

# British Cactus & Succulent Society

## Southampton & District Branch Newsletter

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## Editorial

Up to the middle of last month I was toying with the idea of “one last watering before the end of the growing season” but after the sharp frosts of last week, I think it's safe to say we're done for the year! A few mesembs and Aloes are continuing to flower and some of the haworthias seem to have grown well in the autumn – they often do well at this time of the year.

## Announcements

Last month Portsmouth hosted the **Zone 11 Quiz**. All the teams were desperate NOT to win the Mealy Bug Trophy, but Southampton's team - consisting of Bruce, Richard and myself - did end up winning the trophy! More details about the event next month.

Our **next meeting** will be held on **3<sup>rd</sup> January** and will consist of short talks by branch members. We would like members to bring along photos or plants and talk about them for a few minutes. Pictures can be brought along on slides or a CD or memory stick/card, and should be prefixed with 001, 002, 003 etc. so that they are shown in the correct order. Please let David Neville know ASAP if you would like to present.

The **Branch Programme** for 2017 has been prepared and printed copies are available from the front table.

## Committee Reports - 2016

### *Chairperson's Report*

As my fourth year of being chair draws to an end the most notable change this year has been the drop in the average age of those attending meetings, with young Charlotte Jankovec regularly accompanying her mother Alice. As it happens the demographic of our membership is a concern however age was no handicap for Ivor Biddlecombe who again produced three excellent displays, winning a Big Gold at the Romsey Show. We do of course always welcome those members from other branches of the society who attend our meetings in Southampton.

This was the year of the National Show held in August at Godmanchester in Cambridgeshire which was attended by a number of our members. Local pubs and hostelrys echoed to the sound of people talking succulents and cacti. It was also the year of the biennial Mesemb Study Group held at Banstead in Surrey where again our membership was well represented.

This year we had an open day at my own garden and our garden party hosted by Alice. Successful and enjoyed by those who attended although rain did curtail the open day.

Thanks to all those who serve on our committee and others who support us at meetings and shows, particularly Ted Smith, and I should like to thank Ben Turner, who stood down from our committee this year, for all his past work. Also I would like to thank Lorraine and Colin Bielckus for auditing our accounts, Alec Mant who has brought cakes to all our meetings and Peter Bircher who has taken over our raffle.

I am looking forward to next year's programme which mixes expert inputs from visiting speakers and practical sessions on cultivation from our home grown experts.

I wish you all a Happy Christmas and a prosperous mealy bug free New Year.

*Dot England*

### **Secretary's Report**

It certainly doesn't seem like 12 months ago that I was writing my last annual report, and it's hard to believe that another year has passed by already. Thankfully, overall, it seems to have been another relatively successful year for the Branch.

I think our average attendance numbers have probably fallen a little when compared to those of recent years, but still we have had quite good numbers throughout the year. I know that we have lost a small number of members through their having moved to other areas of the country, and particularly missed are Sue Wilson and Mark Larter who emigrated to the Isle of Wight in the early part of the year..... our loss is the Isle of Wight Branch's gain.

We continue to mount promotional displays at our 3 regular events (Sparsholt Agricultural College Countryside Day, New Forest Show and Romsey Show). It would be good for the branch if we were able to find other events to attend, but there are only a small number of volunteers who are prepared to mount and attend such displays, and it would be unfair to expect those people to do any more.

Both Alice Jankovec and Dot England hosted an Open Day and Garden Party during the summer, and we are grateful to each of them for inviting us to see their plants and gardens, and to spend a few sociable hours chatting with friends.

I have been busy in recent weeks compiling a programme of speakers for 2017, and the new programme will be handed out at the December meeting. I will email a PDF (digital) version to everyone for whom I have an email address within the next week or so. I am pleased that I have been able to find 4 speakers who have never before spoken to our Branch, which is not such an easy feat because there are less speakers on the published BCSS Speakers List, and many people who are working for a living are unable to commit to visiting us on a Tuesday evening when they have to be at work at 9am on Wednesday morning. There are less habitat travelogue talks next year, in response to feedback from members, and more of a theme on cultivation, with 2 of our special Cultivation Evenings, which have proven popular with members in recent years.

On behalf of everyone in the Branch I would like to send our good wishes to Jim Roskilly and Geoff Card, two former stalwarts of the Branch Committee who have each suffered poor health during 2016 – let us hope that they enjoy a much healthier 2017, and that they are able to attend more of our meetings in the year ahead.

As always I would like to thank everyone in Southampton & District Branch for their support and friendship, and I look forward to us all enjoying another interesting and rewarding year in 2017.

*David Neville*

### **Treasurer's Report**

Yet another year is over. Thanks to the careful management of the branch finances by the committee and continued support by members our finances remain in a healthy state. Based on my calculations I estimate a profit of about £30 for the year. This is to be confirmed by our auditors once the year end accounts are finalized. There have been some additional administrative expenses this year, mainly due to the purchase of promotional materials to be used at events over the next few years, but these have been offset by higher income from monthly meetings and prize money from the Romsey Show.

The Branch continues to maintain a very comfortable savings and current account balance of £7670.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all the best throughout the festive season and look forward to seeing you all next year.

*Alice Jankovec*

### **Display Manager's Report**

Our first display for 2016 was held at the Sparsholt College on 22<sup>nd</sup> May. I was disappointed that only three people came along to help as we needed four people to erect the gazebo, fortunately my brother Peter came to help even though he had sprained his wrist. When we arrived on site it was raining with gusts of wind and we all thought we would have to cancel, but Peter and I made enquires and we were able to use a polytunnel nearby. As there were two tables inside, with my three tables we had the most room for sale plants and the display that we had ever had. That was the good news, as for the rest of the day it rained and only stopped for brief periods. This affected sales as a lot less people attended, and a lot less came to where we had our stand. Apart from

packing up in the rain I think we all enjoyed it, my grateful thanks go to Bruce Beckerleg, Geoff Card, and Peter for all their help.

Our next display was at the New Forest Show, held at the New Park Site, We were lucky with the weather, apart from Wednesday when it was overcast with a few light showers, It was sunny most of the time, our display won a silver medal, the same as last year, the judges remarked the reason we were marked down was due to pots being mixed colours and some had signs of limescale, so perhaps next year it may be worth having someone check the pots before they are placed on the display. They said they thought the seed display was a good idea and it would help if we had more information on our branch activities, perhaps on a poster. I will make two lean-to boards to use at our displays, and I think David said he had larger display boards with society information, perhaps this would be a way to provide more publicity for the branch. The plant sales were good and well worth doing for our funds. If anyone has any other ideas for our displays, please let me know.

The last display of the year was held at Broadlands Park in Romsey. When we arrived to set up our stand on Friday, the weather was overcast but dry. On Saturday the weather changed and it rained nearly all day, but this did not stop the public coming to the Show. I am pleased to say we won a large gold medal (the best ever) for our display. This was due to the good selection of plants brought for the display. We did well with plant sales, and with the prize money, it was the best show of the year.

The Table Show this year had 17 members entering, this was better than last year, and although six members only entered once this is better than none! I hope next year they will be able to enter a few more times, as the Table Show is a good talking point for new members to get to see the different plants on show, and talk about their own plants.

Please accept my thanks to all for bringing your plants and help with the displays.

I hope you all have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

*Ivor Biddlecombe*

### ***Librarian's Report***

Several new books have been added to the Branch Library this year, as listed and described in "Books and things" in the previous (November 2016) Newsletter, so I'll keep this report brief. The Southampton branch library contains approximately

95 books, including some multi-volume and journal sets, which are available for you to borrow for the miserly sum of 20p per volume per month.

There is a rather out-of-date list of the books on the web page at [southampton.bcss.org.uk/library.html](http://southampton.bcss.org.uk/library.html) which I will update soon. For members without Internet access, I will also bring a few printed copies of the list to a meeting in the Spring of 2017. I will endeavour to remind you about the branch library in the Newsletter, and to highlight any new books and those which are relevant to particular speakers' subjects in our monthly meetings. Borrowing a relevant book can be a good way to explore any interests you have, which may have been piqued by the month's speaker. Not all the books will be on display each month, so if you see something on the library list that you'd like to look at, feel free to email ([richard@rjwhite.tk](mailto:richard@rjwhite.tk)) or phone (01425 653840) or text (07751 937060) and I'll try to make sure it's on the library table at the next meeting. If you have any books on loan from the library, please remember to return them at the next meeting.

I would like to thank Sue Wilson for her work maintaining the branch library until the early part of this year when I took over the task, and for writing her "Bookworm Corner" column in the Newsletter. Sue had reported that book borrowing had declined in 2014 and 2015 from a high point in 2013, after low borrowings in 2012, so I am pleased to be able to report that the library borrowings this year have matched the 2013 figure, probably because of the new books which have been borrowed frequently. A few redundant books have been sold. The figures will appear in the branch financial statement, and relate to the branch's financial year which runs from October to September.

Have a good Christmas and New Year holiday, and find some time for reading! If you don't find the book you want under the Christmas tree, perhaps there'll be a copy in the branch library.

*Richard White*

### ***Plant Sales Officer's Report***

The season started off, as usual, with a small display at Sparsholt Open Day where we took £128 which is lower than we have ever been at Sparsholt. It is not really clear why this event has been getting steadily worse.

At the New Forest Show takings were £1412 which is up on last year; takings here have been on the increase for several years now.

Our last show was at Romsey where we took £550 which is a few pounds short of our best ever; a good result considering the bad weather. We also won a large Gold for the first time ever, which yielded £110 in prize money, it's a pity the New Forest Show does not give us prize money as well!

Sales at branch meetings have been good as they were last year. We have continued to get a number of different sellers which adds extra interest to the sales table. I would like to thank all of you who brought sales plants to branch meetings and other events.

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 it. We charge 10% commission at branch meetings and 15% at shows.

*Bruce Beckerleg*

### **Newsletter Editor's Report**

Our meeting attendances have been lower than last year, but sometimes during meetings, the printed newsletters run out - if that's the case, PDF copies of the newsletters are available on our website.

The website home page is updated with details of the next meeting a few days before the meeting is held, and hopefully this information gives members a better idea of what to expect at the meeting and encourages more people to attend.

The website seems to be visited by around 50-80 times per day, but I think some of these are due to automated web crawlers which index Internet content. And each month we get visitors from around 80 different countries!

The supply of "snippets" for inclusion in the newsletter has been low this year - please do try and provide me with articles that you think will be of interest to other members.

The programme of events for next year has been finalised by David, and the branch website will soon be updated to show the new branch programme. Once I receive the Portsmouth and Isle of Wight's programmes, I will also update the Zone 11 page.

Best wishes to everyone for 2017.

*Vinay Shah*

## **Last Month's Meeting**

Ben Turner had brought along a couple of plants. The first was *Bulbine frutescens* which is a floriferous plant from the Cape. The other plant he had brought along had been obtained as a cutting from Hollygate - he didn't know what it was but on a recent trip to the Huntington Botanic Gardens, he identified it as *Senecio bulbinifolius*.

### **South Africa - and Namibia 1st class - Part 1**

Alice started by explaining the title of the talk. Why first class? Well it because they were fortunate enough to be upgraded from business class to first class under BA's World Traveller scheme. This was something she'll probably never get to do again so she had to tell us about it. You press a button and the seats go completely flat, there are real mattress covers, duvets and pillows. And there were real knives and forks and the food started with a smoked salmon starter. They were travelling with Chris Rodgeron and Andy Young and also went with Ivor Crook and Mike Thewles and most of them managed to get upgraded by one grade. It was a great experience and a fantastic way to arrive after a 12 hour flight. They were planning to drive straight up to Springbok (350 miles from Cape Town) with only one stop on the day they arrived, so it was good to have got some sleep the night before.

They picked up three 4x4 vehicles in Cape Town, hired from rental company BushLore. These were complete with camping gear. We saw a picture of them learning how to use a jack to replace tyres. Leaving the airport, we saw a view of the iconic Table Mountain and they went to the local supermarket. Once they got the provisions, they headed north on the N7, stopping for a break at Clanwilliam, where the Olifants river is visible. The name indicates there were once elephants in this area. While having lunch they had a quick look around and found a chunky leaved *Gasteria pillansii*. The plants seemed to grow under the cover of bushes. They also saw a *Stapelia* and a *Tradescantia* - the latter was an escapee from cultivation. A plant of *Cotyledon orbiculata* was not a particularly striking form - they saw better ones later. *Conophytum obcordellum* is one of the night flowerers and very variable. It was growing in moss, as many conos do. Also growing in this area was *Lapeirousia jacquinii* with flowers in very vivid colours. She got seed of this but was unable to germinate them. Also growing here was *Lachenalia trichophylla*. This has an egg shaped leaf and protuberances on the leaves, it can have coarse or fine hairs, and there were vestigial flowers at the tip

of the peduncle. The common name for *Lachenalia* is Cape cowslip.

They also stopped at the Knersvlakte. The ground is covered in lots of small pieces of white quartz, and lots of small succulents grow here. They saw lots of *Argyroderma*, *Cheiridopsis* and also daisy flowered plants. *Argyroderma fissum* has long strappy leaves and a nice pink coloured flower. *Cephalophyllum spissum* is a long leaved mesemb which is quite common in this area but it's not something you see in cultivation. *Conophytum calculus* is also very common in this area - it is another night flowerer with cream / yellow flowers. It can be difficult in cultivation because the sheaths don't dry up and it can also get a bit leggy. However, they look good in habitat. Two more natives were *Conophytum subfenestratum* and *C. minutum* - these have white/rose coloured flowers and magenta flowers respectively. This trip was in September 2015 and the plants were just going towards their dormant stage and the red colouring of the bodies tends to appear at this time. Also here was *Crassula columnaris* ssp. *prolifera* with yellow flowers. It can also have white flowers. The flowers are sweetly scented. In cultivation it was green and leggy when she tried to grow it. *Monilaria moniliformis* is difficult to flower in cultivation although Rick Marshall has managed to get it to produce flowers in this country. She's had them for years and not yet managed to flower them. It is quite attractive and the flower colour changes between white and yellow as they age.

After arriving in Springbok, they drove up to Steinkopf and went to Umduas. This is an amazing area which is criss-crossed by rough tracks and it's rich in succulents. It does not tend to be marked on maps, so Umduas might be a local name. They found Stapeliads, *Sarcocaulon crassicaule* and *Sarcocaulon herrei*, which is more attractive with finely divided leaves. She used to have a pink flowered form of the latter, which lasted 10 years before dying. Also very common in this area were plants of *Drosanthemum hispidum* with attractive flowers. *Cheiridopsis denticulata* formed big clumps and had very large flowers. A shrubby mesemb which was not identified might have been a *Ruschia*. Going through Umduas they came across more Stapeliads and a Pelargonium, *P. crithmifolium* which has a trunk with peeling bark which looks quite attractive. It can grow to a metre in height and the flowers persist as they dry up. Still at Umduas, we saw a general view of the area.

*Conophytum stevens-jonesianum* is named after William Stevens-Jones, who was an English lover of conophytums. It was named in 1964 and is a night

flowerer, with the flowers having the scent of cloves. They found it again, growing alongside *Crassula deceptor*. *Conophytum bilobum* is one of the most variable conophytums. It was quite striking in habitat - in good light you can get good colours and red coloration on the keels of the lobes. The body colour can vary from grey to blue to green to white but the flowers are always white or yellow. *Pachyphytum namaquanum* was found here at its most southerly distribution point - most grow further north, near the Orange River. The plant was about to get going with its flowers. From the large to the tiny - *Bulbine mesembryanthemoides* grows flush with the soil - only one leaf was visible. It had a yellow flower with feathery stamens. *Crassula deceptor* is one of the *Crassulas* that looks good in both cultivation and habitat - many *crassulas* don't look that good in cultivation, but this is one plant that does. They found another form of *Crassula columnaris*, with white flowers. The plant has single head which dies after flowering, so in cultivation you have to hope it forms some offsets. They also found *Tylecodon reticulatus* and more *Cheiridopsis* in flower. Alice thought the next plant was a *Jordoniella* - but she wasn't sure. A plant of *Larryleachia (Trichocaulon) cactiformis* was striking - it had a cristate head and long seed horns. It is relatively common and she saw lots of them. Another plant had different coloured seed horns, but it was probably the same species. A plant of *Cotyledon orbiculata* found here had leaves with red edges and it looked much better than the plant at Clanwilliam.

*Conophytum longum* was found with *Crassula elegans* - it is one of the *Ophthalmophyllum* group and has white to pink flowers. Some red blobs which looked like lumps of jelly proved to be *Conophytum maughanii* ssp. *latum*. You get green and red bodied plants in the same population. If you grow them from seed, some go red and others stay green. It tends to stay solitary in habitat. Also here was a daisy (*Arctotis*) which was quite attractive. Alice mentioned that some of the plant populations were very localised and you were likely to find different plants on the different hills.

The next day, they went south west of Springbok, to Komaggas. They found an old plant of *Aloe dichotomoa* (now called *Alloidendron dichotomum*), and also *Aloe melanocantha* which grows in abundance here. *Conophytum meyeri* has a bright yellow diurnal flower. A plant of *Conophytum bilobum* was beautifully marked - if grown in good light, you can get some nice markings on them. We saw a view looking out over Komaggas. An attractive perennial caught her eye. September is the time for pollinators to be flying around and a bee

was covered in pollen. In the past they have had problems with insects going into your nose and ears – it's a pain to have to wear nets over your face for protection! On a previous trip, a swarm of bees had followed one of the cars. Oxalis grows here, with flowers in different colours. So do Gazanias - and the flowers open up in sunshine. A member of the Zygophyllaceae - *Roepora cordifolia* - had yellow flowers and flattened leaves. *Lapeirousia silenoides* had flowers which were shocking pink in colour. A little perennial *Manulea silenoides* had lobed flowers - it looks a bit like a primula. *Senecio cephaloflorus* has really big yellow flowers, but the plants had already flowered so they only got to see the seed head. It was once offered as an "honorary mesemb" by the MSG, and she got one plant to maturity from 5 seeds, and hopes it will flower soon.

*Huernia namaquensis* was one of the few Stapeliads she could identify. It was in an awkward place to photograph but it had a seed horn and was in flower at the same time, so it must flower over an extended period. Another plant was possibly *Stapelia variegata*, but it wasn't in flower. *Tylecodon racemosus* grows here to a height of a foot tall and it has nice pink flowers – it's a good one to grow. A Cheiridopsis had 2 inch yellow flowers - they can look showy when several flowers are open. That evening they saw fields of yellow daisy flowers as far as the eye could see - and also orange gazanias. It gets dark at 6pm so the photographs taken late in the evening weren't that good. John Watmough and Rodney Simms and Bill Darbon went in September this year and due to a drier spring, they didn't see much in the way of flowers at all. In other years, when she's visited South Africa in April, when the conophytums are in flower - you don't get to see any of these daisy flowers.

Back north of Steinkopf, if you see an area with white quartz, you stop and have a look around. They found Cheiridopsis. A bulb *Tritonia karooica* had beautiful striped yellow flowers. She would like to grow it, but she had no idea how easy it was. They came across more Larryleachia growing here with seed horns, along with Hoodias as well. Plants of *Lithops marmorata* were chewed up a bit, she thought it was the crickets that ate them. Of course the main growing point is protected deep in the heart of the plant. *L. marmorata* is the commonest lithops and is found in a lot of locations. The other lithops tend to be much more localised. She found *Haworthia venosa* ssp *tessellata* (and *H. arachnoidea*) growing between large lumps of quartz. These are common in the northern and western Cape, the other Haworthias are found in the south of the country. They wanted to look at a particular lithops which grows near a mine and had

to ask permission. The mine produces feldspar which is used in glass making. It is an active mine and you wonder if the plants will be at risk in the future if the mine expands. A bulb was probably an *Albuca*. A member of the Aizoaceae *Trianthema parviflora* is widespread and it grows in many areas in a range 40°N to 40°S of the equator. Bushes of *Codon royenii* were a metre tall - the flowers produce a lot of nectar and children suck the flowers to get at the nectar. *Conophytum longum* was found here, as was *Lithops dinteri brevis*. There were several clumps of them in the area, but they didn't find masses of them. They didn't see seedlings either. There was a big seed pod on one of the lithops. There were more Stapeliads growing here, they were always growing under a bush or between rocks, trying to get some protection from the sun. *Crassula muscosa* also goes under the name *C. lycopodioides*. She saw more examples of the lovely daisy *Arctotis*, with attractive felty leaves. We saw a picture of the Lithops, with the mine in the background.

They now crossed the Orange River at Violsdrift and entered Namibia. They would visit Grunau, then Rosh Pinah, Witzputz and Aus, followed by Luderitz and Sendelingsdrif where this talk finishes. At Grunau, they saw the White House Guest House, which is located on Mickberg Farm. It was built in 1912, but the person who built it (Frederich Haschke) was unable to locate any water despite digging various bore holes. He was eventually declared insane and his wife went back to Germany, as did he. The house was sold and the people who bought it did eventually find water. It is relatively unchanged and is fantastic inside, and a nice place to stay at. For some reason there was a bath in the front garden, and we saw a picture of Ivor sitting in the bath. A scan showed the story of the house and the original owner, and we also saw a picture of the house taken shortly after it was built. In the garden there were a few cacti, and we saw an *Oreocereus* in flower. It was late when they arrived, but they decided to go to a site for *Lithops karasmontana*. The lithops grows on pink quartz which is being mined, so it's possible the Lithops won't be there much longer. We saw Mike Thewells taking the picture of the Lithops, which is at great risk of disappearing. They found a really spectacular *Adromischus shuldtianus* and also a nice plant of *Crassula ausensis*, which is a very variable species, but this was a nice form with red edges to the leaves. We saw piles of the pink quartz (called rose quartz) which is used for jewellery and ornaments.

They went down towards the Orange River and saw baboon footprints and also a troupe of baboons. In this area they found *Aloe garipeensis* - it grows in

the northern Richtersveld and into Southern Namibia. It is quite an attractive aloe with a yellow flower. A plant which she thought was *Aloe pillansii* was actually a tall and thin *Aloe dichotoma*. The flower spike remains pointed upwards - with *A. pillansii* they are horizontal. The plant was sparsely branched which is why it looked more like *A. pillansi* than *A. dichotoma*. Another *Adromischus shuldtianus* looked healthier and *Crassula ausensis* was found again, this time with more rounded leaves. They had come to look for *Conophytum quaesitum* ssp. *densipunctum* which has a cream flower. It grows around Signalberg Mountain which is north-west of Grunau. They also found *Lithops karasmontana* (signalberg form) - but there wasn't much difference compared to the ones they had found growing in the pink quartz. The plants were found in small patches, more restricted than the *L. marmorata* they had seen earlier. They found *Crassula cerisia*, but the plants were thinner than expected. *Schwantesia herrei* is a plant that likes very arid conditions, and it does not require much water in cultivation - if you give them too much water, the leaves will split. A scene showed how dry the area was. They found *Crassula cerisia* again, looking better than the previous specimen. *Hartmanthus* grows in this area - there are just two species - *H. pergamentaceus* and *H. hallii*. In cultivation, you again need to be careful with the watering. They found one or two in flower. Growing with it was *Monsonia peniculina* which is endemic to this area - the plant looks like a slug with lumps! It reaches 10cm in height and the flowers are pale pink to rose.

They moved on to Rosh Pinah and stayed at the Four Seasons Lodge. They were going to look for *Conophytums*, but first came across *Aloe gariensis* in flower, with typical yellow flowers. It was a difficult climb to get good pictures of this. They found *Conophytum taylorianum* ssp. *ernianum*, which has a diurnal purple flower. The plants were somewhat dehydrated since it was close to the end of the growing season. They found a seedling *Cotyledon* too and a plant which may have been *Aloe ramosissima*. A *Microlooma* caught her eye - it is an asclepiad and the flowers are pollinated by sun birds. Children suck the flowers for nectar. They had a puncture on one of the three cars, and had to use the special jack to change the tyre, which had been ripped to shreds. You can't use a conventional jack because the ground is so soft. They found more *Aloe ramosissima*. One of the plants looked dead but it was still alive and managing to fruit. There was lots of regeneration too. The next morning, they saw the mists coming down over the mountains and it was quite chilly. They went to have a look at some *Hoodias* they had

seen the previous day and these plants were covered in moisture which was dripping off the spines onto the ground near the plant. This must be how a lot of plants get their moisture - there's not much rain in this area.

They drove back down to the Orange River and she was unimpressed - she thought it would be huge, but in some places it is quite narrow. Water is taken from the river for irrigation. Near a weir, we saw a cormorant drying its wings. Also growing near the river was an epiphyte - she was given the name *Xerosicos danguyi* - but that plant is endemic to Madagascar and she thinks it might have been something else. *Monsonia patersonii* had pink flowers - it is endemic to southern Namibia and the northern Richtersveld. We also saw a young plant of it. Some of the plants had large spines. Another *Monsonia* - *M. multifida* also had pink flowers with deeper colouring at the base of the flower. The stems can be almost black and it has velvety leaves. *Juttadinteria deserticola* is another plant that grows in arid areas and is endemic to Namibia. Also growing with it was *Crassothonna opima* which has yellow flowers. The flowers contained ants looking for nectar. They found *Hartmanthus* again. *Tylecodon hallii* was about a foot tall and it had a smooth greyish-white trunk. The flower remains are persistent. They also found a *Schwantesia*. After climbing a hill, they had a good view of the Orange River from the top and they again found *Conophytum taylorianum* ssp. *ernianum*.

They wandered along the river and found clumps of *Euphorbia virosa* - these were huge plants, 6 feet tall. It was very barren here, apart from these plants. They saw baboons again - they didn't bother them on this occasion, but on previous trips they have had incidents where the baboons gang up and make a tremendous horrid screeching barking noise to try and scare them away. In response to a question about what do the baboons eat, well they are omnivores and they eat Aloes such as *Aloe pearsonii* in the Richtersveld. We again saw low mist on the morning. *Monsonia patersonii* was covered in flowers. *Aloe microstigma* is possibly related to *A. gariensis*, but it has a reddish flower. *Ihlenfeldtia* has been split off from *Cheiridopsis* but it is related and the dwarf plants had showy 2" flowers. A plant of *Crassula ausensis* was 25mm across. A pretty gazania was *G. jurineifolia*. Next was a plant which was difficult to spot - it was *Aloe variegata*, just peering out from the soil. Another one growing under a bush looked healthier. There is a lovely black coloration to the leaves in habitat. They had come to look for *Lithops karasmontana* ssp. *bella* and found it eventually, although the plant appeared to have been damaged by crickets again.

They now headed off on a tarmac road to the coast, and Luderitz.

Alice described Luderitz as the most godforsaken place she has been to. They found *Conophytum saxatanum* growing in quite large masses, it also grows in northern Richtersveld. This and *C. halenbergense* are the most northern of the Conophytums. They found a nice *Pelargonium nanum* which is a dwarf plant. There was incredible wind blowing in off the coast. They had come to find one particular lithops, and Mike eventually found it - it was *Lithops optica rubra*, but it wasn't very red. The reds seem to grow along with the greens. They didn't find many examples, and she suspects there has been a lot of collection of this. It is relatively easy to grow from seed, so there's no need to collect it really. There were some flamingos here. A plaque marked the site of the Diaz Point National Monument which dates back to 1488, when Bartholomew Diaz first landed at Luderitz Bay. The monument deteriorated over the years, and bits were taken away to museums etc., but in 1988, on the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary, they decided to reconstruct the monument. However, in 2015, a wooden bridge to the monument had collapsed (David Neville said the bridge was intact in 2012). There were a few grotty succulents trying to grow in the horrible environment near the coast, and they found *Crassula elegans* ssp. *namibensis*. A Monsonia was flowering and covered in lichen. We saw the lighthouse at Luderitz, and the harbour.

Just outside Luderitz is Kolmanskop which used to be a diamond mining town. Now it's just a ghost town. Access is restricted, it is only open at certain times on certain days so they couldn't go in. The buildings are in good condition, preserved due to the dry weather, but they were abandoned in 1954 and most are just full of sand. There were pretty substantial houses. A strange road sign indicated Hyenas for 40km! These animals live inland but they travel to the coast to catch seals. They are a protected species, but they didn't see any. A picture showed Haalenberg rail station, Alice wasn't sure if it was in use or just used for goods. They came across a fortification from the 1<sup>st</sup> World War, and found lots of tin cans dating from that time. They also came across a man camping up here, taking photographs of the dawn. A strange cloud formation was worthy of a picture. Up here was *Tylecodon schaeferianus* which is a dwarf plant with an underground tuber - it has a pretty leaf and would be a nice one to grow. *Juttadinteria kovisimontana* is also known as *J. simpsonii* - not sure why it has 2 names. This was a white flowered specimen with teeth on the leaves. *Avonia albissima* was also growing here - you see lots of it in South Africa. It

was very arid but there were small succulents growing around. *Lithops karasmontana eberlanzii* had quite nice markings on the body. It is supposed to grow with *Lithops francisci* - but they didn't find the latter, despite 6 of them searching, and neither did Steve Hammer when he visited this area. David Neville said they had found some by accident. *Euphorbia lignosa* was growing here, there was nice new pink growth on the plant.

On the Haalenberg mountains, they found *Conophytum halenbergense* - it is night flowering, with scented straw coloured flowers. Along with *C. saxatanum*, it is the most northern of the Conophytum species. *Crassula ausensis* had pointed leaves this time. They also found a plant which you see in South Africa all the time - *Augea capensis*, which is in the Zygophyllaceae. It is apparently eaten by oryx in very dry periods. There were some wonderful old dichotomas growing here. If you do go to Luderitz, the Luderitz Nest Hotel is the one good thing about Luderitz. A road sign featured "Mabel Street" - this was taken specially for Steve Hammer, since it's one of his nicknames. At Sendelingsdrif, they found a notice there saying that their mission is to "manage the national population register, facilitate lawful entry and exit, stay of foreign nations and aid the justice system, guided by the principles of efficiency, effectiveness and accountability".

It was time to end the talk and the crossing back into South Africa was on a pontoon aided by cables that takes 2 cars across the river. It's a lot quicker to cross here than the main crossing where you spend ages going from one hut to the next, filling in forms.

Vinay Shah



**Table Show Results**

There were 24 entries in the November table show, and 6 entries for “Plants in Flower”.

	<b>Cacti – Mammillaria</b>	<b>Succulents – Agave</b>
Open	(1) G Penrose M. lasiacantha f magallanii	(1) I Biddlecombe Agave potatorum
	(2) I Biddlecombe M. perbella	(2) B Beckerleg A.lophantha cv multicolor
	(3) B Beckerleg M. lenta	(3) G Penrose Agave parryi cv. “Cream Spike”
Intermediate	(1) T Smith M. theresae	(1) M Stevenson Agave striata nana
	(2) A Mant M. carmenae	(2) I Biddlecombe Agave victoria reginae
	(3) B Beckerleg M. albilanata	(3) B Beckerleg Agave potatorum

<b>Cacti/Succulent in Flower</b>
(1) B Beckerleg Neoporteria microsperma
(2) A Mant Echeveria sp
(3) G Penrose Mammillaria gracilis

*Ivor Biddlecombe*

**Table Show 2016 – Overall Results**

**Open Section – Cacti (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Trophy)**

- 1) I Biddlecombe 28
- 2) B Beckerleg 24
- 3) T Smith 18

**Open Section – Succulents (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Trophy)**

- 1) B Beckerleg 33
- 2) I Biddlecombe 30
- 3) T Smith 9

**Intermediate Section – Cacti (Peter Down 50<sup>th</sup> Golden Jubilee Trophy)**

- 1) B Beckerleg
- 2) I Biddlecombe
- 3) T Smith

**Intermediate Section – Succulents (25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Paperweight)**

- 1) B Beckerleg
- 2) I Biddlecombe
- 3) G Penrose

**Novice Trophy**

- 1) A Mant

**Ladies Cup (highest points total/Female entrant)**

- 1) M Stevenson
- 2) M Fox-Rousell

**Solent Cup (Cactus or Succulent in flower)**

- 1) B Beckerleg
- 2) A Mant
- 3) T Radford

*Ivor Biddlecombe*

## Next Month's Meeting

Our first meeting of 2017 will be held on January 3<sup>rd</sup>. The meeting will feature short talks by branch members, and if you have a subject that you would like to talk about (even if only for a few minutes), please let Daid Neville 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 or memory stick containing digital pictures. You can also bring along live plants, if you want to talk about those!

The January Table Show will consist of the **Echinocactus** group (cacti) and the **Aloe** group (succulents), along with "plant in flower". Please note that members can submit more than one entry in any of the classes, and that points will be earned for each placed entry.

The table show classes use the classifications from the *Guide to Shows 10<sup>th</sup> Edition* (contact me if you don't have a copy of this).

The Aloe group contains *Aloe*, *Aloiampelos*, *Aloidendron*, *Bulbine*, *Chamaealoe*, *Kumara* and *Lomatophyllum*.

The Echinocactus group includes *Echinocactus*, *Ferocactus*, *Homalocephala*, and *Leuchtenbergia*.

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



## Forthcoming Events

Sat 10 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Portsmouth	Annual General Meeting & Christmas Social
Sat 10 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Isle of Wight	Annual General Meeting followed by American Supper
Tue 3 <sup>rd</sup> Jan	Southampton	Members' Mini Talks
Sat 14 <sup>th</sup> Jan	Isle of Wight	No Meeting
Sat 21 <sup>st</sup> Jan	Portsmouth	Members talks - Paul Klaassen & Angie Money
Tue 7 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Southampton	Peru - Arequipa to Ancash – Martin Sheader
Sat 11 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Isle of Wight	Branch Quiz (questions by Ron Mitchell)
Sat 18 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Portsmouth	Large Flowered Mammillarias – Chris Davies
Tue 7 <sup>th</sup> Mar	Southampton	Plants from my Collection – Julie Carey

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

Facebook : <https://www.facebook.com/southamptonbcsc>