

## Newsletter

### *British Streptocarpus Society Chairman's Comments*



*Members viewing the results at the show in Brownhills and below*

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*All pictures on this page were provided by Mary Davies*

Well has all the Christmas and New Year indulgences slipped away into the mists of time for a while?

Have you neglected your plants a little at this time? Or are you a real fan of your plants and spent some time with them going through the winter chores faithfully? Totally taking off those old tatty leaves that held last season's flowers plus the dead stubs of flower stems on slightly younger plants. Keep a wary eye out for any signs of disease such as Grey Mould, Powdery Mildew of which there has been so much this last season. Keeping a lookout also for the odd infestation of aphids which can easily be overlooked in the depths of winter, so make one more resolution for the year to go through all your plants and examine them on a regular basis, I'm sure your plants will appreciate it and grow all the better for it. Have you got all your plans well in hand for the coming season decided what you will grow and how and where you will grow them? You our members out there grow in many different ways and for so many different reasons some just to fill their window areas with as many pretty flowering plants as they possibly manage. Others like to blend their plants into groups and colour schemes within the décor of their homes. More of you now seem to be using conservatories and creating a slightly "Jungley" look with a mixture of other plant species. Members are also showmen types who like to grow their plants to the ultimate size and shape and taking them along to local shows hoping to gain a first prize red card or maybe a trophy even! Other members grow them just to enjoy the fascination of seeing new plants appear from young leaves they have put in and then to grow the plants on to flower for such a long period of time. Quite a number of you also now are having a go at breeding some of your own plants either from purchased seed or allowing your own to self pollinate and in some case now even dabbling with paint brush. All of

you must have a fair old interest in plants to have become members of this society. This then is one of the main reasons for our society for each to learn off one another for always there are those who have access to information that others do not, or however small may have learnt from their own growing methods something that can be shared with other members. My own thirst for knowledge of Streptocarpus is never-ending and the more I go on the more I realise I have yet only skimmed the surface of the intimate world of Streptocarpus both as a species and the growing and breeding of hybrids. One of my long-term resolutions is growing at least two different Specie Streptocarpus each year to try to familiarise myself with as many species as possible. Difficult yes of course it is, because so many require differing growing conditions to our usual hybrids, some take longer to grow and flower. They all are fascinating to grow and each new one is a challenge and what is life without that challenge. Our seed fund carries quite a number of species now and Sue Long would be very pleased to hear from you should you decide to have a go. Whatever methods of growing you use enjoy your growing in the coming new season and if at all possible bring along a plant or two and enter our own show which thanks to all you members was such a huge success last year. If you have never entered people will be on hand to help you so please make your mind up to come along. Incidentally and most important the new date for this show is now the 19<sup>th</sup> July.

Ken Jones  
Chairman

## *The Growing of Streptocarpus Hybrids*

### *By Ken Jones*

Where in 2002 – 2003 does one start is the first question I ask myself? Well I really have to go back to my first years of growing Streptocarpus, for at that time not so many varieties were so readily available. As I have said many times in the past although being very intrigued by the beauty of the flower, I was a showman flower grower so therefore required plants that not only looked and flowered well but could also compete with other species on the show bench. So this article is going to be in different categories starting with larger show types first.

Earlier varieties I used to win with were **Sarah**, **Helen**, **Paula** and **Tina** and I believe these are still available, though I no longer grow them, all had a good strong habit and good upright stems making a fine head of bloom over the top of the plant. The one exception was **Tina**, which is a plant of shorter habit, but a good well-grown plant of this will smother itself in blooms and offer a contrast to the more upright growers.

Later years saw me change some of my favourites to other show types, which I am going to review now. Some have been out a few years now others are still relatively new. **Susan**, a Dibley's release in 1995, still a wonderful variety and one of the best show varieties I've grown wonderful clean foliage a strong and easy grower and oh! Those glorious red blooms with a marvellous yellow throat, put it on the show bench in all its glory especially if you can position it near or underneath a light shining down onto it, picking up the bright colour and no judge worth his salt could fail to be impressed! **Elsie**, another Dibley's release in 1995, growth habit again similar to **Susan**. A fine velvety purple with a couple of yellow throat marks it almost grows itself puts up a wonderful head of blooms on tall straight stems. Easily still the best in this range of colour. **Ruby** again Dibley's 1995 hailed as the best red even when it first came out quality and show wise it still holds its own with anything else. Again a good easy strong grower that puts up a good head of blooms possibly spreads the head out a little more than the first two mentioned but this is not a bad thing.

Coming to two smaller flowered types again both were Dibley's releases from the 90's. **Falling Stars** and **Gloria**, the latter being a pale pink colour sport from **Falling Stars**. For all their small flowers both of

these can make a big strong robust show plant and can carry approximately 22 flowers per stem so that on a good quality plant you may have several hundred blooms out at any one time. Easy growers both of these but on a good show plant you may need to use plenty of high potash feed otherwise stems can bow over with the weight of the blooms.

Now on to several varieties, which are a few years younger, and then on to really, new ones that fit the bill for show work. First and foremost in these is one raised by Chris rose a well-known amateur breeder and member of our society and I'm sure a lot of you are familiar with his name. **Ruby Anniversary**, a real good looker this and a firm favourite with me from the day I first saw it. Propagates very readily, it's a very easy grower in pink and ruby patterned blends, tremendously strong stems and maintains a good head of flower from beginning to end of season I really cannot fault this one, it will grace any table show or otherwise.

**Hannah Ellis**, another of Chris Roses, again a real beauty grows well from mid season onwards smaller flowered but again smothers itself all over with ruby coloured blooms with bright yellow in the throat, another favourite of mine and a show plant at 10 – 12 months old, really has a lot going for it.

**Elegance**, a **Franken** release of 2 years now, another beautiful upright grower plenty of tall straight stems with a good head of long-lasting flowers, again it's a very easy grower. Its wonderful pastel colours of pale mauve on the upper two lobes deepening into patterned markings on the lower three lobes with a touch of yellow in the mainly white throat make it a very elegant foil for some of the other bright colours in multipot classes, at the same time it can hold its own singly.

**Vera**, I make no excuses for including this one for its one of the first I ever named and raised so maybe beauty is in the eye of the beholder. A good quality plant of this is still capable of winning classes at shows, a medium sized flower 7 – 9 flowers per stem and making a slightly bulbous type head of bloom. Its bright mauve blue colour deeper on lower lobes and veined throughout with yellow in lower 2/3rds of throat, again also useful in multipot classes.

**Ella Mae**, a real find by our own Secretary Frank Davies, a colour sport from a blue seedling of Chris Roses this one. The pink flowers first appeared in Frank's greenhouse about 3 years ago this entire colour came on

## *The Growing of Streptocarpus Hybrids (continued)*

one leaf so it was a case of using that leaf for propagation and hoping that the sport came true. Not many cuttings appeared and so it was a case of potting on and waiting a few months for the appearance of the first blooms. In due course they did appear and lo and behold they were indeed pink. No overtures for the plants at this stage, the cuttings were obviously not taken at our normal time of propagation and plants were a bit mediocre compared to our others, so although it was a colour sport, at that time it was just another *Streptocarpus* and we did not take to much notice of it. Keeping just enough stock the following year it was propagated at our normal time. Oh boy! Come flowering time did we see a difference? Plants were stronger plenty of stems and plenty of flowers. The flower is quite large a beautiful clear pink very yellow at the front of the throat extending well out onto the petal with deeper raspberry coloured lines which are sharply defined. A very beautiful plant indeed, Frank propagated more for this year and some were released to society members. I myself grew about 12 plants some being sold off at earlier shows but two that I kept and potted on into 5 ½ inch pots, had for 3 months an average of 20 stems with 220 blooms on at any one time. To me that's a plant and a half all this was at the hottest part of our summer. This one is a real find; the stems do not grow too tall and tend to be all the same height. Its only fault is blooms tend to overlap so you may have to manipulate them carefully away from one another, or if you are a showman insert a small split cane and soft or garden string around a stem or two to pull them apart slightly, these ties can be removed after a few days.

***Texas Sunrise***, raised by Frank Davies from seed sent by Dale Martens in America. Dale crossed my ***Kerry's Gold*** with an American raising called ***Georgette*** and sent us seed over. The result is a wonderful clean looking plant with large trumpet shaped blooms of a light orange textured colour and pale yellow throat slightly blotched lines of a deeper rose colour also in the throat. A well-grown plant of this stands out really well a good one for multipot classes because of the difference

in colour. Its probable biggest fault rests with the grower it does need very careful watering if you grow this one pay a little more attention when watering and err on the dry side if at all in doubt!

These are just some of the many varieties out there that are suitable for the show world you may well have your own. You may have noticed I have not mentioned a white variety for instance, well really good whites are difficult to breed and to my knowledge the only two worthwhile whites are ***Maasens White*** and ***Albatross***. ***Maasens White*** quite an old variety now is probably the easier one to grow for show work and will produce quite a good head of rather tall flowers. ***Albatross*** on the other hand is rather a slow grower and being a tetraploid has quite coarse thick leaves it does eventually make a head and its greatest asset is the flower, which is a very pristine white that virtually glistens. A good one in a class for a group of plants.

If you want a good flower showing white you cannot do better than grow ***White Wings*** this one can stand out in a crowd with its two upper white then lightly patterned pastel blue veining on lower petals well spaced flowers always give it a pleasing appearance. If memory serves me correctly I think this one is the very first one Frank Davies raised.

To be continued...



## *Letters from Members*

*(with comments from Ken Jones)*

### **Sandra Rimmer 638**

My very first streptocarpus came from a friend's mother, I had just gone for a quick visit and when I saw the wonderful display of plants I was instantly hooked, I had to have one. She gave me a leaf cutting to have a try with, I had such enjoyment potting up and making more plants, I had to find more, I saw an item on gardeners world, which said there was a Sandra, I had to have one so off to the local garden centre to enquire about streptocarpus, as they did not stock them they gave me the address of Dibleys, who I telephoned and they sent me a catalogue, I ordered about four different ones including Sandra, but not long after I discovered that Barton Grange stocked them, so my friend took me to Barton Grange where I bought even more, by this time my only north facing windowsill was full. The joy and excitement I have had from small beginnings has never gone, so much so that I now have over 50 plants, with seed still in the germination process, (this is a new side not explored before). I have a great husband who has kindly put up shelving for all my wonderful plants, it is truly amazing how many shelves can be put into a small space for such lovely plants and so colourful, all my visitors admire the wonderful show of colour.

I have had some minor hic-ups along the way, like a persistent white fly infestation, only on one plant, but it is so persistent. Over watering was another annoying thing. Last winter I had a lot of plants rot off, a sort of mildew appeared then the plants just seemed to rot, can anyone help. Because the room is unheated, I have great fun over wintering my plants, I have them all over the house, bedroom, living rooms, even on the stairs and landing, fortunately most do survive. I am hoping to have heating installed before next winter, so no more moving rooms.

I have only been growing streptocarpus for three years, and now that I have discovered the British strep Society, I look forward to reading the newsletters, and trying lots of your hints and tips.

*Well you certainly are well and truly hooked, once you have the bug there's no turning*

*back a nice light airy room, very nice. Your minor hic-ups are not too distressing but I have to tell you that I doubt very much that your problem is whitefly. They do not feed on Streptocarpus. If you have plants like Geraniums or Fuchsias close by and get **whitefly** on these it is possible they may rest on Streptocarpus but as you say it only occurred on one plant I believe you have had **Greenfly**. It is easy to distinguish between the two. You probably found it on the stems, white with wings appearing to stand out from the body and not moving when touched. These then would be dead skins shed from **Greenfly**. **Whitefly** when at rest are like a miniature moth with the wings flat to the body and also fly up when disturbed. Any of the modern insecticides will kill off your problem here. We all lose the odd plant from watering now and again but your problem of mildew and rotting maybe twofold. If you have had **Greenfly** which has been unnoticed it maybe the excreta of honeydew from these has fallen onto the centre of the plant this will turn into black sooty mould and then create a rotting off process. Alternatively you could be watering too much during winter and the dormant period. Certainly do not give much water when plants are not in flower and during cold spells*

*Ken.*



**Some of Sandra's plants**

## *Letters from Members*

*(with comments from Ken Jones)*

### **My introduction to streptocarpus. Mrs. Margaret Bourne 394**

About 25 years ago, did not foretell at all well for the future. My mother-in-law presented me, on several occasions, with plants she had grown from leaf cuttings, with absolutely no problems. My problem was that they promptly died and mother-in-law took it as a personal affront and the supply dried up. Obviously streptocarpus and I were definitely not meant to be.

Twenty-odd years passed without our paths crossing again until my husband and I were walking through Cloud Forest in the hills above Pilgrims Rest near Graskop in South Africa. It was a new area to us, not having seen Cloud Forest before and the warm humid atmosphere supported a range of animals and vegetation unique to the environment. It was also on the settlers rout as they made for the gold mines of Pilgrims Rest over a century ago, as some of their abandoned wagons on the trail through the forest bore witness.

The forest covered deep ravines with streams and waterfalls and the trees and undergrowth was a lush green. Narrow, sometimes steep and wet paths wound through the trees, it was along one of these trails that we came to a tree with branches leaning low over the path ahead of us. It supported a deep carpet of damp moss and leaf litter in which grew an abundance of blue streptocarpus in full flower. Not just a few plants but a thick blanket of medium sized plants with masses of seedlings, it was a stunning sight and the memory of it sticks vividly in my mind. I have no idea what the variety was but it could have been *Gardenii*, which is a forest dwelling epiphyte with blue/violet flowers and thrives in the damp shady conditions that we saw. It jogged my interest in the plants and I resolved to see if the seed catalogues I already had from South Africa contained that of streptocarpus species.

*What a wonderful way of being reintroduced to the world of Streptocarpus. To see species growing in the wild up there in Cloud Forest conditions a real plant hunters dream. Indeed the species may have been **Gardenii**.*

My interest was increased when we called at an exotics nursery on the way home from staying with friends near London. For sale was an amazing plant. One large leaf about 6 inches wide and about 18 inches long and stems supporting a mass of pale blue flowers, unfortunately at an amazing price, and definitely not to be risked with my past record. Perhaps I could be more successful from seed, which would not be so financially risky. When the

catalogues arrived one offered nearly 20 species of Streptocarpus seed so I sent for four of the large single leaf varieties. Following instructions in the society leaflet picked up at the RHS Tatton show two years ago, on how to grow from seed etc, I now have sixteen small plants that I hope will start a collection of species.

*Margaret you grow a range of plants in your conservatory and although it may not be growing to the "book" your system of giving them "Monsoon" conditions obviously works for you. I think I understand why, conservatories are notorious places in summer for really getting far too hot (usually not enough roof ventilation) therefore the drenching with hosepipe would create some air movement and also humidity. No bad thing in the height of summer. I know also that your plants are kept down in the shade so less chance of sunburn on damp leaves.*

Over the past two years I have collected the usual large flowered hybrids, and am amazed at the vigour of these plants and the rate at which they turn from a small two leaf seedling into a mass of leaves and flowers over 2 inches across. There is nothing delicate or demure about these plants, as they demand regular repotting to keep up with them. I am sure I don't treat them as the books say but I try to recreate the conditions seen in that cloud forest and something seems to be going right. I have found that the conservatory, my mini Eden Project suits them better than the greenhouse. I have semi-tropical bananas, heliconia; brugmansia, passiflora, orchids etc to provide the shade, clivia and streptocarpus provide the ground cover. In summer they get a thorough drenching with the hosepipe about once a week, more often, up to every day when the weather is hot. These monsoon conditions seem to suit them very well as most are less than two years old and are in 8,10 and 12-inch pots. This is where the situation gets a bit desperate: what do I do now? Keep them growing, use them for propagating or can they be divided? Some advice would be greatly appreciated.

### **Margaret Bourne 394.**

*I spoke to Margaret on the phone and it seems that the reason her plants are so large (8, 10 and 12 inch pots) is because she mixes her compost with really well composted horse manure. Again something I would not really recommend for Streptocarpus but she is quite happy with the results so why should I knock it. I do think that you will see a gradual decline of your larger plants as they get older and I would rather propagate new leaf cuttings than split old plants up. You also mention young plants of "Monocarpic" species grown from seed. You will have to*

## Letters from Members (with comments from Ken Jones)

*be careful while growing on of your drenching method. Although having one very large leaf they have a very delicate fine root. So not too much water at any one time or you will lose them.*

Ken

### Beginners Luck

My interest in streps started when I purchased one for a friend who had been ill and each time I visited her there seemed to be more flowers on the plant. I then bought one for myself, but when I moved back to Northern Ireland from Essex four years ago, all my plants were given away as my belongings were going into storage for a time. When I got settled I bought a plant at my local garden centre and it did quite well, so I decided to get some more, and then more!!

Then I discovered the strep society and Dibleys... So it was in September 2001 I discovered that Midnight Flame had set seed with any assistance from me at all! (I had tried the sable brush method but I was not successful.)

So on the 14<sup>th</sup> of January 2002 I decided to have a go and just opened the brown paper envelope, couldn't see what had happened to the dust, but hoped some had fallen on the compost. Placed it in my heated box with the control switched to the halfway mark (please don't ask me what temperature) I left it alone except for wiping away condensation every day.

Well the magic seemed to happen and they germinated but they grew slowly and then seemed to stop. I e-mailed Frank who was most helpful, he told me they would take about 6 to 8 weeks before they looked as if they were growing, as I had no idea what to transplant them into once they had decided to grow on. So again, Frank came to my rescue with the advice to pot them out into seed trays, five across and ten deep, which I did. I experimented and transplanted two lots into plastic seed trays and two more into those nice insulated food trays you get in the supermarket, but put lots of holes in the bottom of them. The insulated trays really grew away so much faster than the plastic trays. I had also added a great deal of sand to the mixture and I felt that this helped a lot too.

At this point I read in the newsletter that Ken Canning had had a disaster with his plants so I rang Ken and gave him two of the boxes of seedlings to experiment with. Ken is 100 miles north of me in Northern Ireland so things don't grow quite so quickly there.

I left the seedlings in the seed trays until the roots were coming out of the bottom. Then moved them on

into small pots and suddenly they took off. So much so that in August I had 10 in flower and now in October I have over 50 in flower and doing very well indeed, mostly in 2.1/2in (7cm) pots only. There are some very frilly edged ones and one particular one has three colours, a deep red throat, a band of white and pink speckled outer quarter of a very frilly petal. There is also just one white one come into flower as well. Frank tells me that they may not stay true to the present form growth wise, but it is such fun seeing what they all look like; I simply can't bear to throw any of them away!! I hope to be able to raise funds for the Red Cross with the surplus plants come the spring. (Oh by the way, all this has necessitated the addition of a second greenhouse!)

So for me beginners luck has been good, I hope it works as well next year. So do give it a go, it's such fun and you never know what results you might get... I have managed to save seed from another five plants, so hopefully??? 2003.

Can I say what a great debt to the folk who got together to form our society, I know how much hard work and effort is involved in such an undertaking-thank you to all the team.

Good luck and happy growing in the new strep season to come.

**Mary Tyrie,**  
**Bangor, Northern Ireland.**  
[mrtric@beeb.net](mailto:mrtric@beeb.net)

*Ken's comment,*

*Well-done Mary with your seedlings and helping out our friend and fellow member Ken Canning. You really did well with your seeds; so many members seem to have problems with this part of growing. Midnight Flame does set seed quite well it maybe self-pollinated or maybe a bee did a bit of cross-pollinating for you. This is a wonderful side of growing plants they may not all set the world on fire but when you have raised them yourself it's a wonderful achievement. As for your spare plants going to a very worthwhile charity we do have a number of members who do this and I think those chosen charities are very grateful for the effort. Keep up the good work Mary.*

**Hello Frank.**

**October 17-02.**

I have been conscious for weeks that I have not been reporting on the state of the mini plants you sent over for test. The reminder in the latest newsletter prompted me.

All three plants M2, M4 and M19 have been doing extremely well and have grown on many leaves, all of which are I think smaller in comparison to the normal streptocarpus plant but very abundant. Flower wise; they have been wonderful, full of flower all summer and only



## Letters from Members (with comments from Ken Jones)

recently beginning to lesson. M19 has now finish flowering M4 is just about finished but M2 is still flowering but a lot less and I think it will soon be over. All three have been much admired by those who have seen them especially M2 the light mauvey pink, and I have noticed particularly by the ladies. I have taken cuttings of each and am awaiting new plantlets.

I put a "Kerry's Gold" into the Norfolk and Norwich Horticultural Society early autumn show in the single plant class and was very pleased when it achieved first prize. (Having started judging this year I would have been very disappointed had it not even though I might be biased of course!) Also a photo has appeared of it on the front cover of the latest N & N Journal, I thought Ken and yourself would like to know that. Hopefully I should have good plants for next year.

I was pleased to see that the show in July was a resounding success. Many congratulations to all its well deserved. My only regret was that we were unable to get over as we had hoped.

Best regards to yourself and Mary.

**David King (155)**

**Hello Mary & Frank,**

Thanks for the lovely Christmas greeting. Hope you both had a nice time yourselves.

**Yippee!!!!!!** The seed has germinated thanks to all your help & tips. I now feel a complete 'Strep' person!!! I sowed in monthly batches and the pots sown end of Oct. now need pricking out. Wonderful!!

Hope you have a good growing 2003 and all health & happiness to you both.

Looking forward eagerly to the next newsletter.

Best wishes to you both,

**Ken.**



*Ken Canning's seedlings*

Ken Canning

[ken.canning@btpopenworld.com](mailto:ken.canning@btpopenworld.com)

**Dear Ken & Frank,**

Congratulations gentlemen! I am writing on behalf of Doreen and myself (Betty having already been quicker off the mark with her letter) to thank you for putting on such a splendid show at Brownhills. We were like children in a sweet shop! The plants were fantastic with so many varieties that we had never seen before we almost wanted one of everything.

Equally, it was great to meet such friendly, enthusiastic and helpful people who were so willing to share their expertise with we amateurs, we immediately felt as though we had been members of Streptocarpus Society for years!

Many thanks also to the catering department who seemed to work non-stop to keep everyone well nourished with home bakes, and one appreciates the time that went into their preparation too.

If you have a chance please pass our thanks to all those who worked behind the scenes to give us such a great day. Thanks again to both of you – you more than met the demands of everyone who wanted your time and attention!

Kind regards. Annabel.

**Annabel Thomas and Doreen Boden 588 /589.**

PS By the way Frank are you and Mary spoiling for another War of the Roses?

*I called them Yorkshire lasses oops, instead of Lancashire lasses! **SORRY** ladies*

*Frank.*

### **Swap Shop**

**Member No 518.**

**Mrs Pat Norton.**

**4 Bamford Close,**

**Dodworth,**

**Barnsley,**

**South Yorkshire.**

**S75 3SL.**

I am only a beginner and have nothing to swap as yet but would like some leaves if anyone can spare them for cuttings.

Thank you.

**Member No 02.**

**Mr. R P Kearle.**

**17 School Hill.**

**Ashcott.**

**Nr Bridgewater.**

**Somerset.**

**TA7 9PN.**

Anyone in or around Somerset interested in Streptocarpus, swaps plants or leaves please get in touch.

Secretary's quote from Mr. Kearle. He tells me that he is growing his plants in a mixture of 50% John Innes No 3 and 50% Westland multipurpose plus a small scoop of vermiculite and they are all growing and blooming well, feeding every other watering with Westland's feed all NPK 15.5.30.

## *Secretaries Report*

May I first of all thank all the helpers, all of you who have given time up to spend a day or more on the society stand not forgetting the helpers at our own show especially the kitchen. Thank you all very much. (Will you do it again this year please)? With this warm spell we have and seem to keep getting on and off during winter when it should be cold and mainly dry. Over the past two to three years I have found winter watering can be a problem in the greenhouse. I tend to wait until the plants wilt and then give a very small amount; if they have not picked up within 24 hrs I do it again still only a very small amount, about a tablespoon full to the ones that need it. You don't want them too wet in case it turns very cold again, you people who grow in the house don't have this problem because your plants are kept at a more constant temperature and you have to water more than in the greenhouse during winter. By the way always use tepid water; this is best all the year round not just in winter.

The society's year has been a very good one our bank balance is very good, this is owing to the sales of seed and leaflets at the shows we have attended, prize monies from the stand display has also been good. Our membership has also contributed to this as it now stands at 691 that's 93 up on the same time last year, considering we lost 190 at the renewal so during this year we have taken on board 283 new members. My thanks to Dale in Texas through her we now have quite a number in the USA and Canada. We wanted to set a credit card system for payment of fees for overseas members, but after consulting Barclaycard Visa and learnt of the cost, this bit was OK, then they told me what the rent of the machine would be per month, well, I thanked them very much put the phone down and !!!!! It was an arm and a leg, we would have lost about £1000.00 a year no I have not put too many 0's. Then Dale suggested could she collect it for us and send a cheque over twice a year or so. This is what has happened and we now have as I have said quite a few members from overseas. By the way if anyone wishes to join from Europe we will accept a euro cheque. Back in October I made a journey down to Surrey to see Anne and collect some species plants that she had kindly baby sat all through the summer, but had not got the room in the greenhouse to over winter them. They had come from a member not very far away from Anne who had passed away, he grew only species, his wife who I understand is not in very good health and knowing very little about streps asked Anne if she could help?

When I arrived and went into the house I could see why she would not be able to house them through the winter, the dining room table was full, and it was a table of good size, they were on the floor, bookshelf and anywhere Anne could get them. Quite a lot were duplicated so we went through them picking out the best ones of each for seed putting them into trays, then Anne pointed to another part of the room with a strawberry pot in view with two very large single leaf ones in it plus others on the other side as we found out when trying to move it, we did get it in the van and it travelled back quite well. The best one was a Dunnii in flower but so far it has not set any seed. The shows we attended this year were excellent except for BBC Gardeners World at the NEC, we ended up at the wrong end of the show, this meant that we did not get as many people pass by as we had done in past, all of the society's said the same, and I am led to believe that it will be the same this coming year. To date the society has not made its mind up on whether we attend in 2003, or go to Blenheim Palace the week after in stead, at this moment I am in favour of Blenheim it will give people in another area chance to meet us and see the stand. The other shows were a great success RHS Tatton Park was very good every day so I am told I did not attend Thursday or Friday, left it in the very good hands of Brian, who made an excellent job of it. The weekend after Tatton was our very own show and what a show that was, I hope we can equal it this coming July. There is a new date for OUR show its July 19 and not the 26 as first suggested, this is because RHS Tatton has been put back a week. The next one was Shrewsbury and this year the society's could enter a class with prize money, it was to be judged by Kim's friend Nigel Colburn during the first hour of the show, we had second, first was given to the Cactus Society who had an excellent display of books the plants weren't to bad either. Streptocarpus have very little literature as all of you are quite aware, after trying to find books at library/garden centres etc with very little luck if any. After Shrewsbury came Kings Heath gardeners weekend this again as is the form a very good show. The following week took Mary and myself down to Somerset, Mary's home county. Shepton Mallet is were the Amateur Gardening Magazine holds its show together with the National Dahlia Society's annual show, so the outcome was unpredictable. On the three days of the show we met quite a few members from this part of the country who came to the stand, also quite a lot of new ones as well. We will be going back this coming year if they will have us all being well. Just before we set off for Somerset I received a phone call from a lady member way down in Surrey, it went, Frank will you be at the Malvern Show? Reply well we hope to be, no frank will you be there as I would like your opinion on something, and it's a long way



## *Secretaries Report (continued)*

to come on a wasted journey, reply yes we will be there even if the stands not, see you at Malvern then. So after doing Shepton Mallet we get 11 days to prepare for our last show of the season Malvern Autumn Show. Show opens and after about half an hour I heard a voice, where's Frank please the voice on the phone from two weeks before, yes my dear how can I help you? Well I brought a few flowers for your opinion can we bring them in. Well Lesley's husband appeared with a large basket of flower heads all on stems, this meant you could count the number of flowers on each stem giving a good insight into what a full sized plant would look like. You want my opinion on this lot you must be joking; they are out of this world. How the hell have you bred all of these doubles? Well this went on for over an hour, and every one was worth putting on the stand. While this had been going on, Chris Rose had turned up he also had brought some flower heads but only single flowers these had been arranged in oasis at the front of the table on Chris's home made little stand. All of these again worthy of a place on any windowsill or in the greenhouse, I trust both of you will during the coming year name some if not all of these. You will find a print out of some of these plus one of streps at lunch, these are a members plants she had arranged for a meeting to show them off, and showing off is well worthy of them they are very well grown indeed, thank you Louisa from Devon. I am only sorry I could not get them to print a little better. Just had a thought must tell you, yes I did sow my seed yesterday 8 crosses I hope the results are better this coming year than the last season, but still if we could guarantee good results every time it would not worth the waiting. That's about it for this year, I hope you have by now cleaned all old leaves etc from your plants, it wont be long before its time to give that first feed (March) I have just received an E-mail from Ken Canning it reads: -Yippee!!!! The seed has germinated thanks to all your help and tips. I now feel a complete 'Strep' person!!! I sowed in monthly batches and the pots sown end of Oct now need pricking out. Wonderful!! (Ken you will need another greenhouse to house all those good luck) Try some seed send to Sue, if anyone has spare seed would you please send that to Sue for the seed fund I hope its not too late to wish all of you a happy new year and a very good growing season in 2003. **PLEASE DON'T FORGET THE SHOW SATURDAY JULY 19 FROM 7AM TO 15.30 (3.30pm) AT THE SAME PLACE THANK YOU ALL.** Frank. PS Any seed you have spare please send to Sue for the seed fund if you don't know what it is label it mixed, thanks.

**Frank**

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Many thanks  
Tom