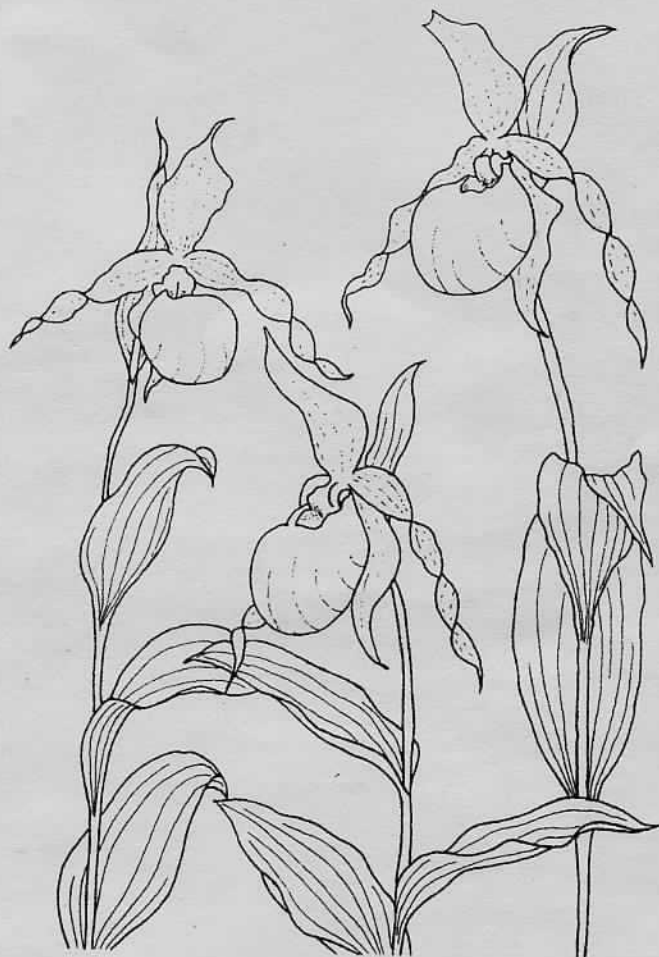


The Hardy Orchid Society *Newsletter*



No. 12 April 1999

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Cover Picture: Cypripedium calceolus by Sarah Marks

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

President: Paul Harcourt Davies, Westbrook, Factory Road, Llanblethian, Cowbridge, Vale of Glamorgan. CF71 7JD. (1)

Chairman: Adrian Blundell 30 Crowmere Road, Shrewsbury, Shropshire.SY2 5HX (1)

Vice-Chairman: Trevor Marks, 83 Ladysmith, East Gomeldon, Salisbury, Wilts, SP4 6LE (2)

Secretary: Richard Manuel, 45 Thorncliffe Road, Oxford, OX2 7BA (3 retires at this AGM)

Treasurer: Mrs Christine Cook, 15 Weald Rise, Tilehurst, Reading, Berks, RG30 6XB (3 - to continue under 'Committee Discretion' as per rule 12)

Membership secretary: Norman Heywood, New Gate Farm, Scotchey Lane, Stour Provost, Gillingham, Dorset. SP85LT (1)

Show secretary: Tony Hughes, 8 Birchwood Road, Leigh Sinton, Malvern, WR14 1LD (2)

Assistant show secretary: Mrs Kath Dryden, Berries, 30 Sheering Lower Road, Sawbridgeworth, Herts, CM21 9LF

Newsletter secretary: Mrs Carol Dash, Lower Lakes, Suckley Knowle, Whitbourne, Worcs. WR6 5RH (3 -retires at this AGM)

Conservation officer: Alan Dash, address as newsletter secretary (3 - to continue under 'Committee Discretion' as per rule 12)

Ordinary member: (publicity officer) Carl Hardwick, 62 Victoria Road, Bradmore, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV3 7EU (3)

Ordinary member:(Newsletter distribution) Bill Temple, Primrose Cottage, Hanney Road, Steventon, Oxon, OX13 6AP (2)

Co-opted member: Moira Tarrant, Bumbys, Fox Road, Marshbury, Chelmsford, Essex. CM1 4TJ.

Co-opted member: (BOC Representative) Richard Nicol, 1364 Evesham Road, Astwood Bank, Redditch, Worcs. B96 6BD

The numbers in brackets after each Committee member refer to the number of years the person has held the position concerned.

MAY MEETING AND AGM

Richard Manuel

The seventh Annual General Meeting and Spring Show will take place at Pershore and Hindlip College, Pershore, on Sunday May 9th 1999, starting at 9.00am (AGM starts at 10.45am). Details of the meeting are as usual: attendance is free but all refreshments must be paid for at cost: lunch plus morning and afternoon tea or coffee will cost £10.00 and must be paid for in advance, see the tear off form in the centre of the newsletter. If anyone requires a copy of the Show Schedule please send a s.a.e with your meeting form (the amendments to the schedule were published with Newsletter No. 6 October 1997). Tea and coffee can be purchased over the counter separately, if required. If you intend to come but wish to make other arrangements for lunch I would be grateful if you would let me know anyway.

Nominations are invited for officers and committee posts. We have some valiant volunteers, but with a couple of honourable exceptions, they are all the same old faces, recycled from other posts. If the Society is to continue to thrive, we need new blood on the committee. One idea is that volunteers could 'shadow' a post for a year before taking it over. Current officers are as shown on the inside cover of the newsletter. According to the present rules (Rule 12), no member can hold a post for more than 3 years. A third ordinary member is allowable under Rule 11. Also it has been proposed that the post of Meetings Secretary be introduced (allowable under Rule 10) but no candidate has yet emerged. All nominations for the committee should be received by the Hon. Secretary a minimum of 14 days prior to the Annual General Meeting, with the names of a proposer, a seconder, and of course the consent of the nominee! In the event of no nominations for an office being received nominations shall be accepted from the floor.

PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME FOR 9th MAY 1999

9.00 am Doors open. Coffee/Tea available 9.15 - 10.15. Sales Tables and Spring Show in upstairs room. Lots of informal chat.

10.45 am Annual General Meeting

12.00 noon approx Orchids of Northern England,
by Steven Davidson

1.00 - 2.00 pm Lunch

2.10 pm Orchid memories of Wales and Northwest England
by Simon Andrew

2.45 pm Seminar Basic Orchid Growing

Two Short Talks:

- Winter/Spring growing species (Orchis, Ophrys, Serapias etc)
- Spring/Summer growing species (Dactylorhiza and others)

followed by a free-for-all general questions/remarks/discussion session.

4.00 pm Tea/Coffee and more informal chat

5.00 pm End of Meeting

As usual, sales tables will be available to anyone who has lots of plants (or anything else) at a flat rate of £10.00 per table. There will also be a 'Society Table' on which any member can place one or more plants for sale, on the basis of 10% of proceeds to the Society. Please make sure that such plants are clearly labelled with species name, your name and price.

It's Show Time Again!

Tony Hughes

As usual, the Spring Meeting at Pershore is the time and place for our Annual Show. Last year we had an excellent display, but this year could be even better. The Schedule, which is much simpler than originally, was distributed with the October 1997 Newsletter (for a spare copy send a sae to Richard Manuel with your meeting form and cheque). You don't need to worry about pot sizes any more - if you can carry it, we can accommodate it! There is no need to enter in advance - just bring your plants along on the day. The Show room will be available from just after 9.00am. We will clear the hall for judging at 10.30 am, so please allow plenty of time before then to stage your entries. Finally, we ask that plants are left on the show bench until the end of the meeting, so that everyone has plenty of time to appreciate them.

Alongside the Show we will again have a non-competitive Exhibition of anything orchid-related you care to bring along. It all adds to the interest of the day, and I am sure most people can think of one or two items that might amuse, entertain or educate the rest of us - please don't be modest!

FIELDTRIPS

Three Fieldtrips have so far been arranged for this summer.

1) TANGLED ROOTS, COMMON ANCESTORS and ATTENTION SEEKERS

Bill Temple

Am I thinking of a famous family, have I finally lost my marbles, or have I done too many crosswords before organising

an orchid spotting tour. (Answers to this question will only be accepted if written on a £5 note!!)

The numbers are limited to 18, the meeting place will be near Henley on Thames on Saturday 22nd May. Departure from the meeting place will be 10.00am, if anyone fails to arrive by then they can join the party at the Warburg reserve where we stop to eat our sandwiches. There are numerically limited facilities at Warburg. (NB the Society's Helleborine transplanting project involved planting several plants on this reserve).

The charge of £4.50 for the trip includes £1 donations for photography at two reserves and a contribution for the non-members car parking charge at Warburg. Maps showing the meeting place and Warburg will be sent to those who are allocated places, after I have received cheques.

In order to reduce costs I would prefer bookings by E mail, which include the name of the nearest town or distance from Henley.

E mails to bill@wtemple.force9.co.uk (cheque made payable to "The Hardy Orchid Society" to follow in 7 days, if a place is allocated).

Written applications to Bill Temple, Primrose Cottage, Hanney Road, Steventon, Oxfordshire OX13 6AP. Please apply without sending a cheque, but with an evening telephone number so that I can contact you to say either "send a cheque please" or "sorry".

If I am swamped with applications I will use the date of receipt and furthest distance to be travelled in order to allocate places. If this happens I will run a repeat trip next year, and send invitations to those who are unlucky this year, before opening the trip to others.

2) Box Hill, Surrey

Norman Heywood

This fieldtrip is on Saturday the 12th June 1999 on the orchids and butterflies of Box Hill, in Surrey, between Leatherhead and Dorking. This all day fieldtrip has been organised by the British Orchid Council, Species Group. We have been offered 20 places on this trip so places are limited on a first come first served basis. The walk in the morning will be led by a local orchid and a local butterfly specialist. You will need to take your own food for a picnic lunch. In the afternoon there will be talks at the Juniper Field Centre, adjacent to Box Hill, on the orchids and butterflies, followed by a talk on orchid cultivation (Norman Heywood). The exact time and place of meeting will be given to those requesting places, nearer the time however it is expected to start around 9.30 am and run until late afternoon. The anticipated cost is £5.00 per person. Money will be collected at the AGM please see Norman Heywood.

3) DORSET

Norman Heywood

This trip is on Saturday the 31st July 1999 at 9.30am. This is a Helleborine field trip based mainly in Dorset. The plan is to meet at New Gate Farm, Scotchey Lane, Stour Provost, Gillingham, Grid Reference 816224, just off the A30, 3.4 miles West of Shaftesbury in Dorset. This trip is again limited to 20 people. The 20 will be consolidated into 5 cars before leaving the farmyard and will then be led by Martin Jenkinson on a meandering tour. It is anticipated that, besides seeing a number of Helleborine species, there should be several of our larger woodland butterflies to see e.g the White Admiral, and the Silver Washed Fritillary. You will need to bring a picnic lunch and drink. The day will end with a Bar-B-Que at New Gate Farm and there will be a charge of £4.00 per person to cover this.

Suitable footwear and waterproofs should be taken in case of bad weather.

If you wish to attend either the Box Hill and/or the Dorset trips please complete the tear off strips found in the centre of the newsletter and return to Norman Heywood, New Gate Farm, Scotchey Lane Stour Provost, Gillingham Dorset, SP8 5LT.

AUTUMN MEETING

A provisional date has been set for 30th October 1999 at the HRI Wellesbourne. We have ordered better weather (and food!) Remember that there is a Photographic Competition at the Autumn meeting so don't forget to take plenty of pictures this year!

NB the committee is considering the possibility of having separate classes for computer generated prints. This was a point raised by several members after the 1998 Photographic Competition. We'll let you know!

SEED AND FUNGUS BANK

Please don't forget to collect seed for the Society Bank this year. Much less seed was donated last season. If our rising membership is to get access to a wide range of seed it is vital for those with adequate plants in their collections to set and collect surplus seed for the distribution. Please note the new collector and distributor of the Seed and Fungus is :

Mr Ted Weeks,
74 Over Lane
Almondsbury
Bristol
BS32 4BT

ENGLISH NATURE SPECIES RECOVERY PROJECT - Kew Distributions of surplus Cyp. calceolus seedlings.

Alan Dash

As mentioned in the last newsletter there are NO surplus seedlings available for distribution to members this year. Thankyou to the 8 members who have returned information on the seedlings they grew last year. On-going news would also be valuable if possible. Please could the remaining members who did receive seedlings let me know results of their culture/growth. Obviously it would be useful to know that the seedlings are beginning to grow (or not) this spring.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

The annual subscription is due for payment at the time of the AGM. The committee has discussed and agreed that it would help everyone to make this payment by Standing Order. This will prevent your membership from lapsing!

The appropriate form has been enclosed with this newsletter for you to set up with your bank. A copy is shown on the next page. The information you require is as follows:

1. Our Bank is the MIDLAND BANK
2. The Branch title is WELLS
3. The Sorting Code Number is 40.46.06
4. Beneficiary's Name, THE HARDY ORCHID SOCIETY
5. Account Number 21185527
6. Quoting Reference - this is your membership number, it is on the label on the envelope that your newsletter has arrived in, it has four figures and two letters. The first figure is the year you last paid your subscription, the next three numbers are between 001 and 999, and form part of your unique number. The first letter indicates the part of the world you live in, and the second your type of membership, either S-single, or F-family. The current rate for each of these is Single - £6.00, and Family - £8.00
7. Date of first payment, 1st May 1999
8. Due date and frequency 1st May ANNUALLY
9. THE REMAINDER OF THE FORM IS IN YOUR HANDS. PLEASE COMPLETE THE FORM AND SEND IT TO YOUR BANK.

STANDING ORDER MANDATE

To _____ Bank

Postal Address _____

Please pay _____

for the credit of _____

the sum of _____

commencing _____

Bank	Branch Title (not address)	Sorting Code Number
MIDLAND BANK Plc	WELLS BRANCH	40-46-06
Beneficiary's Name	Account Number	Quoting Reference
HARDY ORCHID SOCIETY	21185527	9148KF
Amount	Amount in words	
£ 8.00	EIGHT POUNDS	
Date of first payment	and thereafter every	Due date and frequency
1st MAY 1999		1st MAY ANNUALLY
	until further notice in writing or	Date of last payment
		—
end debit my/our account accordingly		

PLEASE CANCEL ALL PREVIOUS STANDING ORDER/DIRECT DEBIT MANDATES IN FAVOUR OF	UNDER REFERENCE NUMBER	Account to be debited	Account Number

Special instructions _____

Signature(s) _____ Date _____

Banks may decline to accept instructions to charge Standing Orders to certain types of account other than Current Accounts

- NOTE: The Bank will not undertake to
- a) make any reference to Value Added Tax or pay a stated sum plus V.A.T., or other indeterminate element.
 - b) advise remitter's address to beneficiary.
 - c) advise beneficiary of inability to pay.
 - d) request beneficiary's banker to advise beneficiary of receipt.
 - e) accept instructions to pay as soon after the specified date as there are funds to meet the payment, if funds not available on the specified date.

Payments may take 3 working days or more to reach the beneficiary's account. Your branch can give further details.

1584-1 (8/95 - UOI = 1 x ph100)

SURVEYS

It was discussed at the Autumn meeting that it would be a useful activity for members to fill in site and /or species surveys for hardy orchids. This could be the foundation for recording trends and populations amongst orchid sites. The idea is for this to be an ongoing project. Norman Heywood has offered to receive and hold the information collected. Copies of the survey recording sheets are shown here in the newsletter. You may like to photocopy and enlarge these examples to A4 or full sized copies can be obtained by sending a large self addressed envelope to the Membership Secretary Norman Heywood (address on inside cover). More information about these will be given at the AGM and sheets may be available there also. Please do not be put off if you are unable to complete all sections of the survey - recording numbers and species is obviously the most vital part.

SITE SURVEY - to be used for 1) regular (annual) survey of site with several orchid species, where no single species is targetted, or 2) notes of a single site visit.

SITE SURVEY (Annual or single survey - all orchid species)

RECORDER: _____

1. DATE: _____

2. LOCATION: _____

3. GRID REF: _____

4. HABITAT (Include vegetation type, Indicator plants, or other significant species): _____

5. GEOLOGY: _____

6. MANAGEMENT: _____

7. SPECIES NOTES (Continue on second sheet if more than 10 orchid taxa):

Species:	Number of flowering plants	Number non-flowering	Full flower (F) Half (H), or in bud (B)	Any other notes:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Total Monthly Rainfall (mm):												
Mean Monthly Temperature (°C):												

Any Other Notes:

NOTES FOR GUIDANCE.

SPECIES SURVEY.

To be used for a single site only: annual survey of a single species population, including 10 randomly selected marked plants (clear, more or less permanent markers), and assessment of status of rest of population. May also be used for one-off visit to a single species site, with data for 10 randomly selected plants.

1. Species: include Common and Latin name if possible.
2. Date: include year.
3. Location: nearest identifiable feature e.g. wood, village, hamlet, then County, and Botanical Vice-County if known (e.g. Duncliffe Wood, nr Shaftesbury, Dorset, VC 9.).
4. Grid Ref: six-figure reference if possible, and include 100km identification letters (e.g. SU 741319 = Noar Hill, Hants).
5. Habitat: e.g. chalk downland, acid bog, calcareous fen, hazel coppice with oak standards etc.
6. Geology: bedrock e.g. chalk, Kimmeridge Clay, Purbeck Limestone etc if known. If known, include also superficial geology, e.g. Clay-with-Flints over Chalk, Alluvial drift over Oxford Clay etc.
7. Management (if any, and if known): include ownership if reserve, whether or not grazed, mown, coppiced etc.
8. Rhizomatous: e.g. *Epipactis* species (except *palustris*), *Listera ovata*, *Cypripedium calceolus* etc. Not to be used for clonal clumps e.g. *Dactylorhiza* hybrids, *Orchis morio* etc.
9. Measure stem height from ground level to tip of fully developed flower-spike.
10. Do not include small lowest basal sheath.
- 11-19. Self-explanatory.
20. Width at widest point.
21. Measured from base of lobe (not from base of lip).
- 22-24. Self-explanatory.
25. Include details of any other orchid species present at site - consider Site Survey.

SPECIES SURVEY (Annual Survey: 10 marked plants; Single Survey: 10 random plants)

RECORDER:

1. SPECIES:	2. DATE:											
3. LOCATION:	4. GRID REF:											
5. HABITAT:												
6. GEOLOGY:												
7. MANAGEMENT:												
Plant Number:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
8. Number of stems: (Rhizomatous species only)												
9. Stem height (cm) (continue on separate sheet if 2 or more)												
10. Number of leaves:												
11. Length of longest leaf (cm):												
12. Width of widest leaf (cm):												
13. Leaf colour:												
14. If leaf markings, are they mainly annular? (Y/N)												
15. Length of inflorescence (cm)												
16. Number of flowers:												
17. Full flower (F), half (H) or bud (B):												
18. Flower colour:												
19. Lip markings type (if any) (Loops L, Dots D):												
20. Lip width (mm):												
21. If lip 3-lobed, length of central lobe (mm):												
22. Reflexed: epichile (<i>Epipactis</i>) side lobes (<i>Dactylorhiza</i>) (Y/N):												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
23. Total Monthly Rainfall (mm):												
24. Mean Monthly Temperature (°C):												
25. Any Other Notes (include total no of plants of surveyed species, other exceptional features):												

Minutes of the Sixth Annual General Meeting, held at Pershore and Hindlip College on Saturday 2nd May 1998

1) Apologies

Were received from Denise Field, Kath Dryden, Barry Tattersall, Paul Harcourt Davies and David Horsfell. Richard Manuel acted as Chair in absence of Chairman.

2) Matters Arising

The Secretary apologised for omitting to mention the reappointment of the Denmans as auditors in last year's minutes.

Secretary's Report

In the absence of the Chairman the Secretary gave a brief report on the year's activities. He hoped that the new format for the newsletter was liked. Many positive comments had been received. The Newsletter Secretary, Carol Dash was thanked.

Thanks to wider advertising our membership has increased to over 300 this year compared with 140 last year.

The HOS has joined British Orchid Council; Richard Nicol has attended a meeting as our delegate.

HOS exhibited a small display of plants and a poster about our conservation activities at the RHS London Orchid Show on 6-7 March. We were awarded a Silver Medal (apparently standard for a first show). Volunteers are required to take over setting up and manning the exhibit for next year.

The Society has been invited to hold a display at Newbury Show on 27-28th June. Although it is not a good time of year for plants in flower, Norman Heywood offered to have a small exhibit next to his trade stand, using the conservation display board to be borrowed from Alan Dash. Volunteers are requested to help man the exhibit.

Alastair Redpath-Stevens kindly volunteered to set up a Website for the HOS on the Internet.

Treasurer's Report (Christine Cook)

Nigel Denman was thanked warmly for auditing the accounts.

Our overall balance is healthy due to increase in membership and the sales have helped. But we must not get complacent as the production costs for the newsletter in the new A5 format have not gone through yet so it is not certain how this will affect the balance.

The Treasurer is due to retire in 1999 but offered to stay on for a fourth year. However if anyone would like to take over, she will stand down.

An HOS badge is available. The Membership Secretary has a stock and can be contacted via Christine Cook. Cost £4.50

Norman Heywood proposed the adoption of the accounts, Alan Dash seconded, and this was carried unanimously.

Membership Secretary's Report (Richard Nicol)

Membership currently stands at 307. 128 have already paid this

year - subscriptions are due at the AGM. This year many new members have joined in response to advertising; including 28 from outside the UK.

About 20 people have not renewed membership which is a lower figure than in previous years. A membership List will be enclosed with the next newsletter.

Richard also reported on a British Orchid Council meeting (mentioned earlier). Meeting was quiet. Officers were re-elected. The Chair retired and was replaced by the Vice-Chair. Nothing else mentioned of interest to the HOS.

Conservation Officer's Report (Alan Dash)

The orchids planted at Dudley Castle have established well and are coming up again.

The Conservation display board has proved a success and it was suggested that another one is produced on other aspects of the HOS.

The Kew Cypripedium seedlings were distributed to about 40 HOS members. Comments please on progress, successes and failures. We will try again for more next year if Kew offer any.

White helleborine project: It is too early in the season for the transplanted plants to be seen yet. Next year will tell how successful the transplanting has been. Bill Temple was asked if the site from which they were removed had been rechecked, which he will do.

Suggestions for other conservation projects will be gratefully received.

It was suggested that an application be made to the Barbara Everard Trust for Conservation grants.

Election of Officers and Committee

After the Agenda was written a candidate for chairman emerged: Adrian Blundell was proposed by Alan Dash, seconded by Carol Dash, and the vote was unanimous.

Barry Cook proposed that the remaining committee posts, as proposed on the Agenda, be voted en bloc, this was seconded by Rosemary Hill, and the vote was unanimous. Thus:

Paul Harcourt Davies becomes our first President

Norman Heywood is the new Membership Secretary

Moira Tarrant is a new co-opted member

Other officers remain as before.

Adrian Blundell will still run the Seed & Fungus Bank but will be happy to give this up if any volunteer appears. This is a very interesting venture and even Kew have used it.

Adrian's elevation to Chairman leaves a space for a third Ordinary Member; this has been taken up by Richard Nicol as our representative on the British Orchid Council.

The Denmans agreed to be Auditors again next year; this was proposed by Christine Cook, seconded by Tony Dickerson and carried unanimously.

Show Secretary's Report (given later by Tony Hughes after judging)

All exhibitors were thanked. Numbers were probably affected by

competing AGS shows: 18 plants compared to 26 shown last year, but the plants were of very nice quality.

Ian Rogers received four awards. Richard Manuel was awarded best in show.

Any Other Business

The Secretary stated that today's meeting clashed with 2 Alpine Garden Society shows which was reflected in the amount of plants in the HOS show. Any Saturday meeting in spring is likely to clash with AGS and other shows, so in order to improve attendance next year Sunday 9th May 1999 was suggested (Pershore is free that day but prompt booking required). This was discussed briefly and, although one member objected for religious reasons and another stated that we could only have sales between 10am and 4pm, the suggestion was accepted.

The Autumn meeting has been arranged for Saturday 31st October 1998 at Horticulture Research International, Wellesbourne, near Warwick. This location offers a better lecture theatre, and ample other facilities, all on one floor. Details of the catering have yet to be sorted out. Our thanks to Colin Clay for volunteering to be 'in house' co-ordinator.

There was a call for volunteers to give talks at meetings and also for new writers for newsletter articles as the same old people are writing the articles.

We have tried a slightly shortened programme today to allow for viewing the show and chatting - comments are requested.

New members asked for the committee members to be identified to all, this was done.

Kew Terrestrial Orchid Symposium: This was revived this year but Richard Manuel reported that it was very rushed as it was squeezed into 3 hours. Greenhouses are currently disorganised due to rebuilding, but it is worth a visit to see their plants.

New members asked about fieldtrips. Nothing has been organised this year. For next year Simon Tarrant offered one in Kent; and Norman Heywood one in Dorset. Alan Dash suggested one for members in the Cotswold area and Norman Heywood mentioned Box Hill, but we need members with local knowledge to organise them. We would put a request in the newsletter for volunteers.

Rosemary Hill suggested that people talk on the orchids they have found in their area during the year. Half a dozen people would fill a talk slot.

A new member suggested that the HOS did not nurture new members. This was discussed: various members felt that part of the onus was on new members to make approaches; other members felt this was due to the format of infrequent meetings so there was pressure to talk to who you need to talk to: as more new members arrived, so it became difficult to identify new ones. It was hoped that name labels would help remedy this. Wellesbourne is more open so this may help too. HOS used to meet in a pub so meetings have become more formal!

Publicity

We are advertising in the AGS Bulletin for a year, at a cost of around £200. It is felt that the HOS image is nearer to AGS

than tropical orchids. Other suggestions included adverts with Wildlife Trusts and RHS, but articles are wanted.

This led to a discussion on the future of the Society. The following thoughts emerged: Don't want the Society to become too big as it could become unweildy; The Cyclamen Society has 1500 members - bigger the better!?!; Could split into regional meetings (but this requires regional organisers and so far no one has offered to do this); HOS attracts like-minded people so should be unlimited; We have 28 members on the continent, and many more enquiries. Since these people are unable to attend meetings the Newsletter must be a sufficient inducement to join. Perhaps we should try and become more European in outlook.

The meeting ended at 11.50am.

DACTYLORHIZAS FROM SEED

Alan Dash.

This article will, I hope, encourage those thinking about growing orchids from seed as well as be of interest to those who already do so. It is by no means a recipe to be followed to the letter and if you disagree with or think you have an improved method please let us all know by sending your comments to the newsletter.

SEED SOWING

Seed collection, storage and sowing techniques are discussed at lengths in previous editions of the newsletter. Two things are of prime importance. Firstly grow with fungus - B1 and T&M appear suitable possibly for all Dactylorhizas. Secondly sow and grow in season - seed is available from August and should be sown before October to get the seasonality right.

Just a quick note on seed sowing. I use a packet technique where a thin rectangle of filter paper (Fig. 1) is folded into a packet (Fig. 2 - 4) and stapled (Fig. 5). By using multiple staples the pattern of staples can be noted and used instead of having to write on the paper. Also the weight of the staples means that when placed in the sterilising container the packet is held under the water, decreasing the likelihood of air bubbles stopping the contact of hypochlorite with seed (Fig. 6).

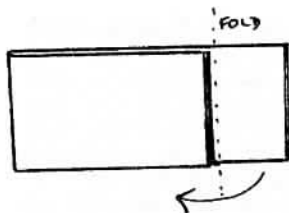


Fig. 3

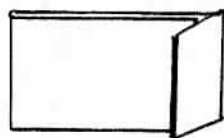


Fig. 4

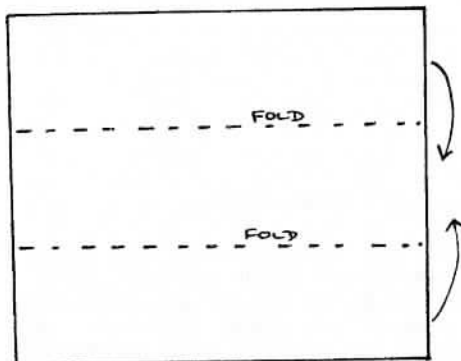


Fig. 1

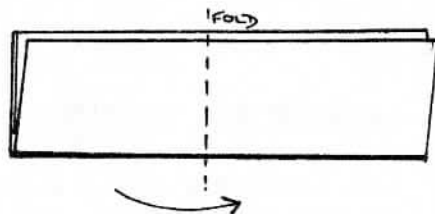


Fig. 2

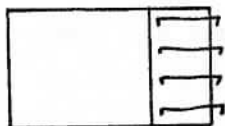


Fig. 5

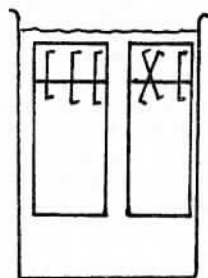


Fig. 6 Soaking the Seed

After bleaching and washing the stapled end is cut off and the seed dabbed onto the oats agar medium. Fungus is added and the container sealed and labelled.

The 'container' could be a jar but if growing in volume petri dishes are well worth the few pence per plant expense. Autoclaved oats medium is poured into sterile petri dishes. This is easier with a laminar flow cabinet but is quite possible in a simple glove box type sterile working area. I've found Richard Manuel's suggestion of using clingfilm sliced

into inch wide strips and wrapping around the side of the petri dish very economical. For extra contamination security I now place the sealed petri dishes into a plastic food bag.

My suggestion is to sow *Dactylorhiza* seed thinly. If you imagine 50% germination and that you may want to replate say 200 protocorms - I would recommend only sowing 400 or so seeds per 9 cm. petri dish.

Store sown plates in the dark at about 20 deg. C. The dark is not essential but probably good practice and the temperature also isn't vital - room temperature is fine. With a hand lens you can track the development. In about a week the fungus grows over the plate. In two to three weeks the embryos swell and burst their seed coats and develop rhizoids. In four to six weeks the protocorms are large enough to handle and replate (about 1 mm. diameter).

REPLATING

As soon as the protocorms are big enough, replating is needed to give the fungus a large surface area of medium and thereby maintain the rapid development of the orchid. Only four or five protocorms are transferred per 9 cm. petri dish. This is where the petridishes come into their own. Stacking of the dishes mean that hundreds of protocorms can be grown on without the need for huge storage space. Whole stacks of dishes can be sealed with wider bands of clingfilm and then stored in boxes in the dark at room temperature or about 20 deg.C. I have also found that oats in the medium can be increased in strength to about 5 g. per litre at this stage for even more rapid development.

Fungus growth after replating is vigorous. Often after ten days it can look like the fungus has destroyed the protocorms. At two to three weeks they fight back with the orchids growing rapidly and reaching a final size over 5 mm. in diameter. Around 5 mm. in size with a strong shoot and root initials just starting should be the target. This is reached one to two months after replating.

VERNALISATION

The petri dishes are stored in a fridge at about 4 deg. C over the winter. At least six weeks cold temperatures but preferably longer should be given. The cold period appears to make sure the seedling develops good roots when potted out in the spring.

POTTING UP

In March to early April the protocorms are taken from their dish and potted into compost. *Dactylorhizas* seem to be tolerant of many types of compost. I have carried out a small trial comparing three different composts. A mixture of approximately equal parts soil based compost, peat based compost and grit did best followed quite closely by 100% commercial peat based compost. These treatments were considerably better than 100% commercial soil based compost (which probably was not 'open' enough in structure). In

general I tend to use a mixture of peat based : soil based : grit at about 1 : 1 : 2.

The protocorms are placed on the surface of the compost and then covered with a top dressing of grit (to reduce the problems of mosses and liverworts). High humidity after potting up is important. A cover of horticultural fleece or similar over the pots helps in this respect. It probably

allows the fungus to establish well and prevents desiccation of the seedling which has very little root to start with (Fig.7).



Fig. 7.

GROWING

Keep the compost moist during the growing season. Shade the plants in the hottest part of the summer and feed occasionally with very weak liquid feed. The plants will develop one or two leaves up to 5 cm. long and 5 mm. wide.

Much of the growth goes on underground where a significant single finger type tuber has developed by the end of August (Fig. 8).



Fig. 8. Seedling in August



Fig. 9. Seedling in September

Repot this tuber in September and grow on in large 6 to 8 inch deep pots given protection only from the harshest of frosts.

Some of the plants reach flowering size in their third year of growth others may take four years.

In summary, the timetable of events is Sow August year 0, Replate Sept / Oct year 0, Fridge Nov / Dec year 0, Pot Up March year 1, Repot Sept year 1, Repot Sept year 2, Flower June year 3

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am greatly indebted to Robert Mitchell (whose article in the Alpine Garden Society Bulletin, Vol. 61 p 324 is well worth reading) for showing us around his house and nursery in France in 1997 and thereby opening our eyes to large scale hardy orchid production.

FILZMOOS, A FLOWERY CORNER OF AUSTRIA

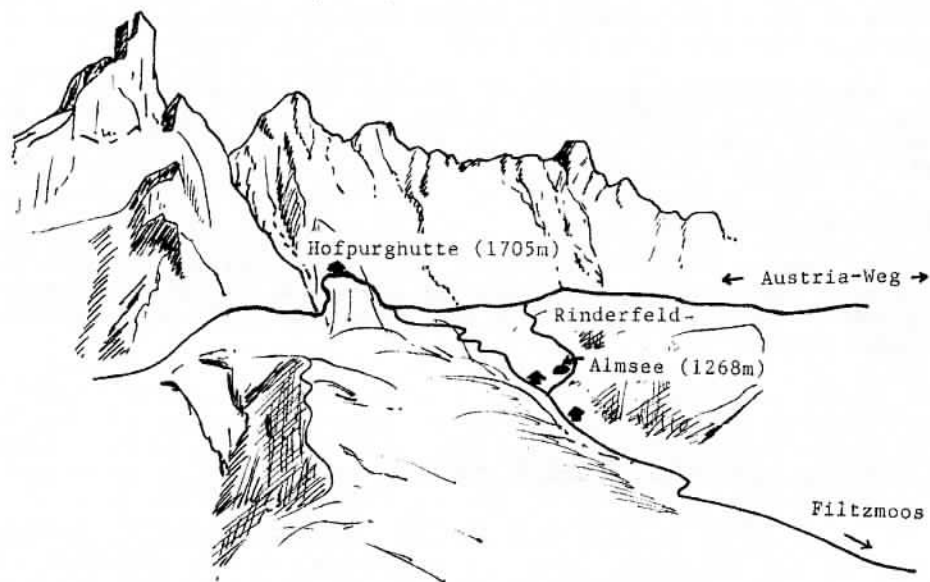
Carol Dash.

Filzmoos is a typical picturesque Austrian village, at the edge of the Dachstein range of mountains, in the province of Salzburg. When we arrived at the end of June 1992 the meadows surrounding Filzmoos (1055m) were just being cut for hay. Peach leaved bellflower (Campanula persicifolia), Campanula scheuchzeri, Alpine bistort (Polygonum viviparum) and Lesser Butterfly Orchid (Platanthera bifolia) were just a few of the multitude of meadow plants present. It was a carpet of colour and we were amazed at what the cows would be eating in their hay! The farmers seemed to perform amazing contortions to crop the near vertical slopes - for a crop which seemed of questionable nutritional value!

The view north of Filzmoos is dominated by the twin peaks of the Grosse Bischofsmutze (2454m). Following local suggestions it was here on the south facing slopes of the Bischofsmutze that the best flowers were to be found. Despite walks in other areas around Filzmoos, this spot could not be bettered.

The walk from the village to the base of the mountain (the Almsee 1268m) follows the river through mixed, mainly coniferous woodland, and is a pleasure in itself. Most of the walk is a gentle climb along the toll road and through wooded tracks. Campanula cochlearifolia tumbled from rock crevices at the side of the road. At the edges of the trees Coralroot orchid (Corallorhiza trifida), May lily (Maianthemum bifolium), One-flowered wintergreen (Moneses uniflora) and seeding Christmas rose (Helleborus niger) were plentiful. We often saw the former 3 plants growing in close association. They preferred the damp darker areas of the mixed woodland, growing amongst mosses on the woodland floor. In other more open and damper areas carpets of Yellow mimulus were mixed with marsh orchids (Dactylorhiza incarnata and D.majalis and their

Bischofsmutze (2454m)



Diagrammatic view of the South face of the Bischofsmutze.

hybrids) and Southern butterwort (Pinguicula leptoceras). There were many such areas beside the road where snow melt trickled under beds of mosses from the mountains around us. The Dactylorhizas were very prolific and very difficult to identify with certainty! We also found good specimens of Frog orchid (Coeloglossum viride) and Twayblade (Listera ovata) by the road side. These two orchids seemed to like the dappled shade of the woodland edges and also seemed to prefer the slightly drier positions on the banks. The road can be quite busy, but walking was still pleasurable with numerous detours off to either side.

The walk to the Almsee is about 7 km. To give more time on the Bischofsmutze and to give the lower walk the appreciation it deserves we took a taxi to the Almsee on two occasions. This enabled us not to be distracted by the flora of the forest glades or water meadows and to begin our ascent as fresh as possible!

Two different routes were taken up the slopes of the Bischofsmutze. The first was to the West of the Almsee and although shorter was considerably steeper than the second. The vegetation was lush as we climbed the path. Mountain avens (Dryas octapetala) were plentiful, as was the Matted globularia (Globularia cordifolia). Tolfield's asphodel (Tolfieldia calyculata), Brooklime (Veronica beccabunga) and Water avens (Geum rivale) occupied the damper spots. As we ascended we spied with glee our first clump of Globeflower (Trollius europaeus) and this provided a good excuse for a rest! Following the twisting path higher, Whorled Solomons seal (Polygonatum verticillatum), Herb Paris (Paris quadrifolia), Lily of the valley (Convallaria majalis - leaves only) and Mountain cornflower (Centaurea montana) were also present. Martagon lilies (Lilium martagon), False white helleborine (Veratrum album), Astrantia sp. and Monkshood (Aconitum sp.) were visibly in bud but would have taken another few weeks to have been fully out. The Alpenrose (Rhododendron ferrugineum) was also not fully in flower in this area. However the Dwarf alpenrose (Rhodothamnus chamaecistus), which we found on the rocks slightly higher up, was a picture of pale pink flowers and seemed altogether more delicate and attractive than the common Alpenrose. Patches of colour on the stoney path were provided by Alpine toadflax (Linaria alpina) with Alpine roses (Rosa alpina) by the path edge. But not many orchids!

The path began to level out and patches of melting snow revealed clumps of Oxlips (Primula elatior) and Drooping bittercress (Cardamine enneaphyllos). Beautifully fresh Christmas roses were also plentiful, with flowers from white to flushed pink. Alpine snowbells (Soldanella alpina) formed carpets around the edges of the melting snow such that it was difficult not to trample on them.

From here the path continued to the Hofpurghutte (1705m) for a well deserved rest and refreshment!

The alternative route to this point involved setting out in a more Easterly direction from the Almsee. The route was slightly longer but had a different range of plants to offer. The path ascends to the Rinderfeld, which is a relatively flat area of summer grazing for the cattle and sheep. En route we found a single specimen of Burnt tip orchid (Orchis ustulata) not in full flower, despite much searching no others could be found. Rockrose (Helianthemum nummularium), Sideritis (Sideritis hyssopifolia) and Alpine coltsfoot (Homogyne alpina) were common. After a period of climbing, the path suddenly flattens out over a beautiful flat glade with a sparkling alpine brook. Here Marsh Marigold (Caltha palustris) and clumps of Aconite-leaved buttercup (Ranunculus aconitifolius) provided fresh splashes of colour. The path then passed between large rocky boulders which were a haven for saxifrages, including Round leaved (Saxifraga rotundifolia), Starry (S. stellaris) and Panicle (S. paniculata) varieties. Spreads of Moss campion (Silene acaulis) were found on the smaller rocks. Several rather jaded Daphne mezereum plants were located between the rocks, these were obviously passed their best by a month or

even two.

A small diversion off to the right onto the Rinderfeld itself was well worthwhile. Several large patches of snow remained and at the edges were a mass of both Soldanella alpina and the smaller Dwarf form (Soldanella pusilla). Yellow wood violet (Viola biflora) and a small unidentified white violet were interspersed between the soldanellas. The whole area was very wet, with melting snow forming icy streams through the mud.

From here the path followed the Linzer Weg westerly. Marmots live in this area and appeared rather curious to inspect us. The route crossed several scree patches but was quite easy and relatively flat. This then joined the first route at the Hofpurghutte. We were pleased to find Clematis alpina scrambling by the path in several places, the flowers just coming out. Yellow auricula (Primula auricula) could be seen in the rocks up above us (these specimens were over in comparison with others found on different walks in the area, for example to the Rotelstein). Several clumps of Alpine leek (Allium victorialis) were also present in this area but few were flowering.

Passing beyond the Hofpurghutte the path follows the curve of the mountain side. Here we found an alpine slope covered in flowers - a real joy!

The clumps of Trumpet gentians (Gentiana acaulis) were in perfect condition. Large swathes of primulas (Primula spectabilis?) interspersed the blue of the gentians. Spring gentians (G. verna) were also plentiful. A few spikes of pink lousewort were also present but the precise identification still eludes us! A little further along the path and spreading both above and below it, was a large area of the beautiful Narcissus-flowered anemone (Anemone narcissiflora) with Globeflowers (Trollius europaeus) and a few very fresh Alpine pasque flowers (Pulsatilla alpina) mixed in to set them off! This really was a beautiful area and probably the highlight of the walk for us. The views were tremendous and the alpine flora in the foreground was at the peak of freshness. A few handsome specimens of the subspecies of Early Purple orchid (Orchis mascula signifera) with its "whiskered" appearance were also found. The shaggy appearance occurs because the petals and sepals end in long fine points. They were growing in quite long grass on a steep and exposed slope. Although the petals were a little rain damaged the spikes were still in good condition. The orchids are very striking and robust - quite easy to see from some distance away and fortunately not too far from the path.

After meandering through the meadow snapping photographs galore we began to descend down the valley towards Filzmoos. En-route we found Ciliate Rock Jasmine (Androsace chamaejasme) on patches of shorter turf. Lower down the grass is more heavily grazed but we still found spikes of Small White Orchid (Pseudorchis albida) along with more Lesser Butterfly Orchid (Platanthera bifolia) as well as the lovely Bearded Bell-flower (Campanula barbata). Both orchids were plentiful. The Small White Orchid often growing up out of low scrubby vegetation

which perhaps afforded it some protection from grazing. This orchid from a distance is very similar to Tolfield's Asphodel and grows intermingled with it in places. On closer inspection the orchid does seem to grow in the slightly less wet areas of grassland, but this could be adjacent to a very wet area. Alpine butterwort (Pinguicula alpina) was also plentiful on the banks beside the path, the leaves forming bright lemony green mats.

The path quickly meets the minor road by a small farmstead at Retteneggalm from where we followed the road down through woods to join the Almsee road about half way along. The return journey was thus a gentle stroll down into the village.

I hope this article is of interest to readers. It is by no means an exhaustive catalogue of all the species we encountered. I hoped really to give a taste of what the area has to offer and to inspire you to go and see what you can find! I make no apology for the inclusion of non-orchid flora since it is the whole alpine flora including the orchids which makes it so pleasurable.

Reference books used were mainly "The Alpine Flowers of Britain and Europe" by Christopher Grey-Wilson and Marjorie Blamey, plus "Wild Orchids of Britain and Europe" by Paul and Jenne Davies and Anthony Huxley.

IN SEARCH OF HOLY GRAILS - A TALE OF TWO SPECIES

Paul Harcourt Davies (drawings by Carol Dash)

Perhaps appropriately for someone whose career started with theoretical atomic physics my knowledge and awareness of orchids has come in "quanta"; those discrete bundles or bursts of energy. Aged seven I realised that there were, in fact, two sorts of orchids: dark purple ones and light pinkish ones (the unambiguous taxonomy of childhood...). Both types grew in the damp field behind my home: our street had even been named in recognition of this wetland - Y Wern (in English "The Bog"...). At fourteen chasing Dark Green Fritillaries over dunes at Kenfig in South Wales I had a "religious" conversion: the mind-numbing experience of seeing my first Bee Orchid - real flowers were just not meant to look like that. And, several hundred thousand Bee Orchids later that leap of the heart is repeated, each successive season, with the proof of this unquenchable excitement lying in dozens of filing sheets filled with slides of the Bee Orchid, added to each year - just in case. That very same June day there was an odd yellowish-green plant scattered in the dune slacks - one not to be found in the Observer's Book of Flowers. Only after a great deal of

searching was the puzzle solved when Keeble Martin was published the following year: my first real rarity - The Fen Orchid (Liparis loeselii).

During an "aberrant" period at Oxford 'Orchidomania' went into a recessive phase whilst I sought the key to the Universe, via complex differential equations. The realisation, that I had definite limitations when it came to the powers of abstract thought deemed necessary to push back the boundaries of knowledge, led to discontent and to a form of depression which to this day can only be readily alleviated by buying books on orchids....

...And, true to the seven year cycle I found a copy of Huxley and Polunin's "Flowers of the Mediterranean" in Blackwells which, mirabile dictu, fell open at the pages on Mediterranean Ophrys. Life, as we know it, was never to be the same again although I had no inkling that, some 10 year's later, I would be working with the late Anthony Huxley on an orchid book. All authors at that time were distant Gods: these days reality has safely shattered that illusion.

By 1978 regular holidays taken in the Mediterranean spring had made old friends of many orchid species - wife Jenne had also become an enthusiast on the "if you cannot beat it join in" principle and we were contemplating a move abroad, the idea being to teach for a few years in Cyprus (the fact that several extremely interesting orchids grew there was not, I am afraid, entirely coincidental).

One Saturday morning in February a package arrived from Weldon and Wesley containing Hans Sundermann's "Europaische und Mediterrane Orchideen" - having married a linguist my idea was to look at the pretty pictures and the stories would be read to me at bed-time in translation. I thumbed excitedly through the volume, having taken it upstairs with the essential mugs of black coffee. At page 156 there was that Bee Orchid, heart-beat-missing experience again as sunbeams suddenly streamed in through the window and, if memory does not fail me, there was a choir of angels too. Illustrated at the top of the page was something Russians call the 'Tsarina' - Comperia comperiana (Steven) Ascherson & Graebner, while immediately beneath lay the intriguingly hooded flowers of Steveniella satyrioides (Sprengel) Schlecter. A few moments before I had not known of their existence; then, life had that strange, incomplete, essentially dissatisfying feel I now know to be a harbinger of an attack of that incurable malady - 'Orchidomania'. And where to see them? Well there was what Sundermann called "Krim" - the Crimea: a better possibility lay with Turkey. After all we were soon off to Cyprus...true the Turks had invaded the island in 1974 but, surely the troubles would not last long? And the site description for Comperia also said "Lebanon"; political naivety at that stage convinced me that it would not be long until that strife-torn land would once again welcome orchid hunters.



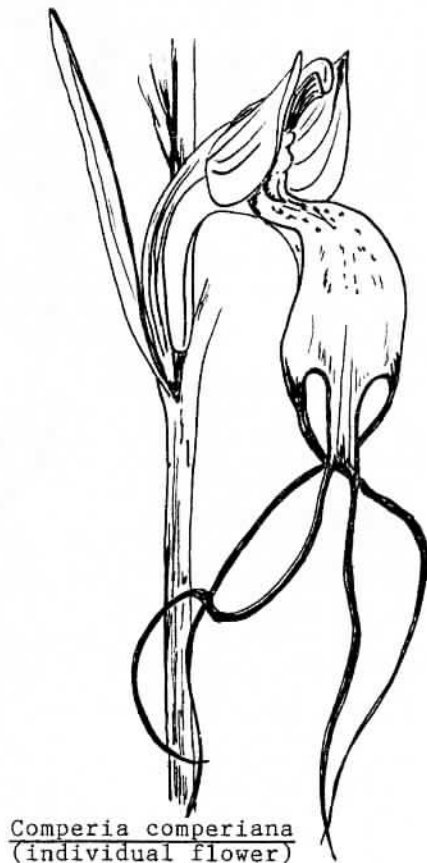
Comperia comperiana

Ironically, it was to be some time before I first saw Comperia, although unfortunately, for the convenience of this tale it was not seven long years but five. A daughter had been born, we had returned to Britain and our Orchid book had appeared in print. I felt guilty that we had not done my 'Tsarina' justice since the only photograph we had was one of those 'end of the day last frame on the film' shots from a trip Anthony Huxley had made some years before.

But that May, it flowered amongst the treasure trove of orchids in Dr. Tom Norman's garden where, patiently he had been laying the foundations for growing European terrestrials - a dedicated study from which many of us have benefited. The year before he had obtained the tubers under CITES permit and had sent a single flower in an envelope: having to untangle the desiccated brown remains under a dissecting microscope only increased the torture to an unbearable level. However, this act of 'phyto-necrophilia' had revealed a feature not mentioned in books: not only did the lip have its long threads - 'filiform processes' but so did each of the two tiny inner petals hidden within the hood.

By the time I saw Comperia and had subjected the flower spike, individual flowers and constituent floral parts to photographic overkill, I had endured several year's worth of glowing "thank-you letters" from friends. I had collected numerous sites for Comperia, often from German friends and had pointed others in the right direction each May, unable myself to escape and commune with my beloved Tsarina. This was a generosity which began to have heavy overtones of masochism.

In 1985 I saw Comperia growing wild for the first time, when I walked along a road in the island of Lesbos. There, as I had always vividly imagined, the lady stood stately: a great calm descended (a convenient all sentient systems switch off to prevent excitement overload) and the celestial music played. The experience made up for what could have been a near miss in 1980 when, with a friend in the Cyprus High Commission, a jaunt was arranged with an orchid-mad



Comperia comperiana
(individual flower)

counterpart in the Mexican embassy in Bierut. We were to take a car, divinely protected by its CD plates, to where, under the famed Cedars, Comperia had once been known to grow. A few days before the planned departure, the Syrian Army moved missile launchers into the valley just below the site. Even my modestly developed sense of self-preservation suggested that no-one would believe that the mountain of photographic equipment I carried at that time would be turned on orchids alone (although K.H.Rechinger wrote Flora Aegea in 1943 whilst serving with the German Army in Crete, the military mind is not legendarily renown for its botanical sympathies). The visit was abandoned.

My sight of Steveniella was really a result of serendipity - almost a question of blase afterthought. A childhood interest in the Gods, Goddesses and heroes of the classical world had been given another dimension through my trips in search of orchids and other plants. I bravely "suffered" the sheer magic of passing signposts to Mycenae, Epidaurus...Olympia as well as the scent of the herbs on a warm hillside as the heat released their essential oils, and then miles of wandering through the rugged limestone terrain. If reincarnation could be a reality that is where I felt I could well have been before.

I had taken to photographing archaeological sites in spring as, fleetingly, the early flowers be-decked them and seemed to offer them life anew. In Greece it had been becoming harder each year with many sites remaining dry and dusty all year around - an open testament to the Paraquat sprayer's art. The final straw had occurred at Nestor's palace where, a decade earlier in the sparse grassland, numerous Ophrys had seemed to dance among the beehive tombs: now there was an arid area, devoid of plant life but for a carefully tended rose garden. To the authorities these were the real flowers; those infernal weeds had gone.

However in Turkey, in the spring of 1988, the sites were still wonderfully unkempt as far as the local flora was concerned and the Turks have always had a love affair with plants, as the motifs on their mosaics show. Orchids had not really come to mind when, now working as a freelance, I had been asked to visit and photograph various sites for the magazine "Cornucopia" published in English in Istanbul. Time, as it always is in the publishing world was tight and the schedule optimistic: do without sleep, there is more time to write notes and take pictures (1500 in five days and a blistered shutter finger as reward).

Lake Abant can be reached by travelling east of Istanbul and then heading south into the Mountains, where, as is the pattern with so many Turkish mountains an endemic crocus (Crocus abantensis) flowers as the snowmelts. The lake sits in the



Steveniella satyrioides
(individual flower)

crater of an ancient and long-dead volcano and the road winds up, first through magnificent mixed woodland, and then pine woods. A half-remembered entry in a journal for "woods near Abant", spiced together with an Orchidophile's "sixth sense" and a dash of serendipity did the trick. We stopped, I walked nonchalantly up the hill - "don't expect, don't get disappointed" and there, under a tree grew a few unprepossessing spikes of Steveniella - one of those "boring greeny-brown orchids" that is until you get the close-up lenses on its flowers.

The generic name commemorates C. Von Steven, the botanist who not only founded the famed Nikita botanic gardens in the Crimea but was the first to describe Comperia comperiana (then as Orchis comperiana) in 1829. The specific name satyrioides refers not to "Satyr-like" flowers as I once read but to a resemblance to the genus Satyrium. Once upon a time many orchids were called "Satyrium", now the name has come to rest on a single terrestrial genus characterised by twin spurs - Steveniella is "satyrium-like" (satyrioides) in having a "twin" spur or, more accurately, a single spur divided almost to its base.

Both Comperia and Steveniella are intriguing, mono-specific genera. But the threats to their survival are different. Turks take their forests seriously and there is a well-known and highly-respected forestry college just outside Istanbul whose personnel are involved in conservation. Steveniella is not a common orchid but its habitats - edges of mountain woodlands and montane pastures - are not threatened. Comperia, however, is one of those orchids greatly endangered both by large-scale grazing and by the Salep trade. Orchid enthusiasts recently visiting Turkey in successive years have noted a remarkable decrease in numbers. Perhaps the only way to be certain of finding it now is to visit sites in cemeteries - some of the few places where the ubiquitous goats and sheep are not permitted to "hoover" the grassland. During 1997 Barry Tattersall did just that and also wandered further afield to find Comperia in some quantity - a question of right places, right time.

Ed note: the original version of this article appeared in The Orchid Review.

LETTERS AND CORRESPONDENCE

Recently some orchid buffs got together and formed a small orchid group which may be of interest to members. The E-mail address is: uk-orchids@onelist.com Or, if anyone is interested the instigator of the group is Geoff Hands who can be contacted on his own E-mail address: geofhans@globalnet.co.uk

Request for information - We are thinking about a trip to Canada in May-June 2000, probably to Ontario. We would be very grateful for any recommendation on places/sites to visit and in particular experiences on timing of the trip.

Many Thanks - Carol and Alan Dash

THE FIRST ORCHID

This short article is by Bill Church who lives near Malvern, Worcestershire.

The land at Middle Barn was purchased from the neighbouring farmer some ten years ago. For many years it had supported an annual crop of winter wheat with a heavy input of fertiliser and the naturally heavy clay soil had become severely denatured. For the first five years, spot spraying was used to remove Creeping Thistle and Dock. At the same time, naturally occurring wild flowers were "amplified" by seed gathering and nursery growing prior to replanting in the meadow. Some essential wild flowers such as Yellow Rattle were introduced. Yellow Rattle is important because, being a semi-parasite on grass, it rapidly creates large swathes of repressed grass where wild flowers can more easily become established. The hay cutting took place after mid July each year to allow the meadow flowers time to set seed.

Over the following five years, aftergrazing by sheep was introduced to ensure that each new year started with a short sward. This is the traditional meadow rotation and the late hay cutting also allowed birds such as the Skylark to breed successfully.

By 1996, the meadow had improved dramatically with only a few areas of aggressive grasses and a reasonable diversity of wild flowers. The butterfly population had also increased and new species such as the Marbled White were seen regularly. Snakeshead Fritillaries had been introduced and were spreading so the time seemed right to think about orchids.

The Internet provided several promising addresses for wild orchids but regrettably, none in the United Kingdom! A modest order was placed with a company in Germany and the plants duly arrived. These were planted out in a damp part of the meadow in October which, with the benefit of hindsight, was probably far too late. This planting failed. The following year, a story in a newspaper (Ed. concerning planting at Dudley Zoo?????) led to

a contact with the Hardy Orchid Society . Unfortunately, despite great care, a further planting in September 1997 also failed to produce results - possibly largely due to the heavy rains and flood damage at Easter of 1998. By this time a measure of despair was making itself felt!



On Thursday 7th June, during an after dinner stroll and in an area far distant from the planting experiment, I was stopped dead in my tracks by the sight of a diminutive flower spike among the grasses and Yellow Rattle. Dactylorhiza fuchsii had arrived all by itself!!

HOLME VALLEY ORCHIDS

by Geoff Rollinson

My main interest is in alpiners and their cultivation in the rock and alpine house.

However, some 6 years ago while exercising the family Dobermann I discovered plants of Dactylorhiza fuchsii growing in a field only 300m from home. This "find" stimulated my interest in orchids and further exploration in our area - Holme Valley - better known to the masses as "Last of the Summer Wine" country, has revealed a stand of D. maculata with some 25-30 plants. Also some 150 plants of D. praetermissa.

What is surprising is that we are on underlying Millstone Grit, no trace of limestone for miles. The top soil is extremely acidic due to the prevailing winds carrying pollution over the moors from the East Lancashire industrial conurbation.

Our own valley was heavily industrialised with textile mills until quite recently. The remaining ones now being powered electrically as opposed to the coal fired steam engines of the past. Upon reflection, the demise of the local industry along with that of East Lancashire has probably contributed to less acidity than previously existed making conditions more tolerable for orchids.

Five years ago I took a ripe head of seed from the D. praetermissa colony and scattered seed in the D. fuchsii location. In June 1998 - success! - a plant of D. praetermissa appeared and flowered.

Courtesy of Barry Tattersall, I did have an attempt at growing Oparys and Serapias in pots. Abysmal Failure - alpiners and orchids do not mix! I am convinced that to cultivate the majority of orchids they need to be maintained in a frost free environment. Whereas in the winter of 1981-82 I recorded -25'C in the alpine house and the plants were frozen solid for 3-4 weeks, and there were no losses due to temperature.

So, I satisfy my orchid interest by growing Dactylorhiza and Orchis in the open garden, and photographing them in the wild at home in Derbyshire and abroad.

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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