

BRITISH CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting, held on Saturday 25th February 2012 at 11.00 a.m.
at the Holiday Inn, Milton Keynes, Bucks.

<u>Present:</u>	Dr Alasdair Glen (AG)	Chairman
	Dr Jim Gibbs (JG)	Vice-Chairman
	Mr David Kirkbright (DK)	Treasurer
	Mr Eddy Harris (EH)	Secretary
	Mr Al Larius (AL)	Journal Editor
	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
	Mr Bill Hildyard (BH)	Committee/Forum Moderator

AGREED VERSION

12/01 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Drs Roland Tebbenham & Colin Walker, Messrs John Arnold & Tony Morris.

12/02 MINUTES OF THE B.O.T. MEETINGS HELD ON 10TH DECEMBER 2011

These were formally ratified and signed.

12/03 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

11/20 Better Promotion of Affiliated Society Membership – Dr Glen was still trying to find a possible volunteer to take on this task. It was suggested that the term ‘Affiliate’ and its advantages should be defined more clearly and this put on our website.

11/29(c) Procedural Complaint – Dr Gibbs had investigated the complaint and replied to the complainant stating that he could find nothing wrong with the procedure used. The complainant had not accepted this and lodged an appeal via Mr Harris. This was then passed by email to the Board of Trustees (except those directly involved in the complaint), together with the grounds and details of the complaint, asking them to review the situation. This had been done and all had agreed with Dr Gibbs’ findings. This decision had then been made known to the complainant by email and letter but was still not accepted by the complainant who then threatened to put his complaint to the Charity Commission. Nothing further had been heard to date.

11/32 Garden Media Guild – Mr Kirkbright had written but said their reaction had been non-committal.

12/04 ELECTRONIC DECISION MAKING

1. E-Library – Peter Arthurs had offered to do this and this had been agreed. This appointment would be made known to Messrs R. Mottram, B. Burke & M Lowry (EH). The website now needed to be updated (BH) and also needed to be publicised in the journal from time to time.

2. Awards – An R.H.M.A. had been agreed.

12/05 COMMUNICATIONS

1. R.H.S. Plant Fairs – These were to be run at Wisley and Hyde Hall. Woking branch was to do the Wisley ones and information on the Hyde Hall ones was passed to Southend branch. The R.H.S. was also to run a C&S education event in April.

2. R.H.S. Grants – It had been learnt that R.H.S. grants to help put on displays at their major shows were to be withdrawn. These were in the order of some £160 and it was agreed that the Society would provide these on receipt of the appropriate request and that they met our requirements.

3. Awards – Following a review of Society members possibly deserving an award for their work, a shortlist had been draw up for consideration. From this it was agreed that 11 A.O.Ms would be awarded, with others to be considered in the near future. A quote for a further 100 A.O.M. badges would be obtained (DK).

12/06 REPORTS OF OFFICERS

1. Vice-Chairman:

a) Branches/Zones – Dr Gibbs was unaware of any changes in these. He had arranged with Birmingham branch to hold the next Zone Reps meeting in conjunction with their Autumn show on 7th October 2012. There were problems with finding a new secretary of Coventry branch following the death of Warren Withers and he would chase up the Scunthorpe treasurer to ensure that an official request for the proposed merger with Lincoln was received and available for approval at the A.G.M., as required by the Society’s constitution. It was also stated that their request to donate part of their funds to a local hospice charity was not allowed under the Charity Act.

b) Speakers List Update – He had now had 56 positive responses, 4 withdrawals, 4 not being available for various reasons and 4 yet to reply, which he was chasing. This gave a probable total of 64 including 3 new speakers, 48 of which were happy to be included in the web version for branch officials, 43 for the website for all members and 41 for inclusion on the list for outside societies. 4 had expressed no preference and he was chasing these. 12 speakers had agreed to contribute their digital presentations to the B.C.S.S. Digital Library and a further 8 were prepared to discuss this or donate them at a later date. He gave a list of what requirements were needed to complete to the Speakers’ List and had obtained a local printer cost of £150 for 200 copies to publish the finished list, which was acceptable. Lists for outside Societies would be

sent electronically or as a self produced list as before. A copy would be sent to the R.H.S. and also appear on our web site.

2. **Membership Secretary:**

Mr Morris in written report stated that since December 2011 he had enrolled 62 new members, comprising 42 Full, 7 Senior, 6 Associate and 7 Junior, 3 of whom had also subscribed to Bradleya. Of these, 11 were overseas members and 5 were re-instated former members. This compared with 41 total for the same period last year. 35 of these had joined via PayPal and 7 had joined via the reduced membership offer in the Welcome Pack. There had also been some response to our reduced Junior membership offer and the inclusion of a request for email addresses on the renewal form had resulted in several hundred being added to the database.

3. **Treasurer:**

a) **Membership** – Mr Kirkbright reported that membership to date compared with last year was: Full 1424 (-76), Senior 779 (unchanged), Junior 9 (+4), which when taken together, the journal taking membership total was 2136 (-72). Associate membership was 209 (-6) whilst Bradleya subscriptions were 457 (-25). 80 Full members had switched to Senior, 32 the other way. Much of the above shortfall had occurred over the last 3 weeks.

b) **Accounts** – He said the Society's financial position was now very sound and in the last 18 months our COIF deposit funds had substantially increased due to lower Journal/Bradleya production costs and exceptional publication sales.

c) **Card Payments** – The use of PayPal in place of Barclaycard had been a smooth changeover with significant website renewals and purchases via PayPal. Around 36% of our income had come via this source. He said that he and the Membership secretary had managed the changeover, retuning their procedures to cope with the changes.

d) **Publication Sales** – The 100 copies of the *Stapeliad* book had been bought and sales of the new *Echinocereus* book had currently recovered 75% of its initial cost, needing to sell a further 200 copies to break even. With the move towards electronic publishing the sale value of back issues of Bradleya was decreasing and with the 2011/12 accounts he proposed to reduce to zero the valuation cost of all but the current and immediately previous editions. This would result in a one-off reduction in our publication accounts which he anticipated would be compensated by the income from Kew for 'ALOES'.

e) **Accommodation Payments** – These had been paid in January.

f) **December 2011/March 2012 CactusWorld Distribution** – Due to a communication breakdown between our printer and our mailing house the prepaid envelope had been omitted from the December journal which may have had an effect on renewals and the survey returns. Following discussion with the Swallowtail, the printer involved, they will print an additional 200 March journals and a special combined message/renewal form at no cost to us. Cavalier Mailing will insert the form and a prepaid envelope in all UK copies. As a result, printing and mailing of the March journal would be by Swallowtail and Cavalier Mailing and the June journal printed and mailed by Charlesworth. He would also create a special edition of the mailing file which would incorporate all who were sent the December issue whether or not they then renewed for 2012, less any deleted and plus all new members since December. Hopefully this would encourage those yet to renew to do so and could remove the need for his April chase-up letter. The BCSS will pay for the mailing cost of the extra journals but it would mean that anybody renewing after the March journal would not have to be sent a journal by Mr Morris, saving him effort and postage and a possible saving if the sending of chase-up letters was not necessary.

g) **Electronic Journal Survey Returns** – To date 940 returns had been received, exceeding expectations, with possibly more after the March journal exercise.

4. **Shows Committee:**

Mr Tibbetts reported that the main emphasis of their last meeting had been the National Show. All arrangements for this were well in hand, the show schedule had now been printed and was with Mike Stansbie ready for distribution, prize cards were printed apart from the winner's name and the risk assessment/method statement, etc paperwork completed. Floor plans had been prepared and once the final sales table area had been finalised (up to 107 sold to date), a meeting with Wood Green would be arranged. Judges' stewards had been recruited and he said that it had been agreed to use a manual system for compiling the results. Mr Kirkbright had confirmed that 116 of the 134 classes had now been sponsored. A Banksian medal had been ordered and Terry Smale was to bring members of the RHS Awards Committee to the show. To date 4 specialist Societies had replied positively for a stand at the show, an advert. for the show would appear in the March journal and that for the June journal had been agreed. Entry would again be by coloured wrist band (different colour), advanced sales of these being coordinated by Mr Harris with a discount for batches of 10. Cambridge branch was to arrange local advertising and to recruit the general stewards and a meeting to discuss final details had been arranged for April. The photography and CD production was still to be arranged by Mr Thwaites. The next Shows Committee meeting would be on 29th April.

5. **Conservation Committee:**

a) Dr Maddams in a written report apologised for not submitting one for the last meeting but said that following careful consideration, a project had been approved to re-establish *Lithops wernerii* at the type locality, where it is now critically endangered, using second generation plants raised from seed of authentic material.

b) He said that, sadly, progress had been very slow in obtaining firm proposals from Dr Kiesling on two putative projects relating to *Matucana oreodoxa v. roseiflora* and another unspecified one.

c) **Ex-Situ Conservation** – Whilst assembling material for a promised insert for the Branch Secretary's Information Pack, he had become increasingly aware of the need for direct member contact, so had therefore drafted an article for inclusion in CactusWorld, after its approval by the Conservation Committee at its 17th March meeting. He had also drafted a shorter item to be attached to a copy of the CactusWorld article for inclusion in the Secretary's Pack. This dealt specifically with suggested ways of promoting ex-situ conservation at branch level by branch officers, in particular, the need to ensure that it was a real part of the branch activities and not 'put on the back burner'.

6. **Research Committee:**

Mr Hill in a written report said that they had now rejected the amended proposal by a Kew student for a visit to Canada, which would form part of his Kew diploma requirement, as it did not meet their terms of reference.

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

- a) Advertising – Mr Quail in a written report said that the 1st quarter advertising income was £695, another increase, although we had lost 2 series of four advertisers. He intended, when chasing up adverts. for the June journal, to emphasis that it was an ideal opportunity for advertisers to feature the National Show and what they would have on offer there. If there was sufficient take up, they could be put together under a National Show heading.
- b) Journal Production – Mrs Vanden Bon started by reiterating details of the problem dealt with in minute 12/06/3(f). She also said that there had been a lot of work choosing fonts that were compatible with both Mac and PC users in the production team and that two had now been agreed; Minion Pro and Ariel. She suggested that the latter become the provisional B.C.S.S. standard. These changes had also required additional work to update all the templates used. A further complication had occurred when both she and Mr Quail upgraded to Quark Express 9, being issued with different versions. This caused font incompatibility between the versions, possibly caused by the use of different versions of Microsoft Office, resulting in her inability to open files from Mr Quail. These were currently being investigated, but it meant that for the first time, the March journal had to be a joint production process. This plus the fact that there had been less input from our other team members, due to work commitments, added to the workload, but the March journal went to the printers on time and proofs are expected imminently. In the discussion that followed, Mrs Vanden Bon said that journal production was not a one person job and very time-consuming and that she could not do this on her own. She paid tribute to the amount of work that Mr Quail did and was still undertaking and hoped that he would continue to help. It was agreed that we should offer to fund any software/equipment upgrades necessary to make the job easier (AVB/DK).
- c) Welcome Pack – Mr Quail said the general marketing versions should now be referred to as the B.C.S.S. Information Sheets and had emailed the Trustees with details for a successful launch at Shows and for general sales plus a copy of the insert to be included in the March journal. This emphasised the need to ensure sufficient supplies were available for the major shows and ensure a return process for unused sets in as-new condition. He had also sent a set to Anne Swithinbank suggesting it might form, in whole or part, a theme for a gardening programme and also as an excuse to further remind her of the National Show date. He had also sent a set to Southfield Nurseries to ask if they would sell them and he might also approach other outlets. He emphasised that these packs needed to be publicised effectively at the forthcoming A.G.M. and asked all Trustees to help in this.

8. **Bradleya Editor:**

Due to a family bereavement Dr Walker was unable to present a report.

9. **Journal Editor:**

Mr Laius reported that he currently had 10 articles in hand, which were enough for the June issue and beyond and that, given that it was only February and articles were arriving steadily, it promised well for the future. Hopefully more members would be encouraged to contribute after the March issue. Of these articles, the majority were cactus based which was the opposite to his expectations, but hopefully this might change, to enable the planned production of a balanced content. He said that up to now no new descriptions had been received, but this was early days and it might be that online new descriptions could be affecting written submissions.

10. **Publications/Internet Officer:**

- a) Internet – Dr Mace reported that it was now a year since the scheme to provide branches and zones with free websites was introduced. These could be managed at local level or by a small central team. This had encouraged quite a number of new zone/branch sites to be set up or externally hosted ones to move to us and he thanked Sheila Cude for her help with this. There were now 9 zones and 54 branches using the new site but 14 branches were still using external hosting and a number were still showing 2011 programmes or in some cases 2010 ones. He would write a piece for the June journal to remind branches to use the new logo and charity number and make sure they were showing current information. It would also be appropriate to remind them of the free and assisted site offer and mention some of the possible software packages for websites which could be made available.
- b) Publications – It was reported that much activity had again taken place since the last meeting, the outstanding task being to send out review copies of the *Echinocereus* book. 100 further copies of *Stapeliads* had been received and the stock of Steve Hammer's *Lithops* book was now below 100, but selling well, so it had been agreed to reprint a further 1000 to take advantage of a special price offer from Charlesworth. Information Packs were selling well and should be ordered for collection at the A.G.M. to avoid the significantly high postage costs. These were due to rise very significantly in April and might result in the need to increase the price of certain publications. He said that there had been no take up from publicising the Welcome Pack on eBay.

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

- a) Slide Library – Dr Tebbenham in a written report commented on progress to date. He had been liaising with Dr Gibbs (Speakers List) and John Ellis (expert) on what people expected from this. He emphasised that we needed to encourage more speakers to offer digital talks to the new library, including initially a detailed written commentary with anecdotes and eventually with a recorded commentary. This could be possibly done at branch meetings with the speaker's agreement, but after discussion on means of providing such a recorded commentary, it was said that it needed suitable methods/equipment and this needed to be investigated/assessed before it could be done effectively. It was suggested that John Pilbeam's Hampshire/Dunne lecture be recorded and Mr Hildyard would check with an acquaintance on what was required (BH). Dr Tebbenham had also been in discussion with Paul Klaassen and others about producing movies or newsreels. The first digital programme had been loaned out without problem, although we would need to provide an external hard drive for use by the Slide Librarian. This was in hand (DK). The revised borrowing rules were now

available, but the existing ones needed to continue in parallel for the present until all digitisation had been completed and to cover branches without digital equipment. Certain actions were required of the Trustees to facilitate these points including opinions of the proposed questionnaire to be sent to branches when they made use of the digital slide library. He gave a detailed resumé on progress to date, which showed 9 sets ready for use, 13 ready for programme file-build, 14 being scanned/correlated and 14 yet to be started. Peter Arthurs had completed 1 set of final files and had offered to produce 3 per month during February to April and 2 per month thereafter. He also said that Gordon Rowley's 'Cactotherapy' was now available and that this needed to be publicised. Mike Gilbert had offered a replacement slide talk on 'Ethiopia' at some point in the future and Dr Peter Brandham of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew seemed to be receptive to providing some of his slide sets, but possibly might need a nudge from another Trustee acquaintance. *Post meeting update: Mrs Mace had made enquiries on availability of digital projectors and found that one of her local councils did offer free use of a projector and laptop if required. It might be possible that other local authorities might do the same.*

- b) Branch Promotional CD – He said that all the material for this had now been moved to the server and Peter Arthurs informed, but was unaware of any progress to date.

12. **Forum/Website:**

Mr Hildyard reported that the new website and new look Forum had gone smoothly with a few minor comments but most had liked the new look. He expressed thanks for Sheila Cude's work on the Junior website and Plant of the Month sections, both of which had been well received. He said that the Shows Committee had started sending in material for their section but was yet to receive anything from the Conservation and Research Committees and some Trustees. He gave a list of items that still might be required for various parts of the website. Mr Kirkbright said that we needed to address providing a secure section for providing the on-line download facility discussed at the last meeting (*minute 11/31*) but this was dependent on input from Peter Arthurs. It was also asked if the show stationary form could be in an editable form so that orders could be submitted electronically (**BH**). As part of the requirements for branch information and because of current cheap printing costs, it was also agreed to revise the current membership form to include colour and print off a suitably large quantity.

12/07 **SOCIETY CONVENTION**

Mr Morris had visited and photographed the new Gilbert Murray Centre and these were then passed around this committee. A current quote had been obtained which, subject to any upward revision over the next 2 years, would be around £285. Mr Laius had contacted several speakers who were willing to attend, although a couple were well known on the U.K. circuit. It was generally agreed that well known international speakers were needed and various suggestions were made. Mr Laius said that more committee members were needed, which currently comprised of 3 full time members. Possible volunteers were suggested and appeals for more volunteers would be made at the A.G.M. and in the June journal. It was agreed that a firm booking would be made for 11th to 13th July 2014. It was also suggested that allowing day visitors in to only buy plants could be arranged, but the period that this was allowed must be later in the convention, say Saturday afternoon/Sunday morning. Dr Kirkbright said that he still had contact details of attendees of the last convention.

12/08 **MARKETING OFFICER**

No further progress had been made about finding an applicant(s). The current c.v. would be circulated to the Board for possible modification/simplification and it was suggested that the title be changed to Society Promotion Officer.

11/09 **FUTURE PUBLICATIONS**

A possible new publication could be an English edition of the Cactus & Co Italian publication 'Succulente in Natura'. A copy of the Italian version was shown to the meeting and during the discussion that followed, it was thought that as it was a general book, it might only have a limited appeal and that a maximum price of £18 or less should be aimed for. It was said that it might be possible to obtain the English translation in a form ready for printing and make other savings, which would reduce costs and Dr Mace would investigate this (**AM**). An estimated publication date in advance of the National Show should be achievable. There might be another publication in 2013/4 on *Eriosyce*.

12/10 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

1. Trustees – Following a query from Mr Laius, there was further discussion on this and it was agreed that the whole structure would be investigated and discussed at a later date, hopefully to provide a simpler structure. It was said that the annual Trustee positions would be advertised in advance of the 2013 A.G.M.
2. Hampshire/Dunn Memorial Lecture – It was agreed that as the lecture subject was *Echinocereus*, a display of these plants be set up to compliment it (**BT**). Although a request for plants for this would not appear in the journal, it would be put on BCSS Announce (**AG**) and spread by word of mouth to the membership.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 5.04pm.

NEXT MEETING: 5th May 2012 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.