

BRITISH CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY

Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting, held on Saturday 28th September 2013 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 Eddy Harris (EH)	Secretary
	Mr Tony Morris (TM)	Membership Secretary
	Mr Al Larius (AL)	CactusWorld Editor
	Mr Barry Tibbetts (BT)	Shows Committee Representative
	Mrs Alice Vanden Bon (AVB)	Journal Production Officer
	Dr Tony Mace (TMa)	Publications Officer
	Mr Bill Hildyard (BH)	Forum & Website Administrator
	Mr John Arnold (JA)	Legal Advisor
	Mr John Gander (JGa)	Marketing Officer
	Mrs Suzanne Mace (SM)	Committee
	Dr Roland Tebbenham (RT)	Committee
	Mr Peter Arthurs (PA)	Committee

FINAL VERSION

13/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Mr David Kirkbright

13/22 MINUTES OF THE B.O.T. MEETING HELD ON 11TH MAY 2013

These were formally ratified and signed.

13/23 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Dr Tebbenham asked if there had been any contact with a TV company for a programme on 'The Great British Garden Revival', but nobody had. Mr Harris said that he had been contacted by a company called '20/20', who were producing a programme on people's large collections of house plants for Channel 4, enquiring if this could include Cacti and Succulents. On being told that there were a few of these, but that most large collections were housed in greenhouses, they seemed to lose interest.

13/19 Current Progress on the Branch Information CD – Dr Gibbs would review the current information and ensure it was fully updated before a new edition was produced (**JG**). *See also minute 13/26/1.* It was said that paper versions should also be produced as well as the CD for secretaries without access to a computer.

13/24 ELECTRONIC DECISION MAKING

Awards – There had been email discussion on this but not all Trustees had offered an opinion. It was suggested that this be done via the Trustees section of the Forum so that there was a record of what was said, but the majority felt that the current system should be used.

13/25 COMMUNICATIONS

1. R.H.S. Workshop at Wisley – We had been invited to a meeting on 13th November. Dr & Mrs Mace were attending as M.S.G. representatives, but agreed to represent our Society as well. The R.H.S. would be informed of this (**EH**).
2. Martin Doorbar – he had been elected as the new secretary of Oxford branch but had asked that only his email address and telephone no. appear on any Society lists. This was noted and should not be a problem.
3. Awards – 3 A.O.M and 1 R.H.M.A. awards were agreed.

13/26 REPORTS OF OFFICERS

1. **Vice-Chairman:**

Dr Gibbs reported that Eltham branch, having followed the correct procedure, wished to merge with Bromley branch at the end of the year and asked permission from the Board for this to happen. This was given. He had also heard that another branch had wished to close, but following discussions with the branch officers, the branch had decided to continue for the present. He had received a comment from one speaker about a lack of hospitality when recently visiting a branch involving a considerable journey. He had also had similar comments from other speakers and during the discussions with the secretary of the previous branch mentioned above, it had become obvious that when secretaries changed, the Secretary's Pack was not always passed on. He felt that this could be addressed if more emphasis should be placed in the Speakers List about offering hospitality for visiting speakers. There had been a few changes in the Speakers List; the latest changes having been sent to Mr Hildyard for updating the Branch Officials section of the Forum and had also appeared in the September CactusWorld. He thanked the Oxford and Northampton and Milton Keynes branches for dealing with speaker enquiries from local Garden Clubs that he had received. He said the Zone Reps. Meeting would take place on 6th October in conjunction with the Birmingham branch Autumn Show.

2. **Membership Secretary:**

Mr Morris stated that since May 2013 he had enrolled 96 new members, 10 of whom had also subscribed to Bradleia. These comprised 60 Full, 23 Senior, 8 Associate, and 5 Junior. Of these, 8 were from overseas and 9 had joined using the Welcome Pack reduced price offer (making 34 to date). He had also re-instated 24 former members. Overseas enrolment numbers had improved, 8 being similar to the same period last year. The total enrolment figure of 96 was also similar to

last year ((92). He said that new memberships for September 2012 to 2013 were 207 (plus 24 re-instatements) compared 225 for the same period 2011/12 (plus 8 re-instatements), so new membership was very similar. However, these figures reinforced the need to address the continued loss of our existing membership. Of our 82 branches, 57 had gained at least 1 member.

3. **Treasurer:**

- a) **Membership** – Mr Kirkbright in a written report said that current membership compared with last year was: Full 1,551 (-130), Senior 967 (+38), Junior 24 (+3), which when added together, the Journal taking membership total was 2,542 (-89). Associate membership was 212 (-20) whilst 2013 Bradleya subscriptions were 532 (-10). 95 Full members had switched to Senior, 31 the other way. He said that the shortfall had remained at around 100 this year which was very disappointing although this had improved to 89 recently.
- b) **Gift Aid** – Response by H.M.R.C. to his claim had been surprisingly quick and £7,422 was received into our accounts.
- c) **Journal Issues** – He had eventually paid the withheld £1,400 to Charlesworth on the understanding that they would reduce the next bill by £500. He was currently waiting their invoices for the September issue as David Quail had sent numerous complaints about the quality and service of their production. He hoped to hear the outcome in time to put meaningful figures in the annual accounts.
- d) **Society ‘T’ Labels** – Their sales via Mr Morris and over the website had been very successful and should have improved their turnover.
- e) **Convention 2014** – To date 93 bookings (including speakers and 4 of the organising committee yet to book) had been received, including 34 sales tables. 8 Trustees were yet to book. With very few bookings now coming in, he did not anticipate reaching a break-even point but felt it should go ahead. To reduce any loss, we might need to reduce our estimated numbers with the university, which could make it difficult for anybody expecting to book late.
- f) **Publications** – The free reprint of the *Agave* book had produced a very confused financial view, but he expected it to be financially successful, although it could pose problems with the accounts and the true stock position. Sales of ‘Succulents in Nature’ were minimal and an extra discount on ELK face to face sales had been arranged, resulting in 4 copies being sold, the first since April.
- g) **Annual accounts** – As he was currently preparing the year-end accounts he asked that everybody send all requested information and claims to him as soon as possible.

4. **Shows Committee:**

2013 Judges Course – Mr Tibbetts reported that this had been successful with an almost full attendance and improved facilities. It had made a small loss of around £200. The results of the tests would not be available until later in the year as the earliest their committee meeting could be arranged to discuss them was on 24th November. There had been much discussion during the course on the new 10th Edition of the Handbook of Shows and comments made would be reviewed at the November Shows Committee meeting prior to the final edition being published and available in January 2014 ready for next year’s show season.

5. **Conservation Committee:**

- a) Dr Maddams in a written report said that meetings with D.E.F.R.A. had been discontinued by them as part of their economy drive, but that information on any changes was available from other sources.
- b) **Projects** – There had been no further progress on the project to conserve *Matucana oreodoxa* ssp. *roseiflora* due to no local contacts being found, but the search would continue. In the continuing absence of new project proposals, he said that the committee was stepping up its efforts to find new contacts and that as of yet, there had been no positive action via Arturo Anaya, a conservation administration official in Mexico, who had promised to publicise our activities. Two other contacts were being approached.
- c) **Ex-Situ Conservation** – Information was being collected on the disposal of plant collections to gain a fuller understanding of the problems that might arise and in what circumstances the committee would be involved. Involvement of a specialist Society could be advantageous in some cases, and he urged the Society via its annual Zone Reps Meeting to continue publicising the need for effective ex-situ conservation.
- d) He said that advice had been given to Plant Heritage, at their request, on a collection of *Rhipsalis* and *Lepismium* species.
- e) There was supporting criticism from this committee about the information contained in an item in the last Conservation minutes which concerned the attitude of Kew personnel at a CITES meeting of Heritage Collection holders. It was reported that their sole interest seemed to be with how many plants had been intercepted en-route to Europe and in particular, how many of these they had confiscated. They were proud to report the destruction of a large consignment of plants from Madagascar, making no attempt to re-house or propagate them and were not interested in the propagation of CITES plants ex situ. This was certainly detrimental to conservation aims and they were told this by other people present at that meeting.

6. **Research Committee:**

- a) Mr Hill in a written report said that a request for a research grant had been received from the Assistant Director of the Huntingdon Library, Art Collections and Botanical Gardens, California for a proposal entitled ‘Field Research and Specimen Collection of the genus *Ledebouria* Roth (*Hyacinthaceae*) in Namibia’. The principal investigator was to be Cody Howard, who in 2010 sent in a proposal for him to go to Namibia to study *Ledebouria* in the field. This had been rejected as *Ledebouria* was not a genus embraced by the B.C.S.S. and therefore outside the committee’s mandate. This was explained at the time and led to acrimony at the rejection. The committee did treat this new proposal on its merits, but arrived at the same conclusion. Mr Hill was to write to the Assistant Director stating this and suggesting that he contact the Alpine Garden Society who do deal with *Ledebouria* and had a travel award scheme.
- b) He said they were yet to hear any further information from the French student who wished to study *Haworthias* in habitat. Mrs Mace said that she understood that he was currently cycling down the Americas from Alaska on his ‘break year’.
- c) A proposal from Dr Olwen Grace of Kew concerning the evolution of succulent plants in southern Africa had been

received. This involved producing a complete, robust phylogeny of the genus *Crassula*, building on previous research and had the scope to be expended for both applied research and conservation. The proposal included a descriptive paper for Bradleya and an article for CactusWorld, the B.C.S.S. being acknowledged throughout. Mr Hill had sent the proposal to Graham Charles and recently discussed with him if he would be happy with having a descriptive paper for Bradleya with a 'deeper' paper published elsewhere. Mr Charles had said that whilst he would be happy to receive such a paper, his remit for Bradleya was for publication of original unpublished research, but that he (and the Research Committee) would welcome clarification from the Trustees on this.

The Research Committee was concerned that requests to fund projects were not being submitted as often as it wished. One perceived problem was that scientific community members were judged on their published research work and Bradleya unfortunately did not feature among the top scientific publications. Thus our requirement that for any grant provided, the results must be published in Bradleya or CactusWorld, could work against us, as many would prefer a more prominent publication such as Taxon. There seemed to be 3 options to consider; (a) maintain the status quo, (b) allow publication in another scientific journal (with acknowledgement of the involvement of the B.C.S.S.) and have a different article on the same topic in our journals, the 'weight' of the science content being the deciding factor, or (c) maintain Bradleya only having articles on strictly unpublished research, allow publication elsewhere (with acknowledgements), but having a completely differently slanted article on the research in CactusWorld, which would be of interest to more members, e.g. more pictures and accounts of collecting samples in habitat (plus a summary of the ensuing results). Thus the B.C.S.S. would receive an article. It was agreed by the Trustees that all future publishing could be non-exclusive and that grant applicants be informed of this.

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

- a) Advertising – Mr Quail in a written report said that the 3rd quarter advertising income was £349, compared with £338 for the same time last year, and that there had been no change in the number of series-of-4 advertisers for this quarter. He said that he was now willing to continue as Advertising Officer if required, as he had now managed to relinquish much of his journal layout work and although his other personal commitments were still taking up much time, some reduction in these look possible in the coming months. It was agreed that his offer would be accepted and a letter of appreciation for his hard work be sent (EH).
- b) CactusWorld Production Trainees – He said that David Slade had indicated that he no longer felt able to learn journal layout work, but that Sheila Cude had successfully loaded David Slade's copy of Quark onto her Mac computer and that a compatible 2 way file transfer system had been set up between her computer and our PC computers. For September she successfully compiled the branch reports and although he had laid them out in Quark, he was hopeful that she would do this when she felt able to do so. Sophie Hilton was now ready for her training day with Mrs Vanden Bon, but the latter said this was still to happen as she had been too busy recently to find time for this, but would do so soon. Similarly he was yet to start Christian Bohm's training due to other pressures, but hoped to start in the autumn/winter months.
- c) Journal Production – The September CactusWorld had been printed by Charlesworth as a 'last chance' to show they could do so satisfactorily after major problems with their two previous quarters. Again there had been many problems both with meeting deadline dates and maintaining quality of colour printing. They had not used the approved mailing carrier sheets, the return address was incorrect and they had changed the mailing house without our approval. The new mailing house had placed its advert. on the carrier sheet without permission or agreeing to pay us any charge for the advertising. We had yet to receive any explanation or apology from Charlesworth for this catalogue of errors. They would not be used again, but a much reduced charge needed to be agreed for the September printing. A second printer would now be sought in line with our strategy to use 2 printers, targeting September 2014 for their trial printing quarter. Subject to satisfactory price quotations, Swallowtail would be invited to print the March, June and December 2014 issues. Mrs Vanden Bon said that the proof reading team now included Mr Berresford and Dr Tebbenham and that Mr Neville had now rejoined the team after his recent illness. It was also suggested that Terry Smale be asked as well (SM).
- d) Marketing/Membership numbers – He again expressed concern over the recent membership numbers and hoped that this would be addressed urgently at this meeting. There was some discussion on this and it was agreed that we should look to try to maintain our current membership by establishing what they wanted from the hobby and maybe this would help with increasing membership. A standard corporate image would also help in this.

8. **Bradleya Editor:**

Mr Charles in a written report said that Bradleya 31 was published on 4th September. The printer, Butler, Tanner and Dennis of Frome, Somerset, printed a total of 1,000 copies against our order of 800 and all the excess were good copies. The cover was made from a stronger card and the paper was thicker with a semi-matt coating, which gave it a better quality feel, supportive of the selling price. It contained 20 articles, including 8 on cacti with 2 important new species descriptions and comprised 164 body pages. The earlier publication date allowed it to be offered for sale at ELK and he intended to publish even earlier next year, depending on timely receipt of sufficient articles.

9. **Journal Editor:**

- a) Mr Laius reported that the September issues were received on time and authors' copies posted out within a week. About half of the authors were now happy with just a PDF of their article and those requiring paper off-prints had fallen from 30/40 copies to just 5 or 6. Consequently, the number of off-prints supplied had been halved and postage costs had been substantially reduced. He said that the December issue was on target and no problems envisaged. He had 23 articles in hand, 9 of which were already designed, 8 were awaiting design and 6 were work in progress. These should fill the December and March issues (and beyond). He said that according to feedback, the 'In my Greenhouse' articles were always very popular, but contributions had run out and he did not even have one for the December issue. However, after contacting various people he had had a very positive response and now had sufficient material in hand (or promised) to run this feature for at least the next 2 years.
- b) JSTOR digital archive – The agreements had been signed and he was just waiting on Martin Lowry to post them the back issues for scanning (these would be returned to him). Once these were available in the JSTOR archive he would let the

Board know and it would be announced in the journal and on the website (AL).

10. **Publications Officer:**

Publications – Dr Mace said that it had been a busy quarter with £11,355.42p worth of stock sold, primarily sale of our new publications, but also sales of older books through dealer bulk orders and higher than normal sales at ELK. He gave a breakdown of the sales, but said that sales of ‘Succulents in Nature’ continued to be poor and calendar sales were steady, but not as good as hoped. Our stock of ‘**Stapeliads**’ was now gone but he hoped to be able to buy some back from a U.K. source. Sales of the *Agave* book were good but the publication had been a technical nightmare due to the reprint and seemingly endless collation and other problems with the printer, resulting in enormous amounts of extra work dealing with email and telephone queries, which were still ongoing. The faults had also required the need to undertake much quality control on deliveries, not to mention the work of loading and unloading boxes from multiple deliveries.

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

Dr Tebbenham gave the current progress on this and the current state of the remaining 29 projected programmes, 9 of which were the next to be released. Details of these were given. Progress was limited by other tasks at this time of year, but no problems had emerged. Programme orders had been slow, but some users had returned their feedback forms. Two new programmes were identified, plus a couple of bequests. Further details would be given at our next meeting. Following the June CactusWorld article, a member’s emailed suggestion had been received, which he planned to follow up. It was said that another source of slide scanning might be Alan Pocock of High Wycombe branch.

12. **Forum/Website:**

Mr Hildyard reported that the Forum was progressing well and that having a 3rd member on the team was working well and smoothly despite the odd spat. B.C.S.S. Forum membership was just under 500. He said that some web pages needed updating, noticeably those of some branches and zones and that an update on the convention was required. Mr Arthurs then gave a short update on his progress with the website and said that most of the work was complete, but there had been problems in certain areas such as the Forum, the Editorial team and providing a permission system for downloading articles. These were associated with our database system, which was being modified to cope with this (PA/DK). He had spoken to Graham Charles, who was unaware of the plan to make Bradleya articles available in advance of publication and he had said that he would give some thought on how this could be achieved. Once this was done, it was felt that the best time to carry out final changes and testing of the system would be over the Xmas holiday period (PA/TMa/BH).

13. **2014 Society Convention Update:**

Mr Arnold said that the programme was now fully arranged and its running order being sorted. He was pleased that numbers of attendees and nurseries were sufficient to make the convention viable. There had been discussion on the ‘goody bag’ content which Mr & Mrs Minors were sorting, but needed to know what the 2010 convention bag had contained and its budget, but felt this should be modest. This was given at this meeting. He had spoken to Graham Charles about the 2010 auction lots and the latter had provided a text file of the 2010 booklet as a template for this event. This had been passed to Mrs Vanden Bon for the layout work, but Mr Arnold would provide the amendments needed for the 2014 convention. She had also offered to print the name badges and order the clips. He was currently unaware of any other Society stands booking space, although perhaps he should contact these to ask and asked for contacts. He was yet to recruit members to help at the convention and wondered if an appeal should appear in the December CactusWorld. He would like reminding what else needed doing. It was said that speakers’ accommodation and travel time arrangements were the most important and Mr Morris said that there now a new contact at the university. He also needed to appeal for and organise the auction lots and the emphasis for this should be on plants. Suggestions for auctioneers and helpers for this were made. Mesdames Mace and Vanden Bon agreed to organise the raffle (SM/AVB). We would also need to provide a series of mini-profiles for the speakers, who would be introducing and thanking them and compiling a list of actual volunteers willing to help on the day.

14. **Marketing Officer:**

Mr Gander said that since May, progress on a number of marketing issues had been somewhat slow, partly due to domestic circumstances and the delay in receiving the results of the 2013 Sheffield branch show, but he hoped that this would improve before the next B.o.T. meeting and before most B.C.S.S. branches had their A.G.M. Matters being worked on were ensuring that each branch and zone had an email contact address and website, identifying and acquiring suitable leaflet holders for use at B.C.S.S. events to ensure publicity could be easily and prominently displayed, adapting and adding to the work by Peter Cowdell and distributing this to all branches and zones for discussion and use, and identifying suitable display boards for use by branches at B.C.S.S. and other events to promote the Society. There were a known number already within the society. During discussion with Graham Charles on his on-line journal, it had been asked if a reciprocal advert. could be placed in our journal and this was agreed. He said that Martin Doorbar was developing an easily recognisable ‘Corporate Identity’ package for use to better promote the Society, using standardised fonts, logos and layouts across all Society entities, publications and events, ready for the 2014 promotional year, but it was said by this committee that this already existed. He also said that Facebook and Twitter could be valuable marketing tools and asked for a contact to ‘an expert’ to get him ‘up and running’ with these. Mr Hildyard said that he now had volunteers to run our Facebook and Twitter sites. It was also suggested that a resumé of speakers’ talks and a picture of the speaker appear in the Speakers List for incorporating into branch programmes. It was also said that any article that appeared in the media should have the Society and website information included.

13/27 **SHEFFIELD BRANCH/PETER COWDELL**

It was said that there were some problems within the branch and this was to be discussed and hopefully resolved at a Zone 3 meeting tomorrow. In the light of this, it was felt to be inappropriate to comment until this had happened. Peter Cowdell had sent out a series of letters to various Trustees in the last few weeks, expounding the perceived campaign

successes. Mr Morris said that the 2013 new enrolments for Sheffield branch were 10, 1 of which had joined via the offer, and 2 in June via our website. The next highest branch was Birmingham with 8. Dr Glen also emphasised that agenda items and points made during Board meetings were not for general circulation unless/until minuted.

13/28 **SOCIETY PATRON**

Anne Swithinbank had agreed to become our patron and had said that she would not be averse to a second patron being appointed. It was agreed that Tom Hart-Dyke be approached to establish if he was willing to also be appointed (SM). Once this was done we would need to set up an agreement with them on how we should utilise them, such as putting their name(s) on our stationery and advertising material and getting our B.C.S.S. letterhead and other key documents changed. Mini-profiles would be published in CactusWorld and they would be invited to the A.G.M., both to introduce them to the members and perhaps get one to give the Hampshire/Dunn Memorial lecture. As part of the agreement we would have to define our expectations, such as their proposed term of office (say 5 years) and ask that they publicise the Society whenever possible on the media. We would like their presence at our major events, such as the National Show and Convention. We should also establish their requirements and that no fees would be paid apart from expenses. It was suggested that this agreement be drawn up by Mr Arnold. It was agreed that in view of Ms. Swithinbank's interest in **Stapeliads** we send her a signed copy of the **Stapeliad** book with a thank you letter from Dr Glen (AVB/AG). It was suggested that the sole contact with the Patrons should initially be the Society Secretary (EH). Further discussion would continue at our December meeting.

13/29 **SOCIETY CALENDAR**

500 had been printed and some 120 had been sold to date. It would be publicised in the December CactusWorld (AL), via the zone reps. (JG) and the membership renewal form (AVB). There would be another photographic competition so that pictures for the next calendar could be chosen. The winning pictures might feature at the convention.

13/30 **FUTURE PUBLICATIONS**

Dr Mace said that he had received 2 proposals for new books which the B.C.S.S. might like to publish and had told the authors that we might be interested but not until late next year at the earliest. Other possibilities were a Gordon Rowley book on hybrids and a possible reprint/second edition of the **Stapeliad** book.

13/31 **REAPPOINTMENT OF ANCILLARY OFFICERS, EDITORIAL TEAM AND SUB-COMMITTEES**

All existing officers, Editorial team members and Conservation and Research Committee members were reappointed.

13/32 **2014 BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING DATES**

These were agreed for 8th February, 26th April, 2nd August and 6th December.

13/33 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

1. **Zones** – Dr Gibbs said that one question that was raised at the Zone Reps meeting concerned changing zones and he asked if there had been any previous attempts to do this. It was said that Robert Holt had tried to get agreement to rationalise the zones many years ago without success, but that changes had occurred recently in Zone 8 and once completed these could provide guidelines for any future changes. Any monetary questions should be referred to the Society Treasurer. There was also problem in Zone 12 which had an affiliated Society as part of its structure. It was said that the recent rules revisions were designed to allow flexibility on how zones operate and it was felt that as the affiliated Society was traditionally part of the zone management committee, it should be treated as a branch of that zone.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 5.05pm.

NEXT MEETING: 7th December 2013 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 1p.m.