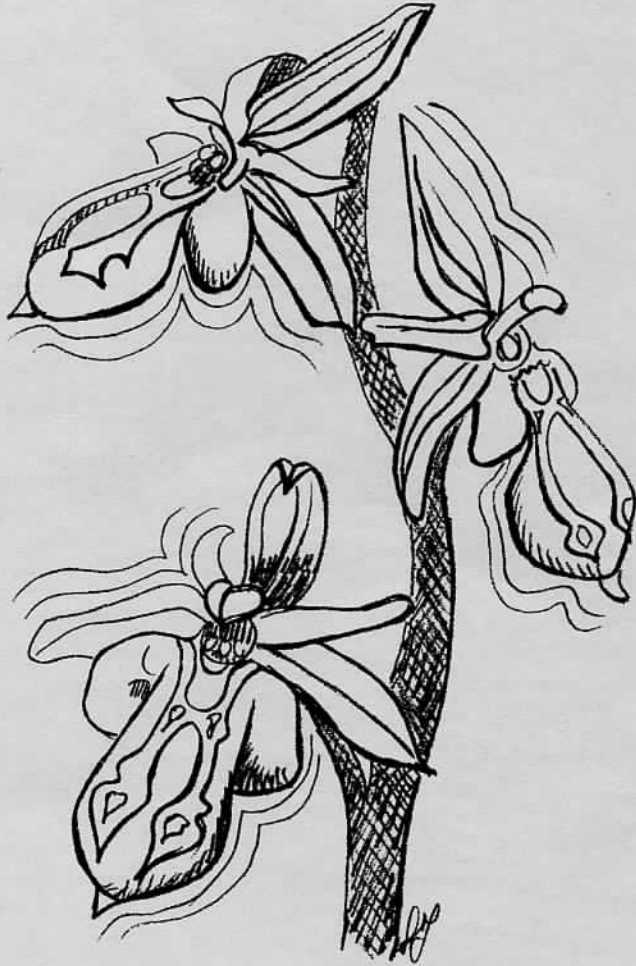


The Hardy Orchid Society Newsletter



No. 11 January 1999

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Front Cover: Ophrys cretica by Sylvia Temple

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REVIEW OF OCTOBER MEETING AT WELLESBOURNE

Carol Dash

Despite the rain and dreary autumn weather we had a very good meeting at the HRI at Wellesbourne. The turnout was excellent and the venue proved itself to be a successful alternative to Pershore. We enjoyed 4 very interesting speakers as well as lively plant sales and the chance to view the beautiful entries to the photographic exhibition - results of which appear below.

PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION 1998 - RESULTS

Tony Hughes

As Show Secretary, it is so gratifying to see a room full of fascinating photographs with crowds of people studying them, so thank you to all 14 competitors (3 more than last year!) who provided so much pleasure. It was an excellent show in fine surroundings, and the new classes for slides proved very popular - Paul's discussion of the entries was extremely helpful and encouraging. It is clear that we are moving rapidly into a digital age - did you realise that some of the prize winning enlargements were computer prints from digitally scanned slides? I know what I want for Christmas!

Next year could be even better - providing you all take plenty of pictures! We would also do well to follow the example of some competitors whose labels stating "what, where and when" were very helpful. Any more ideas?

Class 1, landscape, 6x4" prints (10 entries)
1st Carol Dash Dolomite meadow + Gym. conopsea
2nd Liz Copas Spanish meadow + O. morio (agg.)
3rd Colin Clay English meadow + O. morio
Class 2, Single Plant, 6x4" prints (13 entries)
1st Carol Dash Ceph. rubra in the Dordogne
2nd Simon Andrew Ceph. epipactoides
3rd Liz Copas Cyp. yunnanense
Class 3, Close-up, 6x4" prints (20 entries)
1st Simon Andrew Ophrys reinholdii
2nd Bill Temple Ophrys fusca
3rd Richard Manuel Ophrys lutea
Class 4, Landscape, 10x7" prints (9 entries)
1st Tony Hughes Val Casterino + Dact. sambucina
2nd Liz Copas Spring Meadows in Spain
3rd Simon Andrew Ophrys spruneri extravaganza
Class 5, Single Plant, 10x7" prints (13 entries)
1st Simon Andrew Serapias neglecta
2nd Colin Clay Ophrys speculum
3rd Nick Storer Gymnadenia conopsea
Class 6, Close-up, 10x7" print, (15 entries)
1st Bill Temple Orchis pauciflora
2nd Tony Hughes Orchis laxiflora x Serapias neglecta
3rd Simon Andrew Orchis italica x Aceras anthropophorum

Class 7, Landscape, 35mm slides (9 entries)

- 1st Tony Hughes Val Casterino + Dact. sambucina
2nd Liz Copas Orchis mascula in Long Wood
3rd Simon Andrew Alpine view and Coeloglossum viride

Class 8, Single plant, 35mm slides (10 entries)

- 1st Nick Storer Liparis lilifolia
2nd John Oxenford Comperia comperia
3rd Alan Blackman Ophrys catalaunica

Class 9, Close-up, 35mm slides (10 entries)

- 1st John Oxenford Barlia robertiana
2nd Liz Copas Cyp. margaritaceum
3rd Ronald Brown Disa sp.

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Summaries of the talks, by Carol Dash. Drawings also by Carol Dash unless otherwise stated

Cypripediums in China - or "Is there anything left to be said about Cypripediums?"

This talk by Peter Corkhill recounted his visit to Yunnan with the AGS during September. His main aim in taking the trip was to study habitat and growing conditions for Cypripediums in that area.

The first area the group visited were the Jade Dragon Mountains (Yulongshan). These are a mountainous area composed mostly of limestone. It is a common misconception to believe that the Cypripediums are everywhere in China when in fact they are only really found in the areas of limestone hills. Most of the group were keen to go high up in the mountains however most of the Cypripediums were to be found on the lower slopes and valleys. Even so the area was at a very high altitude (over 10,000ft) and therefore a period of acclimatisation was necessary before too much walking could be done. The first good area for Cypripediums was near Bai Shui (White Water). Here the trees are rooted into a limestone gravel. The soil was very poor and there was little ground cover. A layer of pine needles and moss covered the ground under the trees and the Cypripediums were growing in this. Cyp. flavum was found with very yellowed leaves. Its buds were approx 2" below the surface and covered in pine needles and moss. Other orchids in the woods at Bai Shui included Calanthe tricarinata and Calanthe delavayi. The latter is a very beautiful orchid when in flower, having a spike of pink pleione like flowers. Pleione bulbicodioides was also common on the rocks and boulders. It tended to have it's bulbs deeply buried by 1 to 2" in crevices in the rock surface.

Cyp. plectrochilum was easy to spot in the dappled shade, with it's glossy green leaves. Most of the flowers appeared to have set seed and Peter wondered if they could be self-pollinating.

The party made three visits to the second location which was the Gang Ho Ba or Dry Valley. The cliffs and screes held lots of alpinists whilst the floor of the valley and the lower wooded

slopes were rich in Cypripediums. The valley was difficult to get to and foggy conditions made exploration difficult. The limestone rubble on the valley floor was covered in areas by a close scrubby vegetation. Cyp. tibeticum was common where silt had been washed down at the lower end of the valley. Higher up were glacial moraines and rock slides with woodland up the valley sides. Areas where the rock slides broke up the woodland was found to be favoured by the orchids - Cyp. forestii was probably the rarest found. This orchid has only been recorded 3 times. Plants were found with spotted leaves and also ones with unspotted leaves. The Cyp. tibeticum seemed to favour the steep slopes and it was thought that the loose material was important in allowing seedling establishment. However some plants also grew in the short grass in relatively sunny positions, many underneath scrub presumably as defence against grazing animals. Cyp. flavum also seemed to favour the steep slopes of around 45°, particularly liking any changes in the angle such as where a track runs across the slope. These were always found under shade.

The third area visited was in the High Mountains. Here the Tibetan people are becoming very organised in their grazing and cultivation, particularly on the Zhongdian Plateau. Indeed most of the area was found to be heavily grazed with the exception of Euphorbia sp.. Spiranthes sinensis was found in the close cropped vegetation alongside many Primula sp.. The slopes have mostly been cleared of woodland and this had been replaced by thorny scrub such as Juniper and Cotoneaster. No Cypripediums remain in these areas. However where the trees had been spared (for nut production or prayer sites) the Cypripediums such as Cyp. flavum, guttatum and yunnanense could be found. As well as habitat destruction many plant species including Cypripediums are under threat from over collecting, either for Western collectors or for inclusion in Chinese herbal remedies.

The over-riding impression for preferred habitat for most Cyp. species was therefore a steep slope over limestone rock or rubble. The slope should be north facing or if not should be well shaded by trees. This is borne out by other Cypripedium colonies in other parts of the world. For example the Cyp. macranthos rebunense reserve in North Japan is a steep area of sea cliff which is very cold in winter and wet and muggy in summer. This area is strictly controlled for conservation of the remaining 2000 plants, with large perimeter fencing all around to keep the public to well defined paths. A pollination programme on this reserve has resulted in new seedlings appearing with plants taking approximately 5 years to flower from the time a seedling is first seen. The plants receive shelter from the short vegetation on the sloping site, thus resulting in a cool root run. The same sort of conditions can be seen in Switzerland and the Jura with colonies of Cyp. calceolus growing near to glacial rivers in humid and shaded sites.

ORCHIDS OF THE EASTERN USA

This talk by Roger Gelder, recounted a visit made by Roger to New England at the end of May - early June. This particular year the Spring was late in this area of the USA, indeed the daffodils were only just opening. This was despite the fact that the area visited was at latitude 45' i.e. approximately equating to the Mediterranean. The climate in this area is much colder than our own. Nevertheless orchids were to be found. On the Blue Hill Reservation some 5-7 miles south of Boston is an area of second generation forest. Cypripedium acaule with its pink lip were found growing under the trees in the leaf litter. Isotria sp. were also present, growing in colonies in the leaf litter. The main threat to this area is from habitat destruction for large housing plots.



Cypripedium acaule

Travelling westward into Vermont was very worthwhile orchid wise, with good habitats occurring alongside the old back roads with lightly shaded maple woodland growing at either side. Corallorhiza sp. were common in the damp mossy woodland floor. Other plants included trilliums, but many of the other orchids were not yet in flower.

Near to Amherst, west of Boston, is another reserve approx 10 miles east of the city. Cyp. acaule was again plentiful especially on the boulders covered by deep layers of pine needles. Corallorhiza trifida was again found in the area, as well as Isotria sp. and other plants such as Erythronium and Arisaemas. The tiny Calypso Orchid (Calypso bulbosa) was also found growing in an area of pine trees. Colonies of Cyp. pubescens were located growing by stream sides but only one plant was found in flower. The seedlings were obviously used to being covered in water during the winter/spring. Goodyera sp. were found in similar areas to the Cypripediums and formed large mats on the stream sides in the leaf litter.

The feeling was that the 1st week in June was better for orchids in this area. However the growing season is very compressed the further north one travels and so the species seen can change very quickly during a visit.

ORCHIDS OF TURKEY

In this talk Barry Chambers gave us a well illustrated overview of some of the 148 different species of orchid to be found in Turkey. Many of the species appeared to be widespread however many of the more unusual ones were confined to the East of the country. Barry recounted some of his adventures into this region which are definitely not for the fainthearted!!

Most of the visits were made at the end of April - Early May. Some of the most reliable sites for finding orchids are in cemeteries.

"SERAPIAS AND OTHER BASTARDS"

This talk by Tony Hughes was based on his visit to the Var region of SE France in Mid-May of 1998. This area is west of Nice and inland from St. Tropez. There is a large area of limestone cut into many deep gorges known as the Massif des Maures. A good area for orchids occurs around the small D75 road. This is a gently north sloping area which is slightly acidic. The road is however built on a base of limestone chippings which resulted in a lot of Ophrys sp. growing within 2 yards of the tarmac. To the side of the road are Cork oaks which produce a light woodland. Lots of Serapias sp. grow in the area. Serapias lingua had made prolific colonies with a wide range of flower colour. This species is identifiable by the presence of a single dark shiny "coffee bean" protrusion

at the base of the lip. If this protuberance is divided in two then it is not pure lingua. For example Serapias olbia looks externally very much like lingua with a rich mahogany colour but has a divided protuberance. In contrast S. vomeracea is taller with a longer "tongue" and the flowers spread sparsely up the spike. This tallness is passed onto the vomeracea x lingua hybrid.

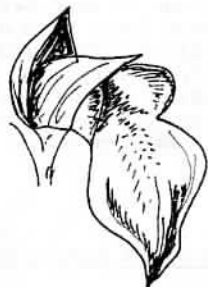


S.lingua

S. cordigera is a large robust plant with large heart shaped lips to its flowers. The flowers are clustered around the top of the plant. It nearly always has a very rich brown lip. Many of the plants found have characteristics from different species and really identifying the parents of these many hybrids is down to guesswork. S. neglecta has a lip size and shape similar to S. cordigera but the colour is very different and it is usually much earlier flowering. The two side lobes of the lip are well displayed out of the hood rather than being tucked inside.



S.cordigera with tucked in side lobes



S.neglecta with splayed out side lobes

Other orchids which frequently hybridise include Orchis laxiflora and Orchis morio. Also found in the south of France were O. militaris x O. purpurea. Dactylorhizas are also of course well known for their promiscuity.

To make a hybrid the plants must be in fairly close proximity and be in flower at the same time. They must also be visited by the same insect if cross pollination is to occur. Once pollinated there is of course no certainty of fertilisation. However it seems logical that plants with similar numbers of

chromosomes could match up well to form hybrids. Since Richard Bateman's suggestions for rearranging the orchid genera (see Newsletters 5 and 10) many of the previous hybrids which were thought to be between different genera are actually intrageneric, for example Gymnadenia conopsea x Nigritella nigra. Many hybrids can be spotted in a group of their parents by their size, as they are often more robust than either of their parents (hybrid vigour). Often they are not fertile either and may or may not produce pollen.

AGM - SUNDAY 9th MAY 1999

Carol Dash

A reminder that the AGM will take place at Pershore & Hindlip College, Pershore on the above date. Further details of the programme will appear in the next newsletter.

If you have any matters which you would like discussed at the AGM you are required to write to the Secretary of the Society Mr Richard Manuel (address on inside cover).

Also - several members of the committee are due to leave their posts at the AGM. Thus there will be vacancies needing to be filled! Anyone who would be interested in helping to run/organise the Society's events and activities - no matter how small a contribution - would always be welcome. If you feel you would like to participate in some way please contact the Secretary.

At the Autumn meeting the subject of Fieldtrips was raised. Anyone who is willing to organise and lead a trip (which includes contacting the necessary land owners for permission) please contact either Carol Dash or Norman Heywood. We would like to be able to offer several trips next spring and would like information for the April Newsletter (i.e. preferably by mid February).

Also discussed was the possibility of members filling in recording sheets for local or favourite sites. Norman suggested that the information could be collected by members for use by researchers or county records, and that over the years could provide a very useful and interesting base for assessing orchid populations. This was felt to be an excellent idea and a very positive step for the Society. It is therefore hoped that recording sheets and further information will become available next spring.

Finally I would like to put in a further plea for articles for the Newsletter. I would like to thank all members who have contributed so far. However I would urge you all to put pen to paper (or finger to button) and write something that you think the rest of us would enjoy reading about - whether it is an orchid holiday review, successes and failures in cultivation or something about you local reserve - as long as it is Hardy Orchid related. We have so many new members, joining recently, I am sure they have masses of experiences and information to share.

CONSERVATION PROJECT NEWS

Bill Temple

Last Autumn a number of White Helleborines were moved from a location where they were threatened by proposed housing development, to local Nature Reserves. Some plants were taken by the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew and by members of the Society in the hope that it would be possible to isolate fungi from their roots (without killing the plant) which would then assist in the germination of White Helleborine seed. The interest in such a fungus is because the White Helleborine is closely related to the Red Helleborine which is very rare in Britain. The hope is that a fungus capable of assisting in the germination of White Helleborine seed would also assist in germinating Red Helleborine seed.

The Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew and members of the HOS have reported 100% successful translocation (although a few plants have been dormant this year). The Nature Reserves appear to have had considerably less success, although it is possible that a high proportion of their plants became dormant. Hartstock appears to have fared very badly with only a few percent visible above ground and Warburg has had better luck. It is possible that the long unseasonable drought at the time of translocation may have either killed, or rendered them dormant. The ability of some orchids to enter dormancy means that we will never know exactly how many of them translocated successfully, it is however enough to make similar projects worthwhile in the future.

ENGLISH NATURE SPECIES RECOVERY PROJECT - LADY'S SLIPPER ORCHID

Alan Dash, Conservation Officer

1998 The January HOS Newsletter sent out the challenge to members to grow on British Cypripedium calceolus seedlings reared by RBG Kew. In return, the project expects the return of cultural information, that no commercial gain may be sought from the seedlings and that two thirds of the plants raised be made available for reintroduction after a few years.

42 people received seedlings. I would be grateful if all those taking part would send me information on their culture techniques and experiences throughout the year - either on the form sent out or on a separate piece of paper. These comments (whether success or failure) should prove valuable in seeking the best way to establish these seedlings strongly for reintroduction.

1999 Unfortunately it looks unlikely that there will be enough seedlings raised at Kew for there to be surplus in this coming year. Advanced notice, however, is that germination does appear to be good from 1998 seed. If HOS members are able to provide useful information on the 1998 distributed plants, another distribution in 1999 is probable.

FAVOURITE ORCHIDS

LATE SPIDERS

Richard Manuel

Ophrys, the genus which includes the familiar Bee Orchid Ophrys apifera, is easily the largest orchid genus in Europe and includes such a bewildering array of eye-catching forms that it is difficult to pick out a favourite. I have at least 100 favourite species in this genus! I've settled on the Late Spider Orchid complex not because it shares its initials with the London Symphony Orchestra, but because it is extremely widespread throughout Europe, has some of the largest and most colourful flowers, and has enough local variations to give a taxonomist the heebiejeebes.

In Britain the Late Spider Orchid has been variously known as Ophrys fuciflora, Op. holoserica (sometimes holosericea) and Op. arachnites. Whatever you call it, it has a super flower with a large squarish velvety brown lip produced at its 'shoulders' into more or less prominent horns which are not normally divided off as side lobes, unlike the more familiar Bee Orchid Op. apifera. There is a variable pattern of pale rings and lines in the basal half of the lip, usually suggesting an H shape, which encloses the small bluish speculum between itself and the reddish brown basal field. The petals are usually quite small, triangular and insignificant, but the sepals are large, usually held erect, not reflexed out of sight as in some species including the Bee Orchid, and typically a rich pink colour which frames the richly patterned lip beautifully.

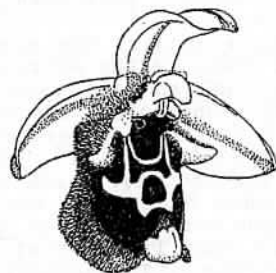
In this country the species is a rare plant confined to the chalk downs in the extreme SE of Kent, notably in the vicinity of Wye NNR and the region around the entrance to the Channel Tunnel - one colony was even moved to allow the trains through. I find it sad that virtually all the plants I have seen in this area showed signs of a parental, if not grand-parental, liaison with Bee Orchids, which occur on or near all the sites. At one site much excitement was caused because someone decided that the LSOs were more like Op. scolopax, a continental species. It is far more likely that these were hybrids involving Bee and Late Spiders. The nearest colonies of true scolopax are several hundred miles away in the middle of France and seem unlikely to have had any involvement with our plants.

Further afield in Europe, the Late Spider complex includes some wonderful forms, be they varieties, sub-species, full species or whatever. These can be found in a broad swathe starting in Kent and northern France (where the typical variety is more common than Op. apifera) and extending as far as Cyprus and Israel in the east (where it is represented by Op. levantina and Op. bornmuelleri). It also takes in all of the peninsula of Italy and the major islands of Corsica, Sardinia

and Sicily, much of Greece and the Aegaeen islands. The various local forms have all, of course, been given their own names, sometimes several times over, but at heart they are all Late Spiders and easily recognised as such. Sadly the Iberian peninsula and the Balearics appear to miss out on this lovely orchid, the few records that have been claimed are thought to be misidentifications of other species.

One group within the complex, from the east of the above area, has been separated off by Delforge on the basis that the fringe of dense short hairs encircling the lip is incomplete in fuciflora and its brothers, whereas it forms a complete fringe in the Op. bornmuelleri group. Whether such fine distinctions are meaningful depends on your own view of what constitutes a species, but this character seems to me to be spurious anyway. For instance, two entities that occur in Sicily, Op. oxyrrhynchos and Op. candida, are supposed to belong to the fuciflora and bornmuelleri groups respectively. Yet I cannot, for the life of me, make out any more of a beard in candida than in oxyrrhynchos. Also if you swapped the pink sepals of the former for the green sepals of the latter, you could have problems telling which is which. These are but two of the many fine forms found in the Italian south and islands. There are plenty of others but as Paul Harcourt-Davies has written about these in earlier newsletters (Nos.1 and 2) I shall say no more about them here.

Perhaps the finest of all the Late Spider forms is the orchid formerly known as Ophrys fuciflora var maxima, which most continental orchidists now call Op. episcopalis. This has one of the largest lips in the group, typically a lighter, often more golden, brown compared with its northern relatives. At its best this can make large plants well over 50cm tall, with up to 15 flowers. This splendid species/variety/form is quite frequently found in Crete and Rhodes but doesn't get as far as Cyprus. In the Aegean most islands have a population of late spider types and every spring a new batch of names is added to the literature when Delforge returns from his spring holidays!



Ophrys episcopalis (R.M.)

In cultivation, this is one of the easiest species to grow, and when happy the plants frequently make more than one tuber per year. I use a very open compost mix along the lines of Cribb & Bailes standard compost but include even more grit and a couple of parts of sharp sand as well. The northern form (typical fuciflora) hardly pauses between going dormant in summer and

starting new growth in the autumn, but it should be given a short dry period once the leaves have started to wither after flowering. Flowering times vary from late March for the Cypriot, April in most of the rest of the Med., becoming later as you go north so that British plants typically flower around mid June, fractionally before most Bee orchids.

Wherever you go orchiding in southern Europe in the spring, or central Europe a bit later, you are likely to come across one of the most stunning of all our orchids, so keep your eyes open.

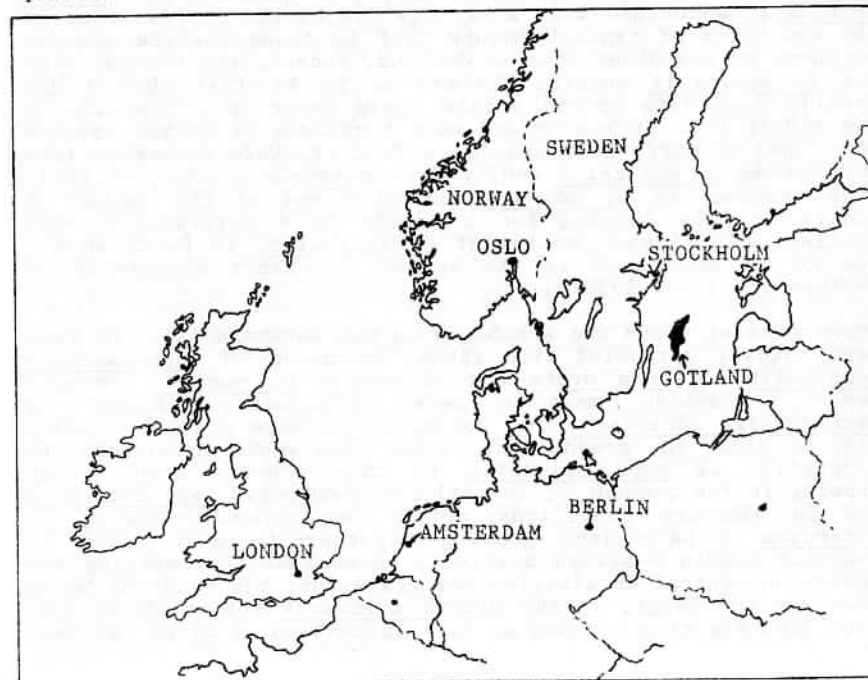
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A VISIT TO GOTLAND - 30 May to 4 June 1998

John Haggart

This year's early summer orchid trip was to the Swedish Island of Gotland. Gotland is a slab of Silurian rock, largely limestone, which rose from the floor of the Baltic Sea as the Ice Age glaciers retreated north.

A broad spindle-shaped island, about 40 x 120 km, Gotland is renowned as Sweden's finest natural orchid habitat and possible the best place for wild orchids in the whole of northern Europe, both in terms of sheer orchid numbers and in variety of species.



Line map to show Gotland - adapted by Carol Dash from Michelin European Road Atlas.

We arrived from Oskarshamn on the Swedish mainland on a rather chilly May 30th. The capital, Visby, is a delightful mediaeval town in a wonderful state of preservation with intact town walls, a cathedral and the eerie remains of many ransacked churches. The natural history museum is centrally situated and well worth a visit quite apart from being an essential stop to pick up a copy of their publication "Orchids of Gotland", available in English and offering descriptions and sites of most of the island's 36 orchid species.

Of particular interest to British travellers is the abundance of species that are so rare at home. One of the most memorable sights of Gotland in late May and early June, however, is the Orchis mascula. Known in Sweden as Saint Peter's keys (Sankt Pers nycklar), it can be seen everywhere. Its sheer abundance is overwhelming and in many places it exists in a myriad of colour forms from white through to the most familiar deep purple. Unlike the British Early Purple orchid, the plants on Gotland usually have unspotted leaves and the flowers tend to be rather "shaggier" in form, with an appearance tending towards the central and eastern European type signifera.

Visits to the wonderful nature reserves of Brucebo and Haftingsklint on the west coast north of Visby produced little in the way of orchid finds other than the ubiquitous O. mascula. At Haftingsklint I was hoping to find the rare Orchis spitzelii, an orchid with a strange disjointed distribution in the mountains of central Europe that is found nowhere else in northern Europe other than on Gotland. Indeed, the nearest site for O. spitzelii outside Gotland is in Austria! When I did finally find this orchid several days later on a roadside in the middle part of the island near Norrlanda it became obvious why I had hitherto been unable to find it. Unfortunately, from a distance O. spitzelii really does resemble a poor, slightly drab specimen of O. mascula and in a sea of the latter it really is like looking for a needle in a haystack! I only realised that I was looking at O. spitzelii, in fact, when I was 20 cm away from it! No wonder it wasn't discovered on Gotland until the 1930's!

Open coastal woods and scrubland on the northern islet of Faro were thickly sprinkled with robust specimens of Cephalanthera longifolia, Listera ovata and of course O. mascula. Several marshy, roadside meadows here contained specimens of Dactylorhiza incarnata. Two colour forms were evident growing side by side. The predominant darker form would undoubtedly be identified as ssp. pulchella in this country even though growing in the company of typical flesh coloured ssp. incarnata and in alkaline conditions. These two colour forms of D. incarnata I have seen growing together in many sites in southern Sweden - always distinct, never seemingly merging and always on neutral or alkaline wet grassland. The roadside banks here sported large, fleshy Orchis militaris spikes whose buds were just starting to open as June approached. A large fen near

the village of Faro is the most northerly site in the world for Orchis palustris, "a marsh orchid that isn't a Dactylorhiza"! Sadly we were a good three weeks too early to see it. D. incarnata ssp. cruenta was found here with its deep crimson-purple flowers and leaves spotted heavily on both surfaces. The Swedish name of "blood keys" seems particularly appropriate for this plant.

Moving south again to the area around Hejnum hallar, the ancient meadows near Laxare were rich in orchids. Orchis morio, O. militaris, Gymnadenia conopsea and Platanthera bifolia were common. A short drive away from Laxare, near the Kallgatburg reserve, a fifteen minute walk took us to the largest wild colony of Cypripedium calceolus that I have ever seen. Hundreds of plants growing in open shade around the base of pine trees in marshy grassland provided the best photo opportunity of the trip! This is one of Gotland's best known colonies of Lady's Slipper orchid (known as Guckusko or "cuckoo's shoe" in Swedish) and the reserve's visitor's book revealed that only two days earlier the flowers had been closed buds. On June 2nd the blooms were open!

Whilst the Kallgatburg visit was undoubtedly the highlight of the trip, later finds also included Cephalanthera species, longifolia and rubra although sadly we were far too early to see the Red helleborine in flower! Neottia nidus-avis and Ophrys insectifera I have never seen so frequently as on Gotland. The Fly Orchid occurs surprisingly far north considering that it is a member of the predominantly Mediterranean genus Ophrys. I have found it growing near the Arctic Circle in Scandinavia. A few late stragglers of Dactylorhiza sambucina (known in both its colour forms (Adam and Eve in Swedish) were found near the beach at Hammars. D. sambucina is one of several otherwise alpine orchids that grows at sea level (apparently always close to the sea as well) in Sweden.

The marsh at Muskmyr on the southern tip of Gotland proved to be yet another haven for marsh orchids. The Scandinavian form of Dactylorhiza traunsteineri, (ssp. curvifolia a form with usually spotted leaves), grows here but later in the year. Dactylorhiza incarnata ssp. ochroleuca ("Wax-keys" in Swedish but lacking a common English name) was abundant here. Although most so-called subspecies of early marsh orchid at least resemble D. incarnata ssp. incarnata in flower shape, ssp. ochroleuca really does seem to be a different animal all together. Its waxy yellow flowers are large with broader, less erect lateral sepals and a broader lip than the other subspecies of D. incarnata with which it grows. I never found any intermediate forms of early marsh orchid. Even here where the flesh and fuschia pink colour forms grow in abundance together with ssp. cruenta and ssp. ochroleuca, the forms are always to my eyes completely distinct and easily identifiable. Perhaps the splitters are right and these should all be different species?

Where next year, I wonder?

ORCHID HUNTING IN FLORIDA DURING JANUARY AND FEBRUARY

Mike Parsons

I am known as a snow bird as I visit Florida each year normally during January and February. I usually stay between 2 and 6 weeks trying to capture the Sunshine State's beautiful weather. I travel with my wife, mother and father-in-law and sometimes a few friends. I am an orchidophile, and have visited many sites in Britain and Europe, and have travelled as far as Turkey and Israel in the East and the Canary Islands in the West.

As I know that Florida has over 120 species of orchid I thought that finding them would be a doddle - how wrong I was! The climate at this time of year is similar to spring in southern Europe, where it is quite easy to find many species of orchid at one site, but this it seems is not the case in Florida. I soon found out that there are very few species that flower at this time of year and the ones that do flower are, it appears, fairly rare. Of course, there are a few epiphytes that do flower at this time of the year, and a few that flower during the whole year but as they are far up in the trees it is hard for the inexperienced eye to decipher the genus from the leaves, especially when the orchid is not in flower. So where does one start? First of all it is not easy to look along roadsides, as it is very difficult to park, mainly due to the Florida roadside restrictions. However, there is one orchid that seems to be ubiquitous and is easily found January. This orchid is Zeuxine strateumatica, also known as the Lawn Orchid, which apparently originated in Asia and seems to be spreading rapidly. I first found the Lawn Orchid at Universal Studios and photographed it, to the disgust of my children who thought I was showing them up! Later I found it in my own lawn of my garden, sorry back yard! I have since seen it everywhere. The orchid looks a little like Spiranthes, with the brownish colouring similar to the european Orchis collina.

On my second visit to Florida I managed to find Habenaria odontopetala (a tall green orchid) growing in a wood just outside Orchid World, which has many tropical orchids. Once I knew what it looked like I found it in several places, e.g. Lake Dorr, Gemini Recreation Site and Merritt Island. I realised the reason that I was finding the orchid now was that I had arrived during a cold spell and the orchid was still in bloom during January and February. I understand the best time for flowering is in December.

The third year I visited Florida was during March and I saw one Spiranthes praecox at Corkscrew Bird Reserve and Spiranthes vernalis in the Everglades. I found many other orchid leaves, e.g. Eulophia alta, Polystachya flavescens and Encyclia cochleata, but unfortunately none in flower. There could have been many others but I was not experienced enough to put a name to them.

On my fourth visit I visited many State Parks, but I found that there were very few rangers that knew anything about the

plants. It seems that most of the rangers are employed for security rather than their knowledge of the wild life. On visiting Corkscrew Bird Reserve, I at last found somebody who knew a little about orchids, who told me that there was only one species in bloom, that being Ponthieva racemosa, but I was then told that I could not visit the area as there was no one available to escort me. I said that was no problem if they gave me directions but I was then informed that I was not allowed to go because of the pygmy rattlesnakes in the area, and they did not want to lose any customers!! Fortunately they told me a good site for Burrowing Owls nearby which compensated for the lack of orchids.

On my fourth visit to Florida, however, I did manage to find Ponthieva racemosa, also known as Shadow Witch, with its unusual raceme, and also Corallorhiza wisteriana, a yellowish/purple coralroot orchid, in Highlands State Park.

My fifth year of visiting was by far the best. I joined the North American Native Orchid Alliance and got in touch with Paul Martin Brown and Stan Folsom, who were staying in Florida at the same time as myself. We arranged to visit Highlands together, and we saw more of the orchids mentioned previously. We were mainly looking for Centrogenium setaceum (Spurred Neottia) but had no luck. Paul pointed out several epiphytes in the trees - Epidendrum conopseum (green-fly orchis), Encyclia tampensis (Florida Butterfly orchid) which I then realised I had seen in Mykka State Park and Kissimmee State Park. Paul also pointed out Campylocentrum porrectum (Leafless Harrisella) on an orange tree exactly in the same place as Luer described in his book. Unfortunately none of these species were in flower. However, we did find a good site on the way to Highlands in a spot where a small housing estate was meant to be built, but thank goodness, had not and in the ditches were lots of Habenaria repens (Water Spider Orchid) in flower. This species apparently flowers during the whole year and seems to be more of an aquatic orchid.

Since that day, on Paul's advice, I visited another good site near Belleview, for Corallorhiza wisteriana, where there could be over a thousand plants. If mosquitos are the pollinator to this orchid then no wonder that this orchid was abundant! I then found Beadlea cranchoides in Alexander Springs State Park but only in bud, and Mesadenus polyanthus near Floral City in Citrus County. Both these species had previously been listed under Spiranthes, and the latter orchid (which was in flower) looked like a cross between Spiranthes and Coralroot. I was very pleased to find this orchid, especially as the first plant I found was in prime condition and had over 50 florets. In the book it was described as only having 10 to 40 florets, which was more or less correct with the rest of the colony, which was several yards from my prime flower. The only other orchid found was Listera australis which I found in the city limits of Gainesville. This orchid was just as difficult to find as Listera cordata, especially as it was hiding amongst a colony of ferns. This orchid was just as pretty and I was fortunate to have a green and purple orchid next to one another.

It looks as though, if orchid hunting is to progress in the early months of the year, then I must visit the Fatahatchee Swamp. Although over 30 species can be seen in a day, the area could well be under water and walking could involve wading from boot level up to waist depth. Of course, that is not the only problem - tangled undergrowth, snakes, sleeping alligators and mosquitos as well as the risk of getting disorientated have all to be taken into account!! Let's see what the next visit brings!

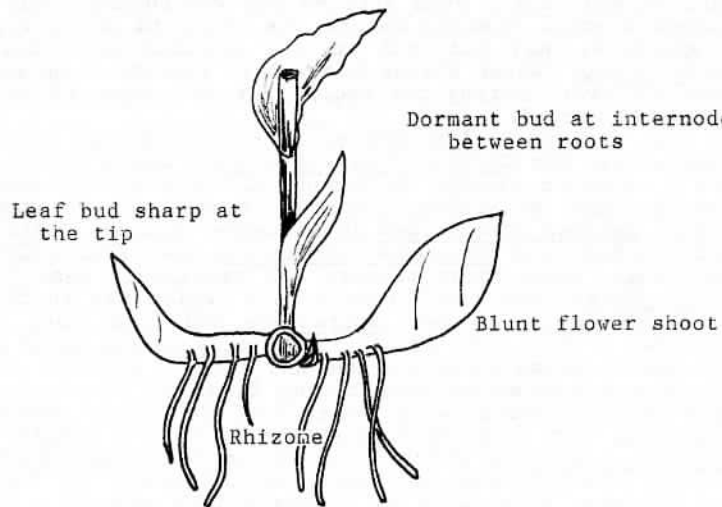
Literature:

The Native Orchids Of Florida - Carlyle A Luer
 North American Native Orchid Journals

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DIVISION OF ESTABLISHED CYPRIPEDIUMS

This short article is based on the end of Peter Corkhill's lecture given at Wellesbourne. He showed the diagrams based on advise given to him by Japanese growers. It may be of interest to anyone buying in plants this winter or indeed in dividing established plants. It should be noted that these are only suggestions and not hard and fast rules! Smaller divisions may grow perfectly well but larger ones are safer if you get the choice!!

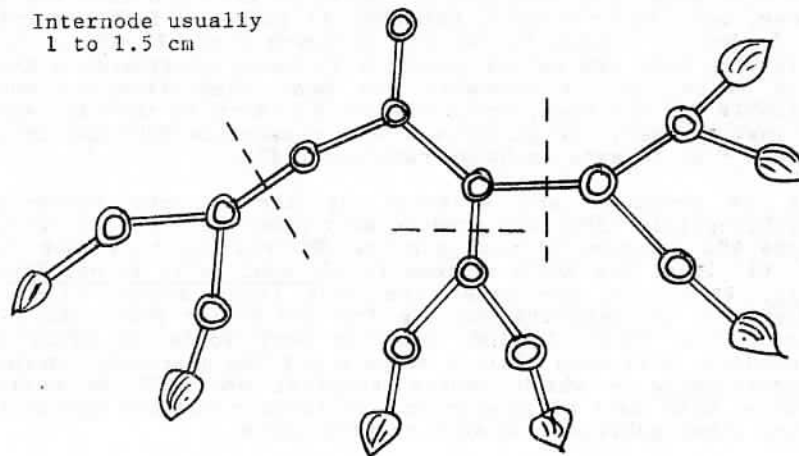
Division should be carried out when the plant is resting which is any time between autumn and spring.



Identification of parts of the plant

The rhizome should be separated into partitions which have 5 nodes. Each cut end should be treated with a germicide product. Preferably each division should possess 4 or 5 shoots.

Internode usually
 1 to 1.5 cm



Diagrammatic view of rhizome division

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BOOK REVIEW - "Les Orchidees de France, Belgique et Luxembourg"

Richard Manuel

A copy of this book aroused much interest at the October HOS meeting, so here is a brief review and details of how to get it. First of all, it has no nominated author but a Directeur Scientifique, Marcel Bournerias, the whole thing being a compilation from many contributors. It is perhaps the most complete book on orchids of this area, which, by extension, covers most of the British species as well, lacking only the plethora of northern *Dactylorhiza* species and one or two odds and ends. It is a must for those who regularly travel to or through France for orchidaceous holidays.

Its meticulous descriptive section has numerous "crunchy" colour photos; distribution maps, by department, for each of the 148 species and subspecies included; as well as a very thorough and clearly presented text. In addition there are chapters on classification, orchids through history,

distribution and habitats (again with some excellent illustrations), orchid morphology and reproduction, and conservation, with better coverage of these subjects than in any other similar book that I know.

The down side, for some people, would be that the book is, of course, written in French, but that is rather a feeble excuse not to buy it - what better way to learn French? Whilst its satisfying bulk and weight preclude it being considered a true field guide, it is probably the best identification book available for the area; certainly one to carry in the car. And, for what you get, the price is a very reasonable 300F including postage - at today's exchange rate about £30.

It is produced and marketed by the Societe Francaise d'Orchidophilie (SFO) who produce many other very useful orchid guides and atlases. If you join the SFO you get this book for 20F (£2) less. The SFO's address is 17, quai de la Seine, 75019 Paris, where you can order the book (they accept Visa or Mastercard) or join the Societe for 230 F per year plus 80F joining fee. (N.B. I find them not very toute de suite in responding, s'il vous plait.) Members get the quarterly journal L'Orchidophile - which covers tropical as well as native orchids, with lots of good colour pictures - and the option of buying other publications at a reduced price.

LETTERS

From Mark Rowland

25 August 1998

Have other members enjoyed a better than normal season with their orchids?

I have maintained a small collection of mediterranean orchids, mainly *Ophrys* spp., for many years, enjoying a modest increase some years and suffering the occasional loss after a dull winter. Last season, however yielded an unprecedented harvest. *Ophrys levantina* (*O. bornmuelleri grandiflora*) returned 7 tubers from 4 planted, *O. mammosa* 10 from 4. *O. bornmuelleri* was also prolific. Even *O. speculum*, which I find temperamental, produced several small tubers around the neck of the most vigorous plants. It would be useful to know how others have fared, to indicate whether the season was kind, or my technique in some way improved.

From Dennis Weimer

4 November 1998

Shortly after the Society was up and running there was talk of a name change, but clearly the consensus of those involved in the discussions decided against changing the name of the Society at that time.

As the Society grows in size and status I feel that this subject is worthy of further discussion, particularly in view of the rapid growth in membership, which some might feel inhibits a name change, even at this time.

My criticism of the name is with the word "hardy" because its interpretation can lead to mis-representation of the objects of our interest. Furthermore, the noticeable scientific interest of the Society requires a more precise name.

Hardiness does not seem to truly reflect the characteristics of our orchid family, since survival in their natural habitat is often only achieved by rather narrowly defined parameters with respect to the site soil conditions, temperature and degree of wetness. This conflicts with the general definition of hardy as robust and ability to withstand outdoor conditions in general.

I believe that the words "temperate" and "terrestrial" instead of "hardy", would reflect and define more precisely the objectives of the Society and should be incorporated in the name.

I hope my letter will provoke some correspondence, if members think the subject is sufficiently important to them.

Sent in by Christopher Toogood:

Express & Star, Thursday, June 18, 1998

Black day for orchids

Workmen tidying up a roundabout mowed down 5,000 rare orchids on a roadside nature reserve.

The workmen for the Highways Agency were told to trim back the edges of the roundabout near Ipswich, Suffolk, to improve visibility for drivers.

But they mowed down all the bright-pink pyramidal orchids on the Beacon Hill interchange, along with a range of other wild flowers.

Wildlife expert Peter Lawson said the workmen had now turned a roadside wildlife reserve into an ordinary urban roundabout. "The orchids were in

full flower and at their most beautiful when they were all cut down," he said.

"They were a fantastic sight this year and many motorists used to drive around the roundabout several times just to look at them. I am extremely disappointed and saddened that this display has been effectively killed off."

The species *Anacamptis pyramidalis* was a common sight in the countryside before the intensification of agriculture.

The roundabout was built in 1975 on a meadow where the orchids had grown undisturbed for hundreds of years.

All contributions (preferably typed) for the newsletter should be sent to the Newsletter secretary at the address printed at the front of the newsletter by the 1st of the month prior to the publication month. The newsletter is published quarterly in January, April, July and October.

Any drawings or illustrations for the newsletter would also be appreciated - though we have not yet progressed to colour I am afraid so line drawings are most applicable. Please note that articles and letters may be shortened for publication and that views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of the Hardy Orchid Society.

Back copies of the Newsletter can be purchased from the Newsletter secretary for £2.50 per issue or £8.00 for 4 issues, cheques should be made payable to the Hardy Orchid Society.

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Please send a cheque (made payable to the Hardy Orchid Society) with the advert to the Newsletter secretary indicating the size and format required.

Orchids of Cyprus

by Gisela & Karlheinz Morschek

This book is a pocket sized bilingual book of 189 pages with 108 colour illustrations, recently published in Germany. It received a very favourable review in the September/October 1997 edition of The Orchid Review. Opposite a photograph of each orchid is a German text alongside an English translation. There is also a full bilingual introduction to the island's geology, soil conditions and orchid habitats. The book (14.8 x 21cm) has "a photograph of every orchid known to grow on the island" and in nearly every case these occupy a full page.

Copies of the book can be obtained from the translator Mr D. Mahen, 23 Gores Lane, Freshfield, Formby, Merseyside, L37 3NT Tel. 01704 873962. The price is £13.99 + £1.50 p&p. This will be of use to anyone hoping to visit the island in Spring 1999.



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