



Berkhamsted and District Branch

www.berkhamsted.bcass.org.uk

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November 2013

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Programme

December 2013 to May 2014

14 Dec	Christmas Get-together David Minnion Film Show
11 Jan	Annual General Meeting and members' slides
08 Feb	Julian Cooke Topic to be advised
08 Mar	Alice Vanden Bon South Africa 2010
10 May	John Watmough Succulent Compositaeae

Zone 6

International Convention

22 March 2014

Rikus van Veldhuisen

Tomas Kulhanek

Sale of plants, pots, sun-dries and books

British Cactus and Succulent Society

Editor's Comments

Welcome to the November 2013 Branch newsletter. It has been yet another strange growing season this year, so cold, wet and dull in March, followed by a scorching July. Yet again many of our plants woke up late in the greenhouses and garden flowers arrived four to six weeks late. We managed to get reasonable amounts of potatoes, carrots and runner beans but failed dismally with beetroots once again.

Branch members have been busy supporting other local branch and national events (Luton Branch Show, Harrow Branch Show and Zone 6 Events). This reflects well on the Branch and shows our commitment to nearby branches and the Society as a whole.

We held the Branch Mini-Show, in August this year, judged by Barry Tibbetts. A number of speakers made welcome return visits to the Branch, including Paul Klaassen, Alan Phipps, Tony Roberts and Mark Preston. The November speaker, Martin Doorbar, cancelled his talk as he was flying back from the USA on that day. Julian Cooke has kindly volunteered to give

us the talk he is due to give next February.

We have our Christmas meeting in December followed by the AGM and **members' slides in January.**

My thanks to Julian and Gill for their **articles on 'My favourite plants #4 - Cochemia setispina'** and about the recent Haworthia Convention respectively. Articles from any branch member will be more than welcome.

Attendances have been variable once again between nine and 14 this year. Overall, the average attendance so far this year has been 10.86 (11.25 last year).

I hope all your plants are safely and warmly tucked up in the greenhouse or wherever they are kept. Gill and I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the Christmas Get-Together again this year and at our meetings in 2014. Finally, may I take this opportunity to wish yourself and your family all the best for the festive season and a Happy New Year.

David



Review of Branch Mini-Show 2013



The Branch held its Mini-Show at the August 2013 meeting. It was an interesting and well supported show and we should thank our judge, Barry Tibbetts, for his hard work. There was also a general discussion about the plants, led by Barry.

The Show offered a relaxed atmosphere and allowed members to enjoy the plants on the tables and the opportunity to have a chat.

Thanks to everyone who put plants in the Show.



The awards at the Show went to: -



Trophy/Award	Exhibitor
Most points in Section A—Cacti	Julian Cooke
Most points in Section B—Other Succulents	David and Gill Wilson
Most points in the Show	David and Gill Wilson
Best Cactus in Show	Astrophytum capricorne Ina Hopkins
Best Succulent in Show	Euphorbia decaryii David & Gill Wilson



My Favourite Plants #4—*Cochemiea setispina* by Julian Cooke

Another in my series of favourite plants, this time I have gone for a plant that can get to quite a reasonable size in cultivation.



Mammillaria setispina will be better known by most people as *Cochemiea setispina*. Related to the more commonly seen *Cochemiea poselgeri*, it is a much more attractive species. It forms clumps of green tuberculate stems up to 6 cm in diameter that bristle with a formidable array of white radial spines on each areole and one long central spine that is hooked and can be dark tipped. The cen-

trals can be 4 cm long and are excellent at grabbing at jumpers so here is a plant that is best not put right at the front of the bench!

It grows slowly but steadily and will happily fill an 8 inch pan after 10 years or so. Individual stems will eventually grow to well over a foot long and very likely much longer in the wild.

It does like full sun so the more you can give the better the chance a mature stem will produce its fabulous brilliant scarlet red flowers. The buds emerge from very close to the top and open to rather zygomorphic flowers with long exerted anthers. The petals are very shiny and this can make photographing the flowers rather tricky as they reflect light so well. During a sunny summer, it may produce rings of flowers on more

than one occasion if you are fortunate.

As far as cultivation goes it is undemanding. Full sun and plenty of



water during warm summer days seems to benefit both growth and the production of flowers. Unlike many *Mammillaria* species it seems that red spider do not particularly like it.

If you can spare room for a 6 or 8 inch pan and can get it to flower it is a stunning plant.

12th Haworthia Society Covention by Gill Wilson



The Haworthia Society (HS) (www.haworthia.org) is dedicated to the furtherance of knowledge and cultivation of the *Aloaceae*, including *Haworthia*, *Gasteria*, *Astroloba*, *Aloe* and also *Bulbine*.

These are my favourite plants along with Euphorbias, caudiciforms and South African bulbs. The HS holds an international convention at the Hilton Hotel in Leicester every two years. It is always very enjoyable, entertaining and good value for money. All the talks are **about the plants I'm most interested in and there are no boring cactus or mesem talks!!** The venue is very comfortable with spacious rooms and ex-

cellent food. Even better, David and I can have a restful weekend as we don't have to play any part in the organisation or provision of food, which makes a pleasant change!

The Haworthia Society always endeavours to bring at least one international speaker to the conventions but this year excelled itself with three excellent speakers Jakub Jilemicky from the Czech Republic, Robert Wellens from the Netherlands and Sean Gildenhuys from South Africa. Jakub and Sean gave three talks each and Robert two. They were supplemented by talks from Tony Roberts and Alan Rollason. Jakub is well known to the branch as he gave two talks at our Zone 6 Convention earlier in the year. I missed most of them at the Zone Convention (in the kitchen!) so it was good to be able to hear them in entirety this time. This was Sean's first visit not only to the UK but also Europe! He was very excited and was making the most of his trip by visiting several people's collections as well as Kew and Wisley whilst he was here. Sean with Kotie Retie runs the: Gariep Plants nursery (www.kambroo.com), which is situated in Faerie-Glen (Gauteng Province) in the east of Pretoria. Gariep plants aims to conserve the





natural succulent flora and natural environment by making succulent plants available to the public, decreasing the pressure on wild populations. It is a firm policy of the nursery not to sell field collected plants.

The Convention began on the afternoon of Friday October 18. We had travelled up in the morning and had a pleasant lunch (plus some shopping!) in the 'Heart of the Shires' shopping village on the A5 south of Leicester. Two rooms were filled with succulent plant sales, one just for Robert Wellens with his Succulent Tissue Culture plants (www.succulent-tissue-culture.com/

[EN](#)) and one for other nurseries (including Toobees and Stuart Riley) and members' plant sales. Rob Wellens's sales room was literally bursting at the seams. He had thousands of plants for sales and several trays that there was not enough space to put out. Rob and Teresa were rushed off their feet with the volume of sales. The plant sales were open for the duration of the Convention so there was plenty of opportunity to go back and find the gems that were missed the first time round. Hence everybody seemed to spend lots of money on plants they could not live without!



The first talk was in the evening when, after a welcome from Alan Rollason the HS Chairman, Jakub gave his first talk on 'North of the Swartberg mountains Part 1'. As usual Jakub's talk was very interesting and his photography was outstanding.

The next morning, after an amazing choice at breakfast, there was just enough time before the talks started to stage the plants for the table show and buy raffle tickets for the first raffle. Although the show only had 19 classes and the pot sizes were all limited due to lack of space, there were many gorgeous plants exhibited, as you would expect from a specialist society. We thought we were well out classed but were pleased to have done quite well in view of the competition. The Show was judged by Stirling Baker so the good news for everyone else was that he could not enter any of his fabulous plants!



The morning talks were Sean on South African Aloaceae, Robert Wellens on some of the latest additions to his succulent culture plants and Tony Roberts on Gasterias in the western and eastern Capes. After lunch Jakub treated us to Part 2 of 'North of the Swartberg mountains', Alan presented beautiful pictures in 'Haworthia magic by



Gerhard Marx' and Sean gave his second talk on Aloaceae. After an enjoyable dinner in the restaurant the scene was set for the infamous plant auction, with Stirling as a very formidable auctioneer who took no prisoners! There were over 70 lots and some really beautiful plants. In particular there were some very special *Haworthia* cultivars from Ernst Specks that were all named after birds, so they especially appealed to me. These included 'Snow egret' (obviously named by a non-birdwatcher as it should be snowy egret!), 'White Hawk', 'Royal Tern' and 'Mandarin Duck'. I made some bids but the prices went far too high for me, some sold for over £200 each!



On Sunday morning after another fantastic breakfast, Robert entertained us with a very enjoyable talk complete with several mini-videos on the background and history of his laboratories and nursery. This involved at one stage having no electricity, water or toilets and later living in a caravan in the snow! Afterwards, Sean gave his last talk on the Albany centre of endemism and the Convention came to a close with a very entertaining double act between Jakub and Alan on their *Haworthia* hunting trip last autumn.

Time had sped past and unfortunately the Convention was over for another two years. It had been very enjoyable but was tinged by the sad news that Joyce Coccozza, one of the stalwarts of the HC was in hospital with severe eye problems and at the time it was not known if she would regain her sight. Hopefully she has improved since then. After lunch, it was time to say our goodbyes and thanks for all the hard work of the HS Committee, collect the show plants and head back south. There was still room in the car for me despite all my purchases! Apparently planning for the 2015 Convention has already begun and I would heartily recommend it



Christmas Get-Together

The final meeting of the year will be the annual Christmas Get-Together where we celebrate the forthcoming festive season and enjoy a more relaxed and different type of meeting.

As usual there will be Xmas cake and other nibbles available on the day.

Don't forget to bring along a glass (to toast the festive season) and your donated prize for the Grand Raffle.



Wishing you a
Merry Christmas and
a
Happy New Year



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 11th January 2014 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. (12 January 2013).
3. Matters Arising.
4. **Treasurer's Report.**
5. **Secretary's Report.**
6. **Chairman's Remarks.**
7. Programme 2014/2015.
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		