

British Cactus & Succulent Society

Southampton & District Branch Newsletter

December 2007



Branch Secretary

Margaret Corina
79 Shirley Avenue
Shirley
Southampton
Hampshire
SO15 5NH

(023) 80779057

Newsletter Editor

Vinay Shah
29 Heathlands Road
Eastleigh
Hampshire
SO53 1GU

vvshah@clara.co.uk

(023) 80261989

Editorial	1
Announcements.....	1
Committee Reports - 2007	1
Chairman's Report	1
Secretary's Report	2
Treasurer's Report	2
Show Manager's Report	3
Plant Sales Officer's Report.....	4
Newsletter Editor / Website Report.....	4
Publicity Officer's Report.....	4
Librarian's Report	5
Last Month's Meeting.....	5
Plants of Interest.....	5
Eastern Cape	6
Table Show – November 2007.....	8
Branch Committee Meeting.....	9
Branch Programme 2008.....	9
Table Show 2007 – Overall Results	10
Next Month's Meeting	10
Forthcoming Events.....	10

Editorial

Reading through my notes in last year's December newsletter, it seems like the weather this year is almost identical – mild, but wet and blustery.

The similarity with last year is reinforced by the fact that the Mammillaria with magenta flowers which bloomed for me last December has done so again this year. It is situated near the front of the conservatory and receives sunlight even with the sun being low in the sky so this is probably a favourable location for plants which like to flower in the autumn. I think I have mentioned previously that Glottiphyllums have long-lasting flowers and one labelled *G. pygmaeum* has been in bloom for over a month. The yellow flowers are quite large so I am wondering whether the specific name is correct, nevertheless it seems like a reliable flowerer and is well worth growing.

Announcements

The **2008 Branch programme** has been prepared and programme cards will be available from the

front table – a list of the events is also contained in this newsletter. The branch has again endeavoured to arrange a selection of varied and interesting selection of talks and events for next year.

We will **not** be holding a **meeting in January** so our first meeting of 2008 will be held in February. It will consist of short talks presented by branch members, and we are planning to use both conventional and digital projectors. Talks involving real plants would be welcome too! If you would like to talk for a few minutes about any of your plants or plant-related experiences, or have some photos which you wish to share, please let one of the committee know. Digital pictures should be brought along on a CD or a memory card.

Committee Reports - 2007

Chairman's Report

This year has been one of highs and lows. The lowest being the loss of David Corina after a short illness. He is a great loss to the branch, for all he did for us, his fund of knowledge for the Zone quiz etc., and of course as a friend. He made a tremendous contribution to the branch over many years and we will miss him greatly. Thank you to those of you who have been so supportive to Margaret.

Another low was the 'lash up' over tickets for the New Forest Show in July, (not our fault). This meant that Ivor Biddlecombe, Bruce Beckerleg and Geoff Card did the three days on their own. Dave Neville and I got in for the last day and were able to help to carry the plants and display about ½ mile to the cars, involving many trips, the cars were not allowed any nearer because of the mud. At the end of the day I was towed out of the mud bath by tractor, backwards, very undignified! It is very unlikely that we will have such dreadful conditions again.

Our Branch show at Romsey was disappointing for it's lack of support, and apart from Angie Money from the Portsmouth Branch, who is a frequent visitor to our meetings, only the committee entered

the competition. This lack of support prompted Ivor to declare that he will not manage another show for us. (He must have been doing our shows for about 30 years). As a show it was quite good and the venue saved us at least £100 pounds to hire a hall. We also had 100s of people passing through. We will be concentrating on displays in future.

Now the highs. In March, the American Steve Hammer gave a brilliant talk and slide show to an audience of about 50 of us, we were joined by members of the Mesemb. Society for this event.

Over the Easter weekend we put on a display at Broadlands, Romsey and the 'Prickly Potting' for the children. Over 400 young people came through, each receiving a plant, seeds and lots of information to 'sow the seed' to become future cactus and succulent growers, we hope!

On 22nd May we had an enjoyable 'Branch Dinner' at the Luzborough Inn at Romsey. In July we attended the New Forest Show, very successful, despite the problems due to the weather. August saw the Zone Quiz at Southampton and we were pleased to see Portsmouth Branch take away the Giant Mealy Bug Trophy. Also in August we had the branch show and display at Romsey, which apart from poor support from members was well worth doing.

A few of the committee have manned smaller displays at Whiteley and Hilliers Arboretum for which we thank them. For the last few months there has been fewer members coming to meetings than earlier in the year. This despite having Marlon Machado from Brazil, via Zurich, Switzerland speaking to us in September, (this was a change to the published programme). David Neville travelled with Marlon on his visit to Brazil. We have had other good speakers.

In spite of lower numbers at recent meetings we have welcomed several new members this year. I want to thank the committee for all their hard work on our behalf, and all of you who support us at meetings and in other ways.

Best wishes for 2008,

Peter Down

Secretary's Report

The Branch can congratulate itself on a successful year. We hosted two meetings for nationally renowned speakers, Steve Hammer and Marlon

Machado. We were even lucky enough to get a preview with Marlon's talk on his study prior to its publication!

We held displays at six venues this year and all were successful. The August show at Broadlands is cancelled for 2008 so it will only be five next year. This should afford some relief to the team of dedicated workers who spend so much time helping at these events, without them the Branch would be in dire financial straits and charging for attendance at meetings.

One trend we have noticed this year is that although our displays seem to raise as much interest as before the cash raised is not as great. We are putting this down to the gloomy summer and holding on to the thought that things will change if the sun shines a little more in 2008.

I would like to thank Vinay for being the technology boffin who sits between me and the internet and deals with all the Branch affairs there in cyberspace. Thanks also to David Neville for organising the Branch programme for 2008; I decided I would like to take a break from that task and he has stepped into the breach. One other person, Peter Down. We are all grateful to Peter for the way he runs the meeting and delivers the vote of thanks to the speaker on our behalf.

Margaret Corina

Treasurer's Report

Before I report on the Branch's finances I would like to draw your attention to the national ones! The latest membership list from the Society shows that a considerable number of our branch members have not completed a Gift Aid form. If you pay tax, on either income, savings or dividends, PLEASE complete a Gift Aid form. This declaration enables the Society to claim back 28p for every £1 of your subscription. The Society has no knowledge or access to your personal affairs. All we do is submit the names to the Inland Revenue who cough up the cash! The Society can raise large sums this way; it also means that your subscriptions should remain unchanged for the foreseeable future. I have a supply of forms available and will be only too happy to post the completed form for you. Please take the couple of minutes needed to complete one if you haven't already done so. I would like to thank those members who did complete the form. Subscriptions for 2008 remain at the same level, mainly due to the influx of funds due to those members who did take the time.

The Branch has made the usual profit on its activities during the financial year 2006/07. The events we did support have raised enough money for us to continue increasing our deposit, and enables us to keep our attendance at monthly meetings free of charge.

I will close with my usual thanks to everyone who has helped the Branch this year. Ivor Biddlecombe who raises large sums from his seed packeting efforts. All the people who set up and attend displays, and the ones who donate prizes for the raffle. I wish to thank also the people who buy and sell plants at meetings, those who provide the refreshments and those who consume them. All these activities contribute to Branch funds. Also a personal thank you to June Purseglove and Merilyn Prior who deal with the raffle at the meetings. The Branch is grateful to Colin and Lorraine Bielckus for auditing the books and producing the balance sheets for us.

On a personal note I would like to thank all the members of the Branch for the help, kindness and support I have received this year; both during David's illness and after his death. You have all made a big difference to me and helped me cope.

I wish you all a restful Christmas, and hope you come back full of energy to support the Branch at the meetings and the events we have planned for next year.

Margaret Corina

Show Manager's Report

Our first Show of the year was held in Broadlands Park at Romsey on the Easter weekend (7th – 9th April). On Friday afternoon your Committee arrived on site to set up the marquee for the Cactus display and plant sales, with one side of the marquee set up for the children's Prickly Potting. We had very few branch members giving their support during the event, but special thanks go to Derek and Merilyn Prior, Dot, and Mark and Rebecca Jakins for their help during the Show. The weather was dry and sunny on all four days but it was a bit chilly in the mornings due to the marquee being sited under two large trees. Public support was not as good as last year but I was told by many of the youngsters taking part in the Prickly Potting that they had managed to grow their seed and still had their plant from last year which made it enjoyable and well worth doing.

Next was Whiteley Village, and we set up our display on Saturday 26th May. This year I altered the

tables to take a 18mm ply board and this worked well as trestles were not needed. The weather was dry and sunny but not very warm due to a cold wind, nevertheless the sale of plants went well on the first day. On Sunday, the weather took a turn for the worse with rain nearly all day and this affected plant sales as most visitors wanted to get out of the rain and in to the shops, On Monday we had a shock when we arrived - our gazebo had blown over in a gale during the night and we had to pack up early as there was no cover for us and our plants in the rain. I was very surprised at this as the Whitely organizers had supplied us with four very heavy weights for each corner of our gazebo and this had worked well on the first two days. We were lucky as apart from damaging two legs on the gazebo (which I managed to straighten out) and our sale/display plants getting a soaking, no harm was done.

In July, we took part in the New Forest Show – unfortunately one word describes the event and that is MUD. It rained during setting up and on all three days of the show. This caused all paths around the showground to be covered in mud, the worst being in the car parks as the heavy vehicles dug deep ruts at the entrance to all the flower show car parks. During the four days all of our cars had to be pushed or towed out of the mud at some time. We were disappointed this year with the number of free tickets we were allocated - we were given 6 and we needed at least 11 to cover the three days. After we had put up the display I talked to the organiser and he managed to find another five tickets which gave us just enough to man the sales table and display. I was sorry that branch members who had agreed to help us out over the three days could not attend due to the lateness of tickets and car park passes.

The Show had all the usual displays but was spoilt by the heavy downpours of rain. The organisers tried their best with straw and tree bark to keep the paths dry but it was just too wet. On the last day, the exhibitors' car park was closed so we had to make a lot of trips across the Show Ground in thick mud to carry our plants and display background to our cars when we packed up. I was pleased that the sale of plants was only £30 less than last year, so despite the weather, it was well worth doing.

This year we held a Branch Show during the Hampshire Craft & Garden Show at Broadlands, Romsey, on August 11th. Saturday was set aside for the Show and on Sunday we put on a display. It was dry and sunny on both days, but not many of the public came to the event. I was very disappointed with having no support from Southampton branch members (apart from the Committee members)

either entering the classes or helping at the Show, so it is obvious that the branch members do not want a Branch Show so I am resigning as Show Manager. If anyone would like to take over this job, I am willing to give my support to them.

Due to the additional costs of running the Show we ended up making a very small profit, which is a poor way to finish as Show Manager. If no other branch member wants to take over the job of Show Manager then I am still willing to continue to do the Branch Displays.

The overall results for the monthly branch table show are featured at the back of this newsletter. Again, there was little support for the table show and only 5 branch members entered the show during the entire year.

All the best for 2008,

Ivor Biddlecombe

Plant Sales Officer's Report

The sales year started off at Broadlands Easter show as usual; sales were quite a bit down on last year, I am not sure why. I did not go to Whiteley but I did go to Hilliers which is the first time I have managed to make this event, it has always clashed with something else in previous years. Sales were modest but this is usual, I gather.

After many, many years, Southampton Show is no longer with us, so next was the New Forest which was pretty dire in terms of setting up and worse still breaking down because of the mud - those of us who came will never forget it. Surprisingly sales were almost exactly the same as last year. To finish we had the Broadlands Summer Show which incorporated our Branch Show. Takings were very low, a lot less than they have been at this event previously. I suspect that it will not be held again.

I do not keep a record of sales at branch meetings but these were probably up on previous years because we have had increased attendances but overall sales are still small compared with the public shows.

I would like to thank all of you who brought sales plants. Particularly David Neville with his impressive selection of plants from continental nurseries. For those of you who do not know, anyone can bring plants for the sales table, just make sure each plant has a price label with your

initials on. We charge a 10% commission at branch meetings and 15% at shows.

Bruce Beckerleg

Newsletter Editor / Website Report

Statistics about our branch website suggest that the site is accessed 2500 times each month – however many of these accesses are by automated web search engines or “web crawlers”, so the usage by real persons is probably of the order of a few dozen accesses per month. Having a website is a useful form of publicity, and apart from gaining us new members it allows us to announce modifications to our programme or publicise special meetings; for example, the visits of Stephen Hammer in March and Marlon Machado in September.

Recently, attendances at our monthly branch meetings has been lower than normal so there seem to be a few spare copies of the newsletter left over these days – please take a spare and hand it to friend! I would like to thank those who acted as scribes to write up branch meetings, and also those persons who provided articles or snippets for inclusion in the newsletter.

For those of you who have received this newsletter in the Christmas mailout, please note that all copies of the newsletter dating from January 2004 are available for download from our website. In addition, I am willing to mail out newsletters to any members who provide me with a stamped addressed envelope in advance.

Vinay Shah

Publicity Officer's Report

First, my thanks to all who have made a contribution to making others aware of our activities by whatever means. Especial thanks to those who have assisted in rigging and/or manning displays and shows. Other than the branch website these are our main contact with the public. Radio Solent continues to give us unstinting support by publicising our meetings and events. Incidentally the “Information Exchange” daily mention of events no longer exists. In future, news of local events will be broadcast only on Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. At Easter we had a small piece in the Echo referring to the prickly potting at Broadlands. This is the first time we have been lucky enough to get in the Echo for about 4 or 5 years, however we unusually did not get a mention in the Romsey Advertiser this year - you cannot win them all!

Once again my thanks to all who have made my task easier by spreading the word. Seasonal greetings to all and good growing in 2008.

Jim Roskilly

Librarian's Report

Since my last annual report, three important books have been added to the Library. At the end of last year we added the *New Cactus Lexicon* edited by David Hunt. This is the first such book to be published for 40 years. It is in two volumes, with the Illustrations in the Second Volume being of exceptionally high quality. Next was "*Dumpling and his Wife*" by Steven Hammer, which is an updating and expansion of his previous book on Conophytums. Then in July this year we acquired "*Ariocarpus etc.*" by John Pilbeam and Bill Weightman which is a reference book on the smaller genera which do not justify a volume to themselves.

The latest development is that there is now increased cupboard space available at the hall where we meet, so that it is now possible to have all the library books available at our monthly meetings. The most popular will always be on display: the librarian has available for inspection a complete list of books held, including those which may be left in the cupboard. The Committee have reviewed the list of books in the library. New books having been added, some of the older books are of less interest and a few of these will be on sale at meetings for modest prices.

The usage of the library remained at much the same level as last year. 18 books were borrowed, as compared with 20 last year but with the changes mentioned above, it is hoped the usage will increase.

Total revenue for the year was £24.90, as follows:

<u>Source</u>	<u>2006/7</u>	<u>2005/6</u>
Lending	£18.90	£ 4.60
Sale of surplus books	£ 6.00	
Sale of old Journals		£ 3.00
TOTAL	£24.90	£ 7.60

The high figure for lending includes £6.00 from borrowings of the two-volume *New Cactus Lexicon* at £1.00 a month and £10.00 from some books having been borrowed for a very long time by three members.

We have a very well-equipped library. It is yours to use.

Philip Clemow

Last Month's Meeting

Plants of Interest

Following on from last month, **Margaret Corina** had again brought along a selection of succulents. *Massonia echinata* featured a pair of dark green leaves with a central group of white florets. *Polyxena ensifolia* can have white or mauve flowers – some members of this genus resemble Lachenalias. *Strumaria truncata* is a bulbous plant and produces a spray of pink or white arching flowers. *Polyxena corymbosa* has narrow leaves and produces pale magenta flowers. The final plant was *Oxalis massoniana* which is a low growing oxalis from South Africa which has nice orange flowers.

The next set of plants had been brought in by **Jim Roskilly**. First was a cycad which he had bought some years ago. After doing nothing much for a couple of years, it has suddenly burst into life by growing some large new leaves this year – the plant was now a couple of feet across. Next was a monstrose form of *Hoya carnosa* – the leaves were much thicker and fleshier than normal. This was followed by some white double flowers of *Kalanchoe blossfeldiana* – Jim has obtained this plant from Hilliers arboretum during our stint there earlier in the year. *Senecio kleiniaeformis* was in bud, and we also saw two adromischus plants (*A. herrei* and *A. cv 'Little Spheroid'*).

Tylecodon minima is unusual amongst Tylecodons in that it remains small. *Crassula ausensis* had clusters of tiny white flowers which were 1/8 inch across. As a complete contrast in size, a large Christmas cactus (*Schlumbergera*) featured over a 100 magenta/pink flowers and buds.

Moving on to some cristate/monstrose plants, there was an *Euphorbia lactea* cv. "Grey Ghost" – this was his third attempt at growing this species, and a cristate *Monvillea spegazzinii* and the monstrose form of *Cereus peruvianus*. He had also brought along the small-growing *Copiapoa laui* and a cristate form of the same species which was significantly larger. *Yavia cryptocarpa* was growing on a graft. A plant labelled *Aloe aristata* was actually another species and there was a bulbine which he had obtained from Margaret. Rodney Sims said this would go on to have yellow flowers. There was a large upright and neat growing *Rhipsalis* which he had purchased at "The Range" and the final set of plants were a couple of Cotyledons which were left over from prickly potting and which had grown into nice looking plants over the course of the last six months.

The final set of plants in this extended *Plants of Interest* session were from Ivor Biddlecombe. He had brought along 7 different examples of *Lithops salicola* to illustrate the different forms which were available. He mentioned that some forms tended to grow a elongated set of leaves and don't look as nice as a typical *Lithops* – but this seemed to be down to the clone rather than culture. Also present were *Lithops bromfieldii* v. *insularis*, *L. bromfieldii* v. *mennellii* and the pink bodied *L. optica* cv. *rubra*. Finally there were two mesembs which were considered as close relatives to *Lithops* – *Dinteranthus van zylii* and an *Ophthalmophyllum tribneri*.

Eastern Cape

Our speaker for November was Rodney Sims. He mentioned that this talk would be about the Eastern Cape, but it was one of a series of talks he gives on various botanical areas of South Africa. Other talks include the Little Karoo, the Richtersveldt and all being well, he was hoping to do some more exploring in other regions.

For the talk, he used an InFocus DLP digital projector. The first picture showed an entrance to a game reserve – he mentioned that many parts of the habitat were being turned into game reserves and this can hamper access to some of the plant sites.

Gasteria doreeniae is a relatively new discovery from Swartwaterpoort. Rodney mentioned that some of the rock formations here were unusual – with various rock structures emerging from the earth's crust at sharp angles.

The Eastern Cape area ranges from sea level to 2500 ft, with a large plain. Some of the areas had acidic soil - others did not. There were dry river valleys and at the coast, 100 foot high sand dunes. Some of the region has bimodal (spring and autumn) rains which range from 800mm down to 250mm. Some areas also have summer and winter rains and all this variation can make cultivation of specific plants a bit of an uncertainty.

Altogether there are 4000 species of plants in this region of which 60% are succulent. The temperatures range from 9°C to 25°C at the coast but inland, the range is even greater – ranging from frosts right up to 45°C. The vegetation is diverse and in many areas there is a thicket of thorny shrubs and euphorbias which is not easy to penetrate, but this provides a good hiding space for other plants and animals.

At Noorspoort farm near NE Queenstown we saw examples of deliberately started fires burning in the hills. This was done to clear the area of plants and to allow grass to be grown for grazing animals. There are a lot of Angora goats in this area but they are not hardy and have to be rounded up whenever there is a cold spell. We saw an example of *Euphorbia pulvinata* where the animals had nibbled the tops of the plants. Unfortunately the destruction of the vegetation by farmers causes further erosion since when it rains there is nothing to bind the soil and everything tends to get washed away.

For the rest of the talk, Rodney said he would pick out some groups of plants and show us what he found within those groups. We started with the Geraniaceae and at Peddie, near Grahamstown, he found a bush featuring dark red flowers. This was *Pelargonium inquinans* and the plant was 3-4 feet high. At other places he had seen pelargoniums growing up to 12 feet tall. Next was a geophyte, *Pelargonium bowkeri* which has a frilled flower because the petals are split.

He came across *Sarcocaulon* (now named *Monsonia*) *vanderietiae* at Klippaat and *Senecio scaposus* quite close to Port Elizabeth near the coast. The leaves are covered in white felt but there are also some green forms without the felt. One of the forms has triangular leaves in the form of a fleur de lis. *Anacampseros rufescens* has reddish leaves and magenta flowers and was growing in a sand pan. With *pachypodium bispinosum*, the tubular flowers fill with water. An odd *anacampseros* found near Kleinpoort is *A. arachnoides* which has angled leaves which resemble "cow horns". A vine producing plant which he found near Janesville was *Cyphostemma quinatum*. In this area he also found lots broken glass and empty bottles – rubbish left by humans and all quite disgusting.

Moving on to some bulbs, at Bathurst, he found *Freesia corymbosa* which has yellow flowers. *Watsonia* is a genus with several species and the featured plant had nice pink flowers. A succulent bulbous plant only described a couple of years ago is *Drimia acarophylla* - named because the leaves resemble ticks. It grows in angular shale pieces and only occurs in one place about half the size of our meeting room! Also on the shale is *Ornithogalum conicum* which has a white conical bloom. A cyanella had white petals with a magenta stripe and another, *Cyanella lutea*, had yellow flowers and is found near Queenstown. It has leopard-spotted anthers. In the sand dunes, he found *Freesia laxa* which had red flowers. A trachyandra had white flowers with brown midstripe. He also found *Nerine*

hesseoides which has small pink flowers. Margaret asked whether he had collected any seed from this but the answer unfortunately was no.

Moving on to Aloes, *Aloe africana* featured a dense red flower spike and was found at Glen Craig. At Longdraal, *Aloe ferox* has tall spikes of red flowers. At Pluto's Vale, near Grahamstown, he found *Aloe speciosa* with bicoloured red/white flowers. He also found *Aloe praetensis* growing in grass (*praetensis* means pertaining to meadows). It has a large flower spike, and in response to a question from the audience, he mentioned that the leaf tips do tend to die back. *Aloe saponaria* is now called *Aloe maculata* and it has spotted green leaves, It forms hybrids with *A. praetensis* and although he thought he hadn't seen any, after looking through his slides back home he noticed some intermediate plants which might well be the said hybrid. At Hankey, west of Port Elizabeth, he found multiheaded clumps of *Aloe humilis* growing in quite dry conditions.

Rodney mentioned that exploring in some of these regions can be a challenge - you are miles from anywhere or anybody and your cell phone probably won't work.

Cotyledon woodii grows to a bush some 4 feet tall and wide. It has farinaceous leaves which are red at the tips. It tends to form a single flower which is bell shaped. It is a nice shrub to grow, but needs to be pruned to remain manageable. There is also a form with sticky leaves. *Adromischus cristatus* in cultivation tends to be just a collection of leaves but in habitat it forms rosettes (green-brown in colour) due to the stronger light.

South Africa is also famous for the number of parasitic plants which grow there. *Tapinanthus kraussianus* is a form of mistletoe and it has strange erect flowers which are green/pink. *Hydnora africana* is another strange plant which forms flowers which are brown on the outside with orange centres. The covering of the flower is hard and woody and he couldn't force it open to get a good look at flower. *Strelitzia reginae* is the famous "bird of paradise flower". A terrestrial orchid which he came across was *Holothrix burchelli* which had spidery flowers growing in a vertical strip.

Now for some mesembs. *Bergeranthus multiceps* has yellow flowers with red tips. *Pleiospilos compactus* v. *minor* featured 3 flowers which had just finished - over 10 seed pods from previous years were still visible on the plant. At Kleinpoort, he found a *Glottiphyllum* with very red leaves

which had new leaves growing from the older leaves. At Grootvlei, he found a very dry example of *Lithops localis* which had 10 heads and was growing very flat to the ground. It is quite rare to find *Lithops* plants this large in habitat. *Faucaria britteniae* was growing in a shady spot and needed to be photographed using flash. At Cornfields along the coast, he found *Faucaria subintegra* which has chubby leaves and heads about an inch long. *Faucaria felina* has longer and thinner leaves than *F. tigrina*. At Kruisfontein, he came across *Bulbine natalensis*. We saw a close up of the nice yellow flowers, and the anthers are hairy.

Haworthia is a very variable and confusing genus. The situation seems to be getting worse due to people finding new plants and setting up new species when the plants might just be variants of existing species. We saw *H. cymbiformis* with the leaf tips burnt due to the bush fires. A new find with the temporary name of *Haworthia calaensis* sp nov. could just be a form of *H. cymbiformis* v. *setulifera*. He found *Haworthia cooperi* v. *leightonii* at Payn's Hill and *H. cooperi* v. *dielsiana* at Fort Beaufort. *H. specksii* has a few teeth on the leaves and we saw 2" rosettes of *H. zantneriana*. He photographed *Haworthia gracilis* growing 30 feet up a shale cliff at Hellspoor. *H. picturata* was a nice miniature with a red midstripe on the leaves - the plants were only an inch across. *H. isabellae* had toothed leaves and *Haworthia hamata* was quite green and had incurving tops to the leaves. Another new species is *H. cummingii*, but perhaps it is just a form of *H. isabellae*.

In the corner of one of the pictures, we spotted a cactus - a joint of *Opuntia fragilis*. Rodney mentioned that invasive plants such as these were a major problem in South Africa. The plants are used as fodder to feed animals but once the seeds escape into the wild, the plants take hold and tend to dominate over the local vegetation. Another plant found at Payn's Hill is *H. reinwardtii*, with dark red leaves and white dots. He also found *Astroloba congesta* with a red edge to the leaves and stems of *Astroloba foliolosa*. *Haworthia nigra* was found at Committees Drift, and we also saw *Haworthia angustifolia* v. *altissima* sharing growing space with an euphorbia.

We also saw *Haworthia xiphiophylla*, *Haworthia decipiens* and *H. floccosa* which is perhaps the same as *H. blackbeardiana*. *H. azurea* is bluish and has long teeth, and could conceivably be a variety of *H. decipiens*. *H. odetteae* is found near South Jansenville, growing as 2" rosettes. It is possible this is what came into our collections as *H. bolusii* in the

1970s. At Kleinpoort, he found *Haworthia sordida* amongst dead twigs under a shrub, and also found *H. longiana* at Hankey.

It was time to look at some other plants. *Schottia afra* is a shrub which produces red flowers. However, this is a rare event – he’s only seen it in flower twice. There were fields and fields of the yellow and orange flowered *Leucospermum cuneiforme* which is related to the protea. At the roadside near Fort Beaufort they found another unnamed “weed” growing as a big tree with yellow trumpet flowers some 2 inches across. He also came across an *Astrantia* with maroon flowers, and another with pale yellow flowers. At Jansenville we saw a poppy with a cricket crawling inside the flower and also a lilac Ipomea flower which was 3 inches across.

Moving on to Asclepiads, *Duvalia caespitosa* had a long seed pod, and we also saw *Huernia thuretii* also with big seed pods. He came across *Stapelia gigantea* at Lady Frere and *Brachystelma meyeranum* at Frankfort, where there were a lot of tubers in the trench. Several bore the 5-sided flowers and the flowers were different colours so evidently there was more than one plant here. We also saw the spidery green flowers of *Fockea edulis*. In habitat the tuber grows underground (unlike in cultivation) so the plant is quite hard to spot. *Orbea verruculosa* has cream flowers spotted in magenta. In most species of Orbea, the flowers have a central raised disc (annulus).

Crassula perfoliata has long green leaves and the plant can reach 2-3 feet in height. A close up of *Crassula mesembryanthemoides* showed fine hairs on the leaves. *Crassula alba* is smaller than *C. perfoliata* but the clusters of flowers can be striking. *Crassula setulosa* is a small plant which has ¾” rosettes. *Gasteria bicolor* can be found in both radiate (spiral) and distichous (fan) forms. *Gasteria excelsa* grows to 18” across and is found at Fish River pass. There is also a totally black form of this plant. *Gasteria acinacifolia* grows in the sand dunes in shade, and *Gasteria pulchra* has quite long leaves.

We saw a close-up of a locust showing green purple colouring, followed by a small frog which was spotted trying to climb out of the sand dunes and which was given a helping hand. We also saw an agama lizard and a tortoise which was 2 feet across.

The last genus to be covered was Euphorbia. We were running out of time so Rodney went through these quite quickly. In the thicket there tend to be

three types - *Euphorbia trigona*, *E. tetragona*, and *E. triangularis* but in practice it was hard to tell these apart. *E. coerulescens* has stout spines on the body and also on the flower stalks. *E. polygona* is many-sided as the name suggests. *E. horrida* has straight ribs and branched thorns, whereas *E. polygona* has dark thorns and crossing ribs. At Fullerton, he found *Euphorbia ferox* which had lots of strong white thorns. *E. pulvinata* is bright green, and *E. enopla* has a simple flower and green marks on body. At Hankey, he found *E. bubalina* with a couple of seed pods. *Euphorbia clava* has club shaped stems. *Euphorbia meloformis* was quite clean – it forms an underground taproot. *E. squarossa* has more angles on the stem and *E. micranthus* has grey twisted stems. *E. fimbriata* has a central head with robust arms – he feels other plants might be misnamed as this in many collections. *E. esculenta* forms rosettes 2 feet across. It has woolly flowers which look white from a distance. We went through a few more species and ended with a picture of a 12 foot tall *Euphorbia polygona* on a sand bank.

Vinay Shah

Table Show – November 2007

There were 7 entries in the November table show.

	Cacti – Echinocereus	Succulents – Lithops
Open	(1) B Beckerleg Echinocereus nivosus	(1) B Beckerleg Lithops otzeniana
	(2) -	(2) -
	(3) -	(3) -
Intermediate	(1) P Clemow Echinocereus rusanthus	(1) B Beckerleg Lithops bromfieldii
	(2) P Clemow Echinocereus rusanthus SP47	(2) P Clemow Lithops sp.
	(3) B Beckerleg Echinocereus dasyacanthus	(3) -

Ivor Biddlecombe

Branch Committee Meeting

A branch committee meeting was held at 79 Shirley Avenue on 19th November.

The provisional financial results for the year ending September 2007 were discussed. Despite the demise of the Southampton Flower Festival and also a low turnout at the Summer Show at Broadlands, it had been another successful year with the branch continuing to add to our accumulated fund - the surplus for the year was only slightly lower than last year.

Next year's programme of events was being prepared by David Neville and should be ready by the December meeting. There would be no meeting in January, and in July we will be putting on a display at the Solent Fuchsia Show. Following the poor turnout at the Summer Garden Show at Broadlands, this event will not be repeated next year, but we will have the National Show to look forward to.

Membership has been stable during the year. We have 74 members associated with the branch, of whom 64 renewed their membership in the current year.

Philip Clemow will be standing down as Librarian at the end of the year, and the committee thanked him for all his efforts over the years. A successor will hopefully be appointed at the forthcoming AGM.

Vinay Shah

Branch Programme 2008

1 January	No meeting
5 February	Short Talks by Branch Members
4 March	Tom Radford Asclepiadaceae
1 April	Terry Smale Mesembryanthemums
21-24 March	Display/Sales/Prickly Potting @ Spring Garden Show, Broadlands (Easter Weekend)
6 May	Stuart Riley Grafting: Practical and Slides
24-26 May	Display and Plant Sales @ Garden Market, Whiteley Village
3 June	Dr Gillian Evison Euphorbias for You
21-22 June	Display/Plant Sales @ Craft/Garden Fair, Sir Harold Hillier Arboretum, Ampfield
1 July	Stirling Baker Unusual Cacti
26-27 July	Display and Plant Sales @ Solent Fuchsia Show, Titchfield
29-31 July	Display and Plant Sales @ The New Forest Show, Brockenhurst
5 August	Ian Acton South African Miscellany
16 August	BCSS National Show @ Godmanchester, Cambs
2 September	Jonathan Clark Canary Islands: Wild & Tamed
7 October	Doug Donaldson Beyond the Chirachuahas (Arizona)
4 November	Tony Mace Cereanae: An Introduction to Columnar Cacti
2 December	AGM & Christmas Social

Table Show 2007 – Overall Results

The overall results for the table shows held during 2007 are as follows:

Open Section – Cacti (The Challenge Cup)

B Beckerleg	28
T Grech	9
J Roskilly	6
P Clemow	3
J Burnay	3

Open Section – Succulents (The Gateway Vase)

J Roskilly	25
B Beckerleg	22
P Clemow	4
J Burnay	4

Intermediate Section – Cacti (The Bangor Cup)

B Beckerleg	22
J Roskilly	19
P Clemow	14
T Grech	11

Intermediate Section – Succulents (25th Anniversary Paperweight)

B Beckerleg	26
J Roskilly	26
P Clemow	10
J Burnay	10

Ivor Biddlecombe

Next Month's Meeting

Our first meeting of 2008 will be held on February 5th, and will feature short talks by branch members. If you have a subject that you would like to talk about (even if only for a few minutes), please let a Committee member know as soon as possible. We will have access to conventional and digital projectors, so members are welcome to bring along slides, or a CD or memory card containing digital pictures.

The February Table Show will consist of the **Neopterteria** and **Copiopoa** Groups (cacti) and the **Adromischus** Subgroup (succulents). Please note that you are allowed multiple entries in any of the classes.

The Neopterteria group includes *Neopterteria*, *Austrocactus*, *Chileorebutia*, *Eriosyce*, *Horridocactus*, *Islaya*, *Neochilenia*, *Pyrrhocactus*, *Rodentiophila* and *Thelocephala*. The Copiopoa Group includes *Copiopoa* and *Pilocopiopoa*.

The Adromischus subgroup includes *Adromischus*, *Brophyllum*, *Cotyledon*, *Crassula*, *Kalanchoe*, *Kitchingia*, *Rochea*, *Tillaea*, *Tylecodon*, and *Vauanthes*.

*Best Wishes for a
happy Christmas and
a merry New Year!*



Forthcoming Events

Fri 15 th	Dec	Isle of Wight	AGM and Christmas Social
Tue 1 st	Jan	Southampton	No meeting
Fri 18 th	Jan	Isle of Wight	Plant Auction & Members' Slides
Sat 19 th	Jan	Portsmouth	"Lithops – A Review" – Eddy Harris
Mon 21 st	Jan	Southampton	Branch Committee Meeting
Tue 5 th	Feb	Southampton	Short Talks by Branch Members
Fri 15 th	Feb	Isle of Wight	Branch Quiz & Members' Talks
Sat 16 th	Feb	Portsmouth	"Argentina – Part 2" – Cliff Thompson
Tue 4 th	Mar	Southampton	"Asclepiadaceae" - Tom Radford
Sat 15 th	Mar	Portsmouth	"Basic Botany for Cactophiles" – Mal Weobley
Fri 21 st	Mar	Isle of Wight	"Society Slides" – Sonia Barker-Fricker

Branch website: <http://www.southampton.bcsc.org.uk>