



FEDERATION OF BRITISH BONSAI SOCIETIES
AND FRIENDS OF THE NATIONAL BONSAI COLLECTION

Joint meeting held at 10.30 am, Saturday, 5th July, 2025 at
"The Woodlands", New Hall Drive, Walmley, Sutton Coldfield, B76 1QX
Also held online

Minutes

1. In attendance. Peter Fielding, Malcolm Hughes, Kim Turton, Chris Durne, Nigel Wright, Barry Walker, Denise Baum-Pick.
2. Apologies. None
3. Minutes of the previous meeting were an accurate record of the meeting. MH and PF.
4. Matters arising. KT asked committee members who held property belonging to FoBBS to send him details in order for him to be able compile a comprehensive list of items.
5. Correspondence. MH has received notice from Companies House that they intend to change the current system of submitting accounts for the year 2026/27.
6. Bonsai SW report. NW. See appended report. PF thanked NW for producing such a successful show. NW reported that he was still receiving feedback and follow up requests from the event. NW concluded by agreeing to put on a show at the same venue in 2027.
7. Chelsea report and matters to take forward. CD. See appended report. PF thanked CD for his efforts in oversite of the FoBBS display at the show. Peter will contact the Bonsai Boys separately to thank them.

After a discussion about the different options for the show in 2026 it was agreed that CD will apply for space in 2026 and that he will approach the Bonsai Boys to see if they are willing to repeat their efforts on behalf of FoBBS. CD informed the meeting that if the Bonsai Boys were unable to produce a stand he thought it might be possible that members from the Twickenham society would replace them. It was felt that should Twickenham takeover it would be an opportunity to include trees from a wider area of the UK.

8. New Talent Competition 2025 report and matters to take forward. PW. See appended report. There was a discussion regarding the recording and publishing of a video of the event on social media. This was done in agreement by Scott Winnard. PF is to speak to Scott to ask his willingness to be co-opted and be responsible for FoBBS social media presence, and it was agreed that in future FoBBS should have sight of the video before it is published. NW to discuss practicalities with Scott with a view to going ahead with the arrangement.

NW raised the issue of definitions and thought that it was desirable that FoBBS should formalize the requirements of entry to the NTC and that competitors should acknowledge that they meet the requirements. KT to produce an outline document for discussion.

9. Reports.

i. Financial (FoBBS and FNBC)

FoBBS

£6639.73 in total including three cheques that have yet to be cashed. MH to follow up one of the transactions with Staverton BS.

MH reported that Chelsea cost £300 less than last year at £2107.46 and that as usual the prize money has yet to be received.

FNBC

No change to the funds held at £8539.43

ii. Companies House. As above

iii. Membership. No change.

iv. FNBC Working group, state of collection and open days 2025.

BW reported that the collection was looking good. A couple of long-term issues with the Junipers have stabilized and the root issue with the Yew has been reported to the staff.

KT informed the meeting that after the National Collection Open Days are proving as popular as ever with visitors. At the May event KT trained Brian Cooke so that he would be confident in leading the June open day. Brian and his team of helpers from MBS and Redditch held a very successful day and did a good job of the trees as PF was able to corroborate on his visit a few days later. BW to speak to Brian with a view to him joining the working group.

v. EBA & WBFF. No change.

10. OB.

MH nominated CD to be added to the FoBBS Role of Honour for his continued work in putting on the FoBBS stand at RHS Chelsea. Unanimous. NW and MH to look at the website to check that it shows everyone that has been awarded the honour.

11. Date and venue for the next meeting. 6th September.

Bonsai SW 2025 Report - NW

The venue of the second 'Bonsai South West' show at RHS Rosemoor once again lived up to its superb reputation, supported by the unassailable RHS staff – led by Sally Smith and Carrieann. Due thanks must be given to both for making our weekend so much easier.

Once the societies and traders were set up in the 'Garden Room' hall, it looked outstanding. It was most noticeable over the two-day show that a sense of well-being or sepulchre-like atmosphere seemed to pervade, with the 2,056 visitors, including many children, spoke in hushed tones. A remarkable sensation! This was in no small part due to the quality of the trees and their presentation.

There were just five traders who all did 'exceptionally well', catering to the steady yet continuous visitors purchasing from the great choice and diversity of their various offerings.

We had a demonstration most ably guided by Roy Hutchison and supported by Jon Hooper. On Saturday they set to work on a large Scot's pine, kindly loaned by David Cheshire who returned with it to Birmingham, looking rather good for its initial styling. All the wire and raffia were most generously donated by David Cheshire. Thank you.

The Sunday demonstration was confined to an extremely curious and difficult Yew tree. Some progress was made but clearly a long-term project for the owner. There was a constant, if revolving, audience in the demonstration area who were fascinated by the commentary of both Roy and Jon in answering their numerous questions.

The main thrust of the show was to highlight the skills and talents of the various bonsai clubs and societies in the south west, including south Wales. The show was eventually made up of eight such clubs and some individual trees. This came about due a series of cancellations through a spectacular range of medical conditions that afflicted some of the influential people in these clubs. I gather all are well and recovered now.

The clubs knew there was a competition being run for the best display of their trees. The prize was a beautiful wooden box made by Barry Walker. The judges, John Trott and David Cheshire took a huge amount of time in their consideration of each display. The result came to a draw! We only had one prize! The suggestion was to create a 'Best Tree in Show' who would receive Barry's box; this was won by Brian Mackichan for his exquisite Acer. The two judges and myself, all independently came to the same conclusion about the Acer. The two winning club displays being North Devon Bonsai Club and Somerset Bonsai Society each were awarded a tree provided by David and John. It must be said that the overall quality of the trees was extraordinary high – far better than the show FoBBS sponsored at Rosemoor two years ago!

My timeless thanks must go to all the folk who helped to put this show together. The FoBBS Committee for having the faith to let me loose on the unsuspecting public again; the support and guidance from the 'professionals' John Trott and David Cheshire; Hilly who virtually assembled and disassembled the backdrops and tables single-handedly and his good lady Kash our photographer.



Tree of the Show

Notes for the future:

- I started to work on the show about 6 months prior to the event, but quickly found many of the traders that I wished to invite had already committed to Toby Buckland's massive show at Powderham Castle in South Devon on the same weekend. In May there are many horticultural shows and other traders were preparing to go to those before or after our Rosemoor show. The results of this was that:
 - a. Having so few traders, they each did very well financially
 - b. The overall environment of the hall was supremely relaxed.
 - c. We had reduced income from the £35 per table
- I must book traders much earlier to compete against other conflicting events.
- The RHS publicity machine is excellent, even to the extent of handing out information fliers to all Rosemoor visitors from a month before our event. I did have fliers displayed in local supermarkets and some traditional shops in Barnstaple. What must happen next time is to make personal contact with local TV stations, local Radio and use social media far more effectively.
- I believe we made a loss of about £150, but all the invoices are not in yet. I believe this should be balanced against all the wonderful comments from the vast range of visitors that attended.

RHS Chelsea 2025 report - CD

Once again we were very pleased to be awarded a 12 point Gold Medal Award by the R.H.S. Judges in the Floral Marquee. The Bonsai Boys, led by Russ Wheeler, planned and delivered a high quality stand displaying some spectacular colour and a wide variety of tree species. The Azalea flower contrasted exceptionally well with the selected blue background and provided the wow factor needed at the Chelsea Flower Show.

The building of the stand proved an issue, as the R.H.S. had provided a bigger space allocation than requested, so the existing materials were adapted to fit the site. Previous background material was used to limit expenditure on the backcloth. Various members from the London region and affiliated Societies were involved in the set up and tree preparation for display.

Stand minders were also sourced from across the region. Bonsai material was selected from high quality growers in the Southern region and two trees selected from the Midlands. With thanks to Ray Beddows and Mark Bentley for excellently prepared Bonsai that created a lot of interest and questions from the public. Ten Bonsai growers were used in the 2025 exhibit.

The BBC did not include us in the coverage once again, but Monty Don did say about Affiliated R.H.S. Societies in front of the Driftwood Bonsai Exhibit!

As Chelsea is an international show we had many admirers for the display from across the World. We used some new banners on the stand to fly the F.O.B.B.S flag, plus the F.O.B.B.S. leaflets were given to those who were interested in finding out about joining a Society. Thank you to Nigel for supplying the leaflets.

As stated in the minutes, we will have to find another Society to head up a stand, if we wish to request a place in 2026. As there were only two Bonsai exhibits in the 2025 show, it would be a shame if we have to stand down. If any Committee members have suggestions I am happy to work with any Society in the planning.

Chris Durne June 2025

New Talent Competition 2025 report - PF

Firstly, I must thank The Midland Bonsai Society for inviting us to hold the FoBBS New Talent Competition (NTC) during their annual show at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens in June 2025.

We had three very competent competitors, David Fishwick and Mark Pittman, both members of Twickenham Bonsai Club and Ryan Forth from Akamatsu Bonsai in the North East.

They duly drew lots to select three out of four small Junipers. They then had from 11.00am until 2pm to work their magic. Forthcoming were three individual but well-presented young Bonsai.

Scott Winnard produced a very good video of the event for all to view on the FoBBS website, also one can see a very informative account of how Dr Malcolm Hughes, our very experienced judge came to his decisions.

The winner was Ryan Forth who received a Mahogany box decorated with a carved Oak Leaf made by Barry Walker. His winning tree earned Ryan an offer to represent Britain in the European Bonsai Association New Talent Final which this year will be held in Lithuania in October.