lived some 15 miles from Hamish McKelvie, who was willing to referee his progress. This was accepted and agreed.
3. **Cactus Show House** – An email asking advice on the cultivation of cacti and possible sources of specimen plants had been received from a Park Manager in Devon who wished to set up a cactus show house. He had been given contact details of three of the local branches in the area.
4. **Awards** – 1 RHMA was agreed. Mr Arnold had done a review of long term branch officials and had compiled a list of possible candidates. The list would be circulated to this committee for review and evaluation and discussed further at the next meeting (**JA**).
- 11/06 **REPORTS OF OFFICERS**
1. **Vice-Chairman:**
a) Dr Glen reported that there had been no branch closures/Zone Rep. Vacancies occurring since his last report. He remarked that since he had taken office the number of branches had reduced from 92 to 83, some of these by mergers

with other branches, but a worrying point was that some of the remaining branches were very dependent on the work and dedication of one or two long serving officers. A future difficulty might be the ability to provide opportunities to members to hear and see live speakers and plants.

- b) Fortunately the Speakers List had only reduced in size by 2 people thanks to 13 new speakers, but some speakers were less willing to travel long distances. He urged board members to encourage potential speakers to join the list. He agreed that a new edition of the list was due and this would be one of the first tasks of his successor.
- c) The review of the available job descriptions had highlighted a number of anomalies and that there were still some important gaps to be filled such as Treasurer, Seed Buyer and Distributor, Forum Manager and Public Relations.
- d) He said that the Society would be represented at Gardeners World, Harrogate, Southport and Tatton Park at least this year. Bristol Branch was still to decide whether it would stage an exhibit at a large local show. It was said that the Shows Committee had discussed their involvement in such shows and felt that this was down to the local branch(es), although it was agreed at this meeting that perhaps a more comprehensive set of guidelines should be made available (**Shows Committee**).

2. **Membership Secretary:**

- a) Mr Morris reported that since December 2010 he had enrolled 35 new members, comprising 21 Full, 7 Senior and 6 Associate, 5 of whom had also subscribed to Bradleya. Of these, 8 were from overseas and he had also reinstated 5 former members. The total enrolment figure for the same period last year was 42 of which 21 had renewed to date. The late delivery of CactusWorld meant that no renewals were received before Christmas but started in earnest in the New Year. The latest journal delivery he was aware of was to a member of the Fife branch (17th January). He said that the inclusion of the prepaid envelope with all journals meant that he also received members' seed orders, odd applications for the forthcoming Aloe book and even one branch's accounts. However, he gratefully acknowledged the receipt of a batch of *Aloe* and *Euphorbia* seeds from a member in Zimbabwe, which have been passed to our seed buyer.

3. **Treasurer:**

- a) **Membership** - Mr Kirkbright reported that membership to date for this year compared with the same period last year was: Full 1245 (-75), Senior 712 (+25), Junior 5 (+2). 61 had switched from Full to Senior and 31 to other way but current Journal taking membership loss was 48. Associate membership was 190 (-7), whilst Bradleya orders were 413 (-25). This had been influenced by the late journal delivery, but if we maintained the current membership loss of 2.4% for the rest of the year, it would be the lowest decline since 2002. He was planning to do his usual reminder mail shot in April to the 612 yet to renew but hopefully this number would fall before then.
- b) **Journal Postage and Delivery** – He had sent a letter to Royal Mail about the late journal delivery but was yet to receive a reply. He had also telephoned them to be told there was a heavy backlog of customer mail to deal with, but he was sure they were now aware of his feelings. He had also approached UK Mail as the only credible alternative provider but they only handle sorted mail in quantities of 4,000 items or greater, their price for unsorted mail was about 25% dearer than Royal Mail and they seemed very difficult to contact and thus did not inspire confidence. One side effect of the late delivery was that more of the renewals and seed sales occurred after the change in V.A.T. resulting in a higher proportion of our income attracting the higher rate.
- c) **Books** – *Echeveria* book sales after 30 months now needed £1,900 (53 copies) to break even, but all the others were now well past their break even points.
- d) **Aloe Monograph** – After prompting by Mr Kirkbright the first 10% of our payment to Kew had now been paid. An invoice for this was yet to be received. Dr Walker said that its publication was on schedule.
- e) **Seed Sales** – Mr Kirkbright reported that these were slightly ahead of last year and whilst many items had run out there was a significant stock left. He said that Mr Capel was proposing a special offer on these, starting in 2 weeks time, of 30 packets, his choice, for £4 plus P&P. This would be publicised on the Forum and BCSS Announce. He said that due to the increased VAT level the Society was losing an extra 14p on an average order of around £8.
- f) **Speaker Expenses to Scotland** – The rules for payment of grants towards a speaker to Ireland were recently agreed. Some years ago we also agreed, without definition, to pay the cost of a speaker travelling to Scotland. Due to the greater distances and nature of 'Scottish Tours' the 'cheap flight' approach used for Ireland was not practical due to the necessary use of the speaker's own vehicle, so he suggested a formula of 50% of the combined cost of fuel plus overnight stops getting there, this to be limited to a maximum grant of £200. The Zone would provide any tour accommodation and remaining travel expenses. This would be available for 1 speaker per year and this was agreed by the Board.
- g) **Phasing out of Cheques** – He had been in contact with his MP about this and been told it was planned for 2018 but would be reviewed in 2016. The minister would consult with organisations and charities as part of this process.

4. **Shows Committee:**

- a) **Judges Course** – Mr Tibbetts reported that the 2011 course had been provisionally arranged and gave details of the subjects/speakers. Lecture times had been reduced by ¼ hour to allow more time for changing displays, etc. Although arrangements with Moulton College were progressing satisfactorily, it was not certain whether planned building work would be completed by September, so alternative arrangements for catering and bar facilities had been made.
- b) **2012 National Show** – Arrangements for this were well in hand. The initial list of judges had been agreed and invites to these were to be sent out. The show schedule, Method Statement and Risk Assessment had been finalised. It had been agreed to keep all prices the same as 2008; tables at £42 including VAT, entrance at £5 with a discount to £4 for advance purchases of 10 or more. There would be a half page advert in the March CactusWorld and hopefully a full

page in subsequent issues up to the show. The schedule would be included in the September 2011 issue and a meeting with Cambridge branch would be held in April to sort out organisational issues. It was said at this meeting that although the show was not for another 18 months the B.O.T. should approach Anne Swithinbank as soon as possible to ensure she would be available to open the show and present the prizes.

- c) Society Website – Following Mr Hildyard's request for more details of the National Show and Judges Course on the website, it was agreed that Ian Thwaites would contact him to establish what extra details could be added. It had also been remarked that some of the current details there regarding publications were still out of date despite the correct information being supplied.
- d) Society Displays at Major Events – He said that the Shows Committee felt there should be a far more professional approach to Society displays at these events, particularly regarding the quality of the display materials used. It had been said that as there had been no response to the search for a Marketing/Promotions person, the Shows Committee proposed that they look at the whole subject of presenting the BCSS at public events (**Action: Shows Committee**).

5. **Conservation Committee:**

- a) Dr Maddams in a written report said that project proposals for the conservation of *Matucana oreodoxa ssp. roseiflora* and a Brazilian *Discocactus species* were still awaited.
- b) Ex-Situ Conservation – A major step forward in this was imminent. The March issue of CactusWorld would contain articles by John Arnold and Colin Parker, Chairman of Southend-on-Sea branch. The former stressed the need for members to leave clear instructions for the disposal of their plants when they were no longer able to care for them. The latter provided proven methods by which branches could achieve this. There would be a follow up letter from the Committee to Branch Secretaries and Zone Representatives, urging them to ensure that both articles were understood and accepted by their members, that Branch Officers and Committee plan for the disposal of collections and that, when assistance was required, it would be forthcoming from neighbouring Branches, with the help of the Zone Rep.

6. **Research Committee:**

The request, mentioned in the last report, for financial support for the study of the hardy cacti at the northern limit of **Cactaceae** distribution, focusing mainly on the **Opuntioids** of Canada, by a student studying for a diploma at Kew had been withdrawn, due to the supplementary funding it was hoped to receive not materialising. Initially the Committee had expressed interest from a bursary point of view but had decided that there was little real research in the project and was going to reject support. The student then planned to re-apply with an amended proposal towards the end of his course. The student had been informed and told that whilst a second project could be submitted it would require much more work to be successful.

The other project mentioned in the last report, to study the stem anatomy of *Leptocerei scopulophilus* and *wrightii*, was rejected on scientific grounds and how little B.C.S.S. members would be interested in what was a very narrow specialist field.

Financial support for a preliminary survey of the genus *Ledebouria* Roth (**Hyacinthaceae**) in the Kaokoveld, Namibia and a linked project on an unusual form of *Cyphostemma* which might turn out to be an hybrid or new species or simply caused by foraging animals were also rejected as being on the limit of interest to BCSS members.

The proposed research project on *Pilosocereus robinii* and its conservation sister project were still under discussion and at present answers were awaited from Cuba to a number of questions from both Committees.

The 'Thought Document' on guidance criteria for assessment which had been distributed to members of both the Research and Conservation Committees had attracted some interesting comments and was being followed up.

7. **Advertising/Journal Production Officer:**

- a) Advertising – Mr Quail reported that the 1st quarter advertising income was £527 (£719 last year) primarily due to the delayed effect of previous non-renewing series of 4 advertisers and the smaller Southfield advert.
- b) Journal Production – He said that Castle Colour had produced the December journal without any quality problems and it was posted on schedule on 14th December. The possibility of an earlier dispatch date for this year was considered but there was little flexibility available due to a number of factors. However the planned December dispatch date would be brought forward to 12th December with the others remaining unchanged. The March journal dispatch date was planned for 15th March. The slight cover 'greening' problem had now been largely overcome and hopefully would be eradicated. Joel Robinson had had further training and it was planned that he would lay out occasional small articles to help build his Quark expertise, whilst Philip Barker, despite having had some computer and telephone problems, produced the branch reports on time. It was intended to use the two printing companies process again as last year and both Charlesworth and Castle Colour were invited to quote for this. A planned meeting was held with Charlesworth in December to review the books and journals printed in 2010 and they also submitted a satisfactory quote. They would therefore be invited to print the March and September journals, subject to satisfactory resolution of an ISO9001 compliance failure with the September 2010 journal. The Company ownership had also changed since then and they would be outsourcing journal mailing this year. This raised some concerns but as most of our problems were in the dispatch area, the use of a well-established mailing house might resolve these. He would be visiting this mailing house when the March Journal was prepared for dispatch to see the new arrangements. Castle Colour's quote was higher than expected and they had also suggested another nearby printer with whom they had reciprocal arrangements and could do the same work at last year's prices. He felt we should use this company who had actually printed the December journal and assess their reliability.
- c) Work was still continuing on checking the archives for the *Ariocarpus*, *Echeveria* and *Ferocactus* books where the archives were incomplete, with some pictures and Quark files missing and 1 Quark file corrupted plus some font incompatibility. However, with a lot of work, these have been recreated as near identical as possible to those used to

print the books. Pdfs were being produced for the e-library and new archives would be created in case there was a future wish to reprint any of these books. The necessity for this work was highlighted by problems encountered during the preparation of the *Lithops* book reprint.

8. **Bradleya Editor:**

Dr Walker reported that it was a little early to be firm on Bradleya 29's content but gave a list of the 8 manuscripts most likely to be included and 5 other possible ones. Due to his involvement with the new Aloe book he felt that a publication date of August/September might be more realistic.

Discussion then took place on the point deferred from the last meeting when Mr Morris had noted an apparent reduction in the number of members now taking Bradleya. There appeared to be a higher take up by overseas members and a reduction among UK members, the overall average being around 21% of the total membership. Mr Kirkbright said that this seemed to be the norm over the years and that it actually made a loss, but this was accepted as Bradleya complied with our published aims. We had tried to reduce this as much as possible by reducing the print runs and there was a possibility further economies were available with a change of printer. Dr Walker asked that Mr Kirkbright provide more comprehensive information and trends so that a more informed decision could be reached (DK). It was also asked that a small article be given to Charlesworth to establish if their new origination department could produce a similar but cheaper product with the same level of liaison with Dr Walker. It was also suggested that perhaps a brief glossary of botanical terms be either included with the next issue or as a CactusWorld article to make the Bradleya articles easier to read. Dr Walker would attempt to provide this (CW). It was also agreed that we should try to encourage a bigger take up by 'selling'/publicising it more effectively including on the Society renewal form.

9. **Journal Editor:**

a) Mr Mottram reported that the inclusion of pictures of people, particularly on the cover, seemed to agitate some readers, unless they were of that reader; everybody seemed to like plants but not people. This was not helped by the late delivery of the December issue. However, the small amount of feedback received was again very positive. The March issue was in progress and on schedule. Its final content was still to be decided, but there should be an even balance between cacti and other succulents, with a slight bias towards cacti, if anything. He gave a list of articles in hand, plus any additional ones, their current status and planned publication dates. John Pilbeam planned to submit an article updating some nomenclature in the *Stapeliad* book and had asked if he could have 1,000 author's copies of the article when it appeared so that he could distribute these to buyers of his book. This would be expensive, due to the process and could not be underwritten by the Society. It was suggested that a better option would be to put this on the web site.

b) He gave the current status of the e-library, it now being 24GB in size. He had added many further items to it, including pdfs from Bert Jonkers and articles from Martin Terry, plus a donation of 27 unpublished photo prints taken in 1964 by Werner Rauh on an expedition to the Aden Protectorate. This expedition seemed not to have appeared in any journal, making the material unique. He had digitised these photographs and would add them to the e-library and would then pass the originals to Gordon Rowley for archiving. No further e-library usage had taken place but he understood it would be publicised in the February *Mammillaria* Journal by Bob Stanley. Mr Mottram also proposed to refer to it an item in the CactusTalk section of the June CactusWorld.

10. **Publications/Internet Officer:**

a) Internet – Dr Mace said that as a further safeguard he had appointed Bill Hildyard as a deputy manager of the Cactus-Mall server. He would have full access to the server management system and provide cover during holidays or if there were any problems. Yann Cocharde also had this access. A start had been made to move the pictures from the old to the new gallery and he had also begun work in setting up a web framework on the server for all BCSS branches so that all branches would have their own web pages. Branches in the Sussex, Surrey, Kent and London areas had been set up with the new addresses and this work would continue for the remainder. He had previously suggested via email that the modest cost of this be borne by the Society so that branches would get a free website as of 1st March. This was agreed by this committee. He would therefore publicise and give details of this via BCSS Announce and the June Journal and contact branches without a current web page, suggesting these take advantage of the offer and submit branch details and programme to the web team. He would also convert and update existing pages currently stored under local or zonal arrangements to match the full design of the new system. He suggested that any contributions to the web site be sent to Bill Hildyard.

b) Publications – Orders continued at a fairly high level although the late journal problems had some effect on pre-Christmas sales. Current book stocks of *Stapeliad* and *Lithops* were 280 copies and 380 copies respectively although John Pilbeam had 200 copies of *Stapeliad* left and would be happy to sell some back if we ran out. The mail consolidator was being used for all parcels outside Europe as they were cheaper, more reliable and quicker than the G.P.O., except some remote country buyers were increasingly expecting their orders to turn up immediately, resulting in demands to know where their books are.

11. **Update on the Society Future Projects:**

a) Slide Library – Dr Tebbenham reported on progress to date. He said that he was waiting for Mike Stansbie to collect the new scanner/laptop. He detailed the current progress on digitising 14 slide sets and updated his comments at the last meeting. He included a draft procedure for producing CDs and a set of draft rules for members wishing to use the system. Cost would be £5 per presentation including P&P. There was some discussion on these and it was agreed that with a minor modification the rules were accepted. On the procedure, several suggestions were made including that the CDs be sent in a plastic sleeve backed with a suitable rigid media to keep costs down (DK/RT).

- b) Project Progress – He gave details of the progress on the 7 critical/higher priority items and the 6 medium/lower priority ones. There had been no further progress on recruiting a Marketing Manager but Mr Quail hoped to have a revised job description by the next meeting.
- c) Branch Promotional CD – Some progress had been made although higher priority was being given to a new Welcome Pack. Similarly progress on the Secretary's Pack was being left until after the AGM, as content might change as a result of what was decided there.

11/07 **CONSERVATION/RESEARCH COMMITTEES**

Comment was made as to whether these committees should be combined and whether they were being pro-active in looking for projects to use the money that was accumulating in the Conservation/Research fund. Mr Arnold rebutted the latter point but said that he personally felt that neither of the committees would be adverse to amalgamation and would speak to Dr Maddams on this. However it was agreed to leave them separate until further consultation had been made. It was also agreed that more projects could be attracted if details of our grant scheme was publicised better on our web site and by inclusion on known commercial sites outside the Society. Mrs Vanden Bon would speak to Andy Young who dealt with this process to establish how this could be achieved (AVB).

11/08 **FUTURE PUBLICATIONS**

Dr Mace said that the books suggested at the last meeting for various reasons were not now viable. There were two new ones he felt might be considered. The first was a publication (Field Guide) entitled '**Pricklypears Commonly Found in the United States and Northern Mexico**' by Cheryl Green and Dave Ferguson and he circulated sample photographs and an extract around this meeting. He was in correspondence with Cheryl Green who felt it would be in a 144 page Bradleya format but price and authors' costs were still to be established. A preliminary printing quote would be obtained from Charlesworth (DK). This could be a viable proposition providing these and satisfactory publication costs were established and low. The other was another book by John Pilbeam, this time on *Echinocereus*. He expected it to be ready for technical editing in July/August and Mrs Vanden Bon was prepared to do this, dependent on timing. If Charlesworth printed it there was a cost advantage if this was done during their quiet periods.

11/09 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 1. As this was Mr Arnold's and possibly Dr Glen's last meeting, Mr Kirkbright on behalf of the committee thanked them both for their work and leadership over the last 6 years. Mr Arnold responded by thanking the committee for their support and Dr Glen echoed that sentiment.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 4.15pm.

NEXT MEETING: 25th June 2011 at the Holiday Inn, London Road, Newport Pagnell, MK16 0JA (just off junction 14 of M1). It would start at 11a.m. and light refreshments would be served at 1p.m.