



Berkhamsted and District Branch

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Berkhamsted and District Branch

Volume 3, Issue 3

November 2011

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Programme

December 2011 to June 2012

- | | |
|--------|--|
| 10 Dec | Christmas Get-together |
| 14 Jan | Annual General Meeting and members' slides |
| 11 Feb | Alice Vanden Bon
<i>Travels in South Africa</i> |
| 10 Mar | Julian Cooke
<i>Ramble through the Greenhouse</i> |
| 12 May | Alasdair Glen
<i>Meet the Mamms</i> |
| 9 Jun | Rob Stevenson
<i>The Genus Turbinicarpus</i> |

British Cactus and Succulent Society

Editor's Comments

Welcome to the November 2011 Branch newsletter. Once again the growing season has been marked by significant contrasts in the weather. After a very dry spring, summer never seemed to get here. Once again July and August were disappointing, very much like the past two years.

The Zone Convention took place in February and Branch members provided solid support. Less well supported by the Branch was the Zone Show, held near Coventry. Three members showed and upheld the reputation of the Branch. The final Zone event was the Open Day, held by Leicester Branch and again three members of the Branch went.

We held our Branch Mini-Show, in July this year as we had a speaker booked for August, Dorothy Minors. The Branch has also welcomed some new speakers this year. Mark Preston came in October and Tom Radford in November.

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

My thanks to Rodney and Julian for their articles. There will be another article by Julian in the March Newsletter along with a report on the recent Haworthia Convention. If any member of the Branch is willing to provide an article for inclusion in the newsletter it will be gratefully received.

Attendances have been variable again this year with some months as low as six, whilst others have seen 14 people. Overall, the average attendance so far this year has been 9.33.

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 2012. 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

Hon. Secretary



Review of Branch Mini-Show 2011

The Branch held its second Mini-Show in 2011, this time in July. It was an interesting show and a challenge for the judge, Martin Edwards. There was also a general discussion about the plants, led by Martin.

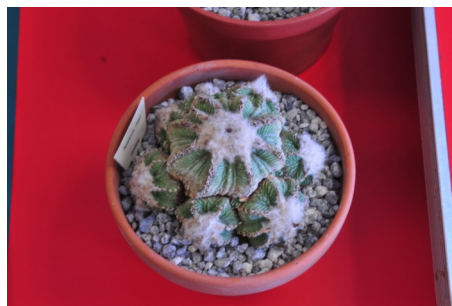
The Show took place in a relaxed atmosphere, allowing members to enjoy the plants on the tables and to have a chat.

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



Pictures courtesy of Julian Cooke

The Branch will be holding another Mini-Show on 11 August 2012. This is an opportunity for a dry-run before the National Show the following Saturday.

What is the Judges' Course

By Rodney Sims

Every year we get an invitation in Cactus World to attend the Judges' Course. Most of us ignore it but when it comes to shows we are only too willing to comment on the judge's performance. What gives us the right to do so when we are not prepared to find out what makes a judge? Unless we go to the course, we do not know what we are missing.

There are over 80,000 plant species that could appear on the show bench. How can you learn about them all? Do you go to one of the Cactus Mall events around the country in the hope of buying those elusive plants we covet? Do you attend one of the Conventions organised by your Zone Committee? Do you enjoy getting a preview of a talk, in learned company, illustrated with the pictures taken by the latest visitor to far-away places? Would you like to do all three at one go? If the answer is "yes", you can find such an event at the Judges' Course!

Arguably there will be more choice plants at the car park

sales. After all, you will benefit from the buying habits and propagations of some of the top growers in the country. Talks will deal with the bones of judging, often with reference to certain plant genera (no travelogues!). Speakers take *enormous trouble to produce specimens of those esoteric species which as exceptions define the genus*. In the evenings you can enjoy a pint or two if you wish

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after dinner and talk while witnessing the arguments and discussion between travellers and arm-chair botanists.

On Sunday you can still enjoy the tests. If you do not want to be

considered for the qualification, you do not have to hand in your paper! You can still learn from the classes set out by the "experts" by going into the test room. But please do not stop the "keenies" from getting a good look at the plants. Certainly you should go to the revelation meeting where the committee try explaining what and why they awarded the prize cards. Some intense and enlightening discussions often ensue.

If you do pluck up the courage and hand in your test paper, it is a short wait before the dreaded envelope plops on the doormat. Inside will be a letter with the result in gentle and encouraging language. You will wonder why you were so concerned.

Looking back, you will see yourself a wiser being with a few more choice goodies. To misquote Bernard Wicksteed (Daily Express columnist in the '1940's and '50's), IT'S BEEN FUN FINDING OUT!

My favourite plants #1 - Echinocereus Lindsayi

By Julian Cooke

This is the first of what I hope will be an on-going look at some of my favourite plants. Some will be very familiar, others may be not so familiar. All are plants I think are worth a try so why not have a go.

I have chosen a reasonably well known Echinocereus as my first plant, one that many will have heard of but maybe not many have tried. The plant is prized for its very attractive and robust spination and beautiful flowers, and famed for its rarity in the wild. The plant hails from Baja, California and is Echinocereus ferreirianus var lindsayi.

In the wild it is sadly very rare. However it is relatively easy to grow from seed and is thus com-

monly seen for sale as seed raised plants. It does grow rather slowly but once a few years old it produces characteristic long twisted spines making it one of the more



Photo: Julian Cooke

fiercely spined Echinocereus. It adores sun so needs to be on the top shelf with as much light available as possible.

Flowers are sparingly but regularly produced during the summer months. The buds have to fight their way through the spines but are worth the wait, being two tone with the petals pale pink around the outer rim of the flower but changing to a deep purple-mauve in the centre. The stigma, in common with many Echinocereus, is green.

Cultivation is relatively easy as it prefers a cool (but not freezing) greenhouse in the winter. Water liberally if the weather is hot but more sparingly during prolonged dull spells. As with most cacti, keep an eye out for mealy bug and the damaging effects of red spider mite.

Zone 6 Open Day By David Wilson

On Sunday 7th August 2011 Gill and I went to the Zone 6 Open Day being hosted by Leicester Branch. On the way we stopped off in Chorleywood to pick up Ina. Thereafter we went round the M25 and headed north on the M1. Our first port of call was with Alan and Marion Brown in Kibworth, which hit our TV screens with the recent Michael Wood series 'Kibworth: The story of England'



Alan and Marion had an interesting garden which included a pond of koi carp. Their outstanding col-



lection, which contained many specimen plants, is housed in an unconventional greenhouse, created from a stand-alone conservatory. The reason for its acquisi-



tion was that it is double glazed,

with a decent space between the sealed panes.

After an enjoyable visit we left Marion and Alan and headed for



our second destination, Markfield, where Mark Brooksby resides. Mark's garden was long and narrow (about 16' wide) but still con-



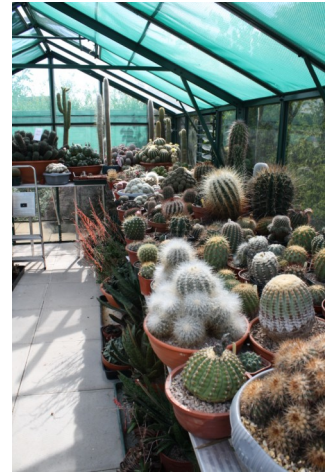
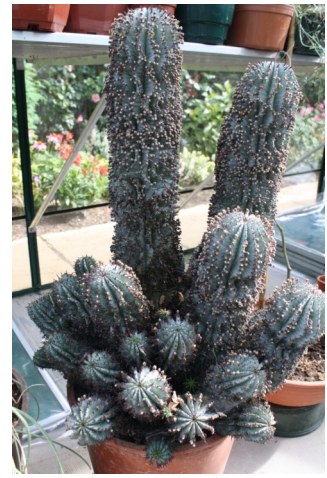
tained a host of interesting plants and greenhouses. Mark's primary



interest is lithops and other mesembs, although he also had a number of other succulents.

Moving on from Mark's we headed for our last stop of the day, Tony Morris. Tony will need no introduction as he is an enthusiastic supporter of Zone 6 and a regular exhibitor at shows. Tony has two greenhouses, containing some

specimen plants, set in an attractive garden.



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.

This year we hope to have a DVD of the rhododendrons at Exbury Gardens. In addition, there will be a short quiz to test your observational skills.

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

February 2012 Meeting

In February Alice Vanden Bon will be transporting us to South Africa where she plans to tell us about her 'Travels in South Africa'. This will be the first time Alice has spoken to the Branch. She is very active within the Society and is involved in producing the Society's Journal, as well as being a Trustee. She also has a wider interest in South African bulbs.

March 2012 Meeting

This year our March speaker will be our own Julian Cooke, who will be taking us on a ramble around his greenhouse.

May 2012 Meeting

Another new speaker to the Branch, Alasdair Glen will be letting us 'Meet the Mamms'. Alasdair will also be talking on the preceding Friday night at Harrow Branch. Alasdair recently became Chairman of the BCSS, taking over from John Arnold. He was previously Society Vice-chairman.



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 14th January 2012 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. (8 January 2011).
3. Matters Arising.
4. Treasurer's Report.
5. Secretary's Report.
6. Chairman's Remarks.
7. Programme 2012/2013.
8. Election of Officers.
9. Election of Committee.
10. Election of Auditors.



Nominations for Elections

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