



Berkhamsted and District Branch

Editor's Comments

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Forthcoming Branch and Zone Events in 2016:

- 09 January—Chris Davies—Larger Flowering Mammillarias
- 13 February—AGM and members' slides
- 12 March—Paul Hoxey—Cacti in Northern Chile
- 02 April—Zone 6 Convention—Pirton, near Hitchin
- 14 May—Rick Gillman—Argentina

Welcome to the January 2016 Branch Newsletter. I hope you like the new format. The old format had been in use for the past five years so it was time to bring the layout of the newsletter more up to date. There was no newsletters last year. Hopefully, going forward there will be more time to prepare future issues and hopefully members will provide articles for inclusion in the newsletter.

The Christmas Get-Together in December 2014 provided a mind bending set of quizzes for a light hearted afternoon's entertainment. We kicked off the New Year with a talk on 'Better Plant Photographs', from Derek Tribble. This was followed by the AGM in February and our own Rodney Sims in March, when we went

'Off-the-Beaten-Track – Part 3'. The May meeting brought back Paul Klaassen, with 4 mini talks. June saw Tony Robert's gracing our meeting to talk about 'South Africa 2011 – Part 1'. Bob Potter introduced us to 'Socotra' at the July meeting, a great audio visual treat. August brought the Branch Mini-Show, judged by David Kirkbright. David Porter explained the life-cycle of British Butterflies in September and in October David Neville took us to Southern Mexico for succulents. The last talk of the year was Colin Walker on Agave. Average attendance so far this year is 10.6 (10.5 2014).

We said goodbye to Graham Hughes at the July meeting. He and Helen moved to Petworth, in Sussex, on 24 July.



Graham has been a member of the Branch Committee for many years and has made a considerable contribution to the success of the Branch. He will be greatly missed!

Best wishes for the New Year.

David

Better Plant Photographs

The first meeting of 2015 was a talk by Derek Tribble, in January, about taking better plant photographs.

Derek showed us how to improve the quality of our plant photographs and the sort of equipment he takes with him on his trips to South Africa.

He covered the technical aspects of taking photographs:-

- Backgrounds
- Composition
- Lighting
- Focus, Exposure and Stability,

He then went on to provide some general hints for photographing potted plants, discussed habitat photography and ended his talk with some final advice.

Throughout the talk he showed us some excellent plant photographs.

Zone 6 Open Day 2015 *by David Wilson*



Roger Thame's collection



Roger's excellent garden



Barry Goodfellow's collection and garden



The day after our June Branch meeting Gill and I left home, at a reasonable hour, and made our way north for the Zone 6 Open Day being hosted by Kettering Branch.

Three collections were open, all of which were in Kettering. We started at Roger Tame's, just off junction 14 of the A43. Roger has a 14 foot greenhouse that contains a mixed collection of cacti and other succulents, with an emphasis on the Crassulaceae. He also has a stunning garden which the photos do not do justice.

After a carvery lunch at a nearby Marstons Pub we headed for Barry Goodfellow's. Barry has two 20 foot greenhouses, joined together, which contain a mature col-

lection of cacti and succulents. He also had some excellent plants for sale. Like Roger before him, Barry has a fine garden containing shrubbery and perennials.

The final stop for the day was with Michael Thurland, Kettering Branch Secretary. Michael has a well-kept collection of cacti and succulents, including some choice miniatures. There was a good range of mesembryanthemums, of which many had been raised from seed. Once again the interest outside the greenhouse was a well-stocked and attractive garden.

Gill and I were quite jealous of the gently sloping gardens, given the terrain we have to work with at home.

The biggest disappointment

of the day was the lack of visitors viewing the collections, only five people turned up: Rodney, Gill and I and a couple from the Northampton and Milton Keynes Branch. This is a sad state of affairs.

Those opening their collections put a lot of time and effort into getting their greenhouses and gardens in tip top shape and gearing up to provide refreshments on the day. If Zone members are not prepared to support these types of events, people will be reluctant to open their collections in future.

Mike Thurland's collection



Zone 6 Show 2015 *by Rodney Sims*

Having loaded the car the previous evening, I started off in brilliant sunshine on an almost traffic-free road.

The roadworks near junction 10 of the M1 nearly lost me. A very complex rearrangement was almost complete but the signing left much to be desired. After that, it was plain-sailing to Cambridge.

Staging was well advanced when I arrived at the hall. Many greetings were exchanged with old friends before getting down to the rea-

son I travelled.

A visit to the sales room yielded a few specials.

During judging, we were permitted to stay in the room. But I needed to go to the local enormous garden centre. Despite its size, I could not find the necessary goods. I returned to the show disappointed.

Now was time to look over the exhibits. One thing stood out. This was not like the usual shows. There were many different genera and

species on the tables. Interest was everywhere. Exhibitors were chatting over the plants and learning from each other.

The judges were finding their task somewhat challenging. When they had finished, most were pleased with their work.

After the prize giving, we packed up the plants, said thanks to the organisers for a great show and after farewells to friends, we returned to our homes having very much enjoyed the day.

Did you miss it?



Mind the splinters!"

Off the Beaten Track—Part 3

Rodney has visited South Africa several times in the past decade and we have all been captivated by his stories and photographs.

His travels have furnished several series of talks of which the Off-the-Beaten-Track series is but one.

We were enthralled with Part 2 in November 2014 and that

only wetted our appetites for the third and final talk of the series.

Once again Rodney enticed us with his tails of plant hunting in South Africa.

Fortunately, Rodney's interest in plants covers more than just the succulents, although there were plenty of those to be seen.

We were spoilt with many examples of South African bulbs, a group of plants that Rodney is also interested in.

Rodney hopes to return to South Africa towards the end of 2016 so hopefully there will be yet more talks to excite us



Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the Berkhamsted and District Branch of the British Cactus and Succulent Society will be held on Saturday 13th February 2016 at Lower Hall, Christ Church, The Nap, Kings Langley, Hertfordshire WD4 8ET at 3 pm.



A G E N D A

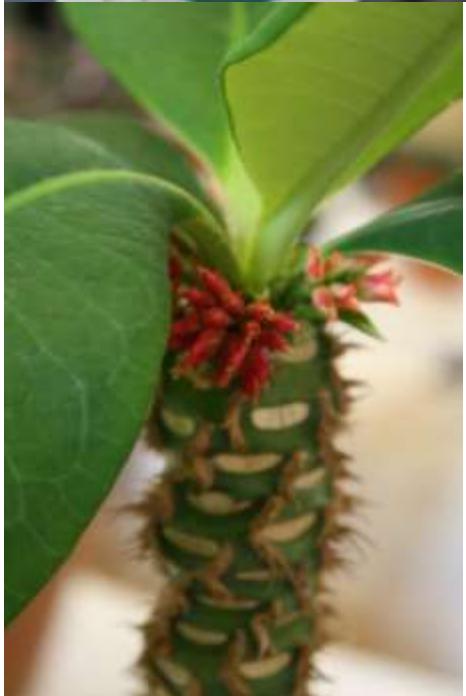
1. Apologies for Absence.
2. Minutes of the Last A. G. M. (14 February 2015).
3. Matters Arising.
4. Treasurer's Report.
5. Secretary's Report.
6. Chairman's Remarks.
7. Programme 2016/2017.
8. Election of Officers.
9. Election of Committee.
10. Election of Auditors.
11. Any Other Business.



Nominations for Elections

<i>Position</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Chairman		
Vice-Chairman		
Treasurer		
Secretary		
Show Secretary		
Sales Manager		
Visitors' Host		

Picture Gallery



Berkhamsted Branch

We meet at:-
Lower Hall
Christ Church
The Nap
Kings Langley
Hertfordshire WD4 8ET

E-mail:
secretary@berkhamsted.bcss.org.uk

www.berkhamsted.bcss.org.uk

The principal objectives of the BCSS are to promote the study, conservation, propagation and cultivation of cacti and other succulent plants.



Membership of the Society is international and open to all. We currently have about 3,000 members and this includes a whole range of interests from novice window-sill growers to experts. The Society has more than 80 branches in the UK, each of which organises an active programme of local events every year. At the national level, we hold an [International Convention](#) every 4 years, the next being in 2018, and a [National Show](#) in the intervening periods, the next being in 2016.

Participation can be at any level, whether you grow just a few plants for fun, are a serious student of botany or at any other stage in between. All members are valued as part of a friendly and cohesive social group. Apart from the immense pleasure and sense of satisfaction that raising and growing interesting plants brings, the BCSS also has another dimension in the struggle to protect the world's heritage of wild and cultivated cacti and other succulent plants from the various threats that the modern era poses.

Zone 6 International Convention 2016

The 2016 Zone 6 International Convention will take place on Saturday 2 April at Pirton Village Hall, High Street, Pirton, Nr Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG5 3PS. Speakers are: -

- Zlatko Janeba from the Czech Republic giving two talks: -
 - Flora of the Peruvian Coast
 - Rare Plants and Most Recent Discoveries
- John Ellis talking about Through the Lens

Plant sales will be provided by: -

- **William's Cactus**
- Terry Smale
- David Neville

Book Sales will be provided by Keith Larkin.

The doors open at 10 am and tickets, available from Berkhamsted Secretary, cost £15 and include refreshments.