



Southern African Bulb Group

www.sabg.tk

SABG Newsletter no. 34 March 2017

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News

- ★ We welcome two new members to our Committee (see below).

Dates for your diary

- ★ Saturday 25th March 2017: NAAS visit to the *Lachenalia* display and glasshouse tour at Exbury
- ★ Sunday 2nd April 2017: SABG Spring Meeting, Winchester
- ★ Sunday 8th October 2017: SABG Autumn Meeting, Winchester

From the Editor

At last, another Newsletter. It will encourage me to produce future newsletters if you can send me any notes that you think may be of interest to other members, even if not strictly confined to South African bulbs, as many of us can't resist growing other plants, especially

bulbs from other areas, even Patagonia!

Notices and Requests

Derrick Donnison-Morgan

I am sorry to have to report the death of Derrick P. Donnison-Morgan on 16th February 2017. He was a member of the SABG, who lived in Winchester and among many other activities contributed to our Bulb & Seed Exchange.

He studied as a botanical horticulturalist at Chelsea Physic Garden and the University of Plymouth and taught at Sparsholt College. He was particularly interested in *Narcissus*, and became quite well known in the bulb world, first as a daffodil exhibitor and later, as a result of his plant hunting in Spain, Portugal and Morocco, as an author of articles on *Narcissus* and as a speaker at horticultural events: one of his talks was entitled "Daffodils in my rucksack", referring to his plant collecting expeditions. Living for eight years in

Spain must have been very productive, and he amassed considerable knowledge and a significant collection of Autumn-flowering daffodils. He was a member of the Daffodil Society¹, and a photograph of him and some more information about his activities can be found in a post and a response to it at their web-site².

He described at least two new species, including *Narcissus alleniae* and, with Harold Koopowitz and B.J.M. Zonneveld, *N. miniatus*, sometimes regarded as a synonym of *N. obsoletus*: the IPNI author abbreviation "Donn.-Morg." might be found attached to these names.

He was known for his "Simply Species" seedlists, provided the seed list for the Scottish Rock Garden Club³ and initiated a seedlist for the Mediterranean Garden Society⁴.

He had been a tour leader for Naturetrek and led plant and wildlife expeditions to the Burren, Madeira and no doubt other places. He was also a judge in the south-east England area of the Britain in Bloom competition (he appeared in articles in the Crawley and Horley Observer⁵ and in the Portsmouth News⁶). He is survived by his wife Marilyn.

New Committee members

At the SABG meeting last autumn, it was most timely and fortunate that, following the resignations of two Committee members in the last couple of years, we were able to persuade two SABG members to join the Committee: Jonathan Evans and Sue Bedwell. Thank you for your generous agreement!

However, don't think that this means that the SABG Committee does everything and knows everything! We are a small and informal organisation which exists only to be of interest to its members, and we would greatly appreciate any offers of help with our activities. It's *your* group too!

Plants wanted

One of our members wants to acquire more plants now that he is retired and has more time to look after them. If you have any surplus bulbs or plants of species of *Babiana*, *Geissorhiza*, *Spiloxene*, *Moraea*, *Gladiolus*,

Ixia, etc., please let me know and I will put you in touch with him.

Books for sale

Ben Turner has undertaken to sell a number of bulb books which belonged to Derrick Donnison-Morgan:

Jeppe, B, <i>Spring and Winter Flowering Bulbs of the Cape</i> , 0-19-570535-1, £40.00
Koopowitz, H, <i>Clivias</i> , 0-88192-546-2, £40.00
Mathew, B, <i>Dwarf Bulbs</i> , £6.00
Van Dijk, H & Kurpershoek, M, <i>The Complete Encyclopedia of Bulbs and Tubers</i> , 90-366-1582-8, £6.00
Arnott, S, <i>The Book of Bulbs</i> , £8.00
Rossi, R, <i>The MacDonald Encyclopedia of Bulbs</i> , 0-356-17666-5, £4.00
Anderson, E B, <i>Hardy Bulbs 1</i> , £2.00
Coleman, C F, <i>Hardy Bulbs 2</i> , £2.00
Bryan, J, <i>Manual of Bulbs</i> , 0-333-61539-5, £10.00
Grey-Wilson, C & Mathew, B, <i>Bulbs: The Bulbous Plants of Europe and their Allies</i> , 0-00-219211-X, £6.00
Mathew, B, <i>Growing Bulbs: The Complete Practical Guide</i> , 0-7134-4920-9, £6.00
Ruksans, J, <i>Buried Treasures: Finding and Growing the World's Choicest Bulbs</i> , 978-0-88192818-1, £20.00
Bryan, J, <i>Bulbs: Volume 1, A-H</i> , 0-7470-0231-2, £6.00
Bryan, J, <i>Bulbs: Volume 2, I-Z</i> , with appendices and index, 0-7470-0231-2, £6.00
Cooke, I, <i>The Gardener's Guide to Growing Cannas</i> , 0-7153-1131-X, £10.00

Ben asked me to stress that these prices are indicative only, and that lower and indeed higher offers will be welcome. He will bring these books and possibly others to our meeting on Sunday 2nd April, but he has not yet said what he will do with books not sold at that meeting. So if you are interested, I suggest you email him before the meeting, at benjamin.turner@btinternet.com

Membership list

Still in preparation, I am afraid. However, if you have any change of address, email or phone number that you would like to be included, please let me know.

The Amaryllidaceae of Southern Africa

This is a lovely and comprehensive book on this family of plants in South Africa and surrounding countries, by Graham Duncan, with watercolour paintings the result of 45 years work by the late Barbara Jeppe and her daughter Leigh Voigt. It includes about 240 species in 18 genera (*Amaryllis*, *Ammocharis*, *Apodolirion*, *Boophone*, *Brunsvigia*, *Clivia*, *Crinum*, *Crossyne*,

1 <http://thedaffodilsociety.com>

2 <http://thedaffodilsociety.com/wordpress/the-late-derrick-donnison-morgan/>

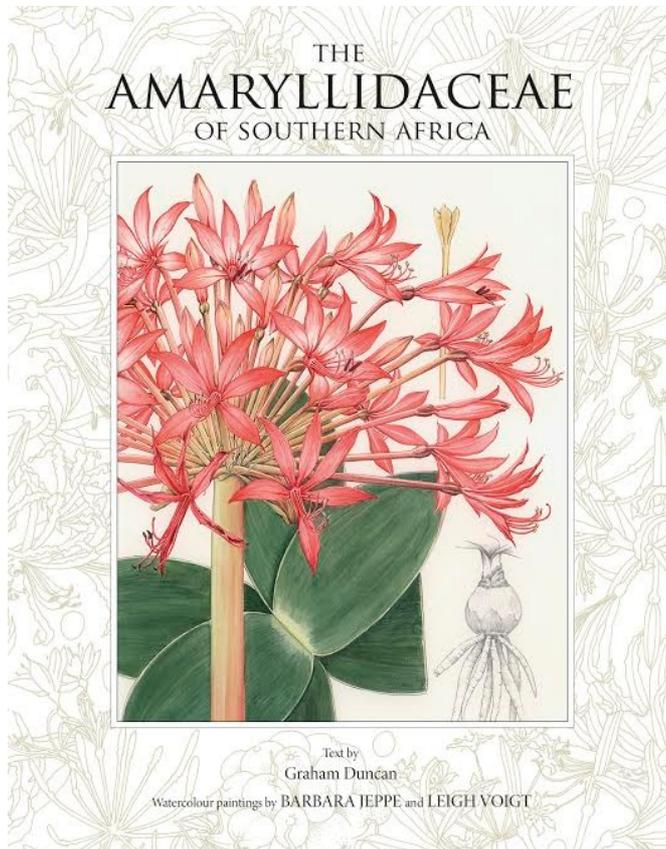
3 <http://www.srgc.net>

4 <http://www.mediterraneangardensociety.org>

5 <http://www.crawleyobserver.co.uk/news/crawley-blooms-for-competition-judges-1-6194715>

6 <http://www.portsmouth.co.uk/news/politics/parts-of-fareham-are-being-ignored-while-others-are-spruced-up-claims-councillor-1-6203457>

Cryptostephanus, *Cyrtanthus*, *Gethyllis*, *Haemanthus*, *Hessea*, *Namaquanula* (no, me neither), *Nerine*, *Pancratium*, *Scadoxus* and *Strumaria*). There are a few pages of introduction to each genus and usually two pages for each species, one of which is a full-page illustration.



Although there are only nine pages on cultivation, they look to be very informative, with sections on cultivation both within South Africa and in temperate regions in the northern hemisphere, where most SABG members live. Several of the suppliers listed below have short descriptions of the book, taken from the publisher's blurb (I believe that is the technical term), but there is a longer review by Eric Hsu at the web-site "Plinth et al"⁷.

At the time of writing, there is considerable variation in the price of this book. It can be bought directly from Umदाus Press in South Africa for R1,200 plus R875 airmail. More conveniently perhaps, Amazon list it for £80.27 with free delivery. NHBS quotes £99.99, Kew Shop £90 and Summerfield Books £85. But if you are a member of the AGS then they have it for sale for £65, which is a bargain at £15 less than Amazon. If you're not a member, it's almost worth joining for a year just to get the book. Buy it!

⁷ <https://plinthetal.com/2017/02/08/book-review-the-amaryllidaceae-of-southern-africa/>

IBSA Bulb Symposium, August 2017

Ruth Prescott of IBSA, the Indigenous Bulb Association of South Africa⁸, has been in touch with Bill Squire to give details of the forthcoming Symposium that IBSA is organising in South Africa in August this year. Some of you may be interested in attending; you do not have to be a member of IBSA. She said that "this is an opportunity not to be missed to hear talks and to see the vistas of flowering geophytes, particularly in the areas which have had fires."

Although brief details are included in the January 2017 issue of the IBSA newsletter, available online⁹, more details are included in a colour brochure, so in order to brighten the pages of this newsletter I include the brochure in full, as follows:

**IBSA BULB & CORM
SYMPOSIUM**

**MONDAY 28 AUGUST TO
WEDNESDAY 30 AUGUST 2017**

GOUDINI SPA, SOUTH AFRICA



⁸ <http://www.safribulbs.org.za/>

⁹ http://www.safribulbs.org.za/images/newsletters/newsletter_january2017.pdf

The Indigenous Bulb Society of South Africa (IBSA) will be holding its next Symposium showcasing South African bulbs and corms during August 2017.

The Symposium will be held at the Goudini Spa from the 28th August to the 30th August 2017.

The natural warm water spa at Goudini is near Worcester and close to the internationally renowned Cape vineyards.

Delegates will book into the Spa on Sunday the 27th August. During the first day of the Symposium there will be lectures and discussions on a wide variety of topics relating to South African geophytes. The next two days will be dedicated to field trips to the surrounding areas to see some of the plants discussed in their natural splendour. Transport for the Symposium excursions will be provided.

Some of the recreational facilities include tennis courts, four swimming pools, volley ball court and of course, the hot springs.



Accommodation at Goudini Spa will be in newly constructed cottages within easy walking distance of the new conference centre and restaurant. The cottages have 2 separate bedrooms with bathrooms, so all accommodation will be on a shared basis (2 people per cottage).

We invite you to come and meet people from all over the world who are passionate about growing South African geophytes. There will be ample time to meet the other delegates and to share information. We will also be able to advise you about other areas of the Cape Floristic Region where good bulbous plant displays may be seen.

Attendance at the Symposium is not restricted to IBSA members.

THE COST

“Early bird” registration fee: USD 130

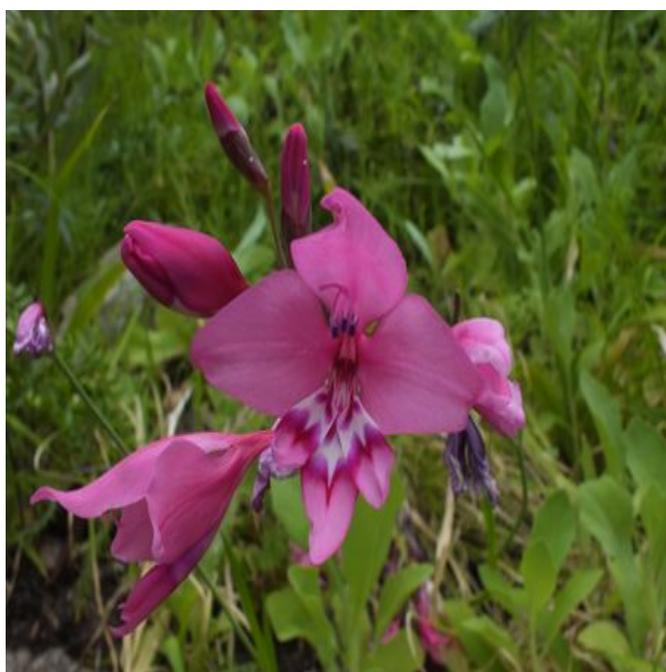
The above price includes 3 lunches and 2 dinners as well as transport by bus for the 2 excursions. It **does not** include accommodation or breakfasts.

If you would like accommodation and breakfasts to be included as well, please ask for a quote.

Late registration fee USD 200

Payment can be made in US Dollars or equivalent in GB Pounds or in Euros. Payments can be made by paypal or credit card.

IBSA will refund 80% of your payment if cancellation is received 30 days or more prior to the first day of the symposium.





APPLICATION FORM
IBSA BULB & CORM SYMPOSIUM
AUGUST 2017

Name:

Address:

Postal code:

Tel No: Home:
 Work:
 Fax:
 Email address:

No. of persons in party:
 Do you need accommodation?.....

.....
 Signature Date

e mail this form to:
ruthprescott@gmail.com

The Secretary
 IBSA
 P.O. Box 12265
 N 1 City 7463
 South Africa

Autumn 2016 SABG meeting

Our last meeting was held on **Sunday 23rd October 2016** at the Badger Farm Community Centre near Winchester. About 35 members attended.

The speaker for the morning session at approximately 11:00 was **Nick Wray**, the curator of Bristol University Botanic Garden¹⁰. Nick has recently been awarded the RHS Associate of Honour¹¹ which “recognises his work of more than 30 years at the garden and for his role in creating the new Botanic Garden at The Holmes, which was the first new university botanic garden to be moved and redeveloped in the UK for nearly 40 years”.

He gave a very interesting talk, explaining various aspects of the distribution of bulbs in the Western Cape – not just the usual story about summer- and winter-rainfall areas, but more detailed aspects of soil moisture, shade, microclimate, pollinators, etc. Apparently there’s a much higher proportion of bulbous species than in other areas with a Mediterranean climate (1,500 out of 9,000 species). Highlights for me included *Babiana ringens* which has red flowers at ground level (for reasons I don’t recall), but which are too close to the ground for birds to reach comfortably. So it provides a handy stiff stalk *above* the flowers, so that sunbirds can perch and hang upside-down to reach the flowers. It is known as the Rat’s Tail for this reason. The BBC web-site has an article about it¹².



Babiana ringens

Another noteworthy point was that insect pollinators can detect the minute electrical field around flowers and use it to decide whether to visit them or not. It is suspected that when an insect visits, it discharges the field, presumably without noticing an electric shock!

10 <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/botanic-garden/>
 11 <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/news/2016/february/rhs-nick-wray.html>
 12 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-14788701>

The field then builds up again slowly, as the nectar is also replenished, thus acting as a guide to nectar content. One suspects that in the UK perhaps the humidity is usually too high for this effect to occur, as I believe electric charge leaks away more quickly in damp air.

Future SABG meetings

The next SABG meeting

Our next meeting will be held on **Sunday 2nd April 2017** at our normal venue, the Badger Farm Community Centre near Winchester. Directions are shown on our web-site at www.sabg.tk. The doors will open at 10.00, and the meeting will close at about 16.00.

The speaker for the morning session at approximately 11:00 will be our very own Bob Charman, who will give a talk on his trip to Patagonia.

As usual, there will be a display table for any plants that you bring along. We plan to have one of our informal discussion periods during the afternoon, so that members can point out their plants and answer any questions. If you have any slides or computer images that you would like to show, please bring them along.

There will also be a sales table where you can offer material for sale on the usual 80:20 basis, i.e. the Group takes a 20% commission to help cover the hall hire costs etc. Please include a second label in each pot, showing the price and your initials, so that we can settle up easily at the end of the day.

There will be a lunch break from approximately 12.30 until 14.00. For those of you that have not come before, it's worth adding that many Members bring their own food so that they can have the opportunity to chat to others. Alternatively, the Sainsbury's supermarket is based on the same site.

As usual, the charge for the meeting will be £3.00 per person, payable at the door. There is no charge for parking, provided that you remember to add your car registration number to the list, usually in the main entrance hall and on the table just inside the entrance to our meeting room.

SABG Autumn 2017 meeting

The Autumn meeting will be on **Sunday 8th October 2017**, also at the Badger Farm Community Centre. Details of the speaker will follow in the next Newsletter.

Snippets

More on smoke to promote germination

You will probably remember the interesting article by Paul Cumbleton in Newsletter no. 31¹³ (August 2015), in which he described the use of "Liquid Smoke", sold as a food flavouring, which might potentially enhance the germination of seeds, especially those, including it is believed many South African bulbs, which are adapted to germinate after natural wildfires have cleared the ground for them. This product was suggested as a cheaper alternative to smoke-impregnated filter papers, such as "Cape Seed Plus", specifically sold to enhance germination in Cape species, but not specifically bulbs.

Those of you who are members of the Alpine Garden Society, or are able to read their journal, will have noticed a longer article by Paul in the December 2016 issue (Vol. 84, no. 4, pp. 394 – 403), in which he quotes other scientific research and includes results of some informal experiments of his own on alpines.

With his alpine experiments, the results were not conclusive, except for an apparent stimulation of germination in species of *Penstemon*. As he points out, alpines are not normally affected by fire in the wild, so they would not be expected to have become adapted to smoke as a trigger for germination.

Given that he reports that most South African bulbs which have been tested in this way have not shown any improvement in germination, except for some species of *Aristea* and *Wachendorfia*, and that some species are actually inhibited, it seems that the jury is still out. If anyone tries any experiments, please share your results with the rest of us.

Could it perhaps be that bulbous species, as opposed to annuals and short-lived perennials, are adapted simply to survive underground when their tops are burnt off, and therefore don't need their seeds to germinate immediately after fires?

In the next Newsletter

I plan to produce the next Newsletter (no. 35) for distribution during May 2017, after our Spring meeting on 2nd April.

SABG Accounts

On the next page are the audited accounts for the SABG financial year ending 30th September 2016.

13 <http://www.sabg.tk/newsletter/SABGnews31.pdf>

Your SABG Committee

Chairman, Seed & bulb exchange

Bill Squire billshire@sky.com

Vice-chairman

Jonathan Evans jonevans46.uw@btinternet.com

Treasurer

Rodney Sims rodney.sims@tiscali.co.uk

Secretary & Membership

Alina Hughes abmhughes@gmail.com

Newsletter & Web editor, Committee minutes

Richard White sabg@rjwhite.tk

Meeting hall bookings

Audrey Cain audrey@cain.net

Meeting supplies

Sue Bedwell bedwell615@btinternet.com

Southern African Bulb Group

Income and Expenditure Account for year ending 30th September 2016

	2016	2015
<u>Income</u>		
Membership Fees	£60.83	£46.45
Catering	£32.04	£31.82
Bulb Sales	£278.00	£307.00
Book Commission		
Plant Sales	£71.10	£93.54
Donations	£0.02	£9.74
Admission Donations	£192.00	£156.00
Account Interest	£4.45	£3.48
Total Income	£638.44	£648.03
<u>Expenditure</u>		
Hall Rental	£154.00	£196.44
Speakers	£250.00	£26.00
Catering Costs	£11.15	£14.63
Bulb Distribution Postage	£108.55	£73.07
Stationery	£8.48	
Printing		
Creditor		£48.56
Postage	£28.90	
Research		
Affiliation Insurance	£105.00	£105.00
Total Expenditure	£666.08	£463.70
Profit/Loss	-£27.64	£184.33

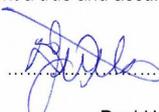
Financial Position at 30 September 2016

	2016	2015
Balance Brought Forward	£1,809.52	£1625.19
Add Profit/Subtract Loss	-£27.64	£184.33
Creditor- expenses due	£248.61	
Balance Carried Forward	£2,030.49	£1809.52

Represented By

Cheque not paid in	£5.00	
Treasurer's Savings Account	£2,025.49	£1809.52

I hereby certify that I have duly examined the books, bank statements, vouchers etc. of the Southern African Bulb Group and confirm these represent a true and accurate record.

Signed  Date 11/11/2016

David Wilson MBA