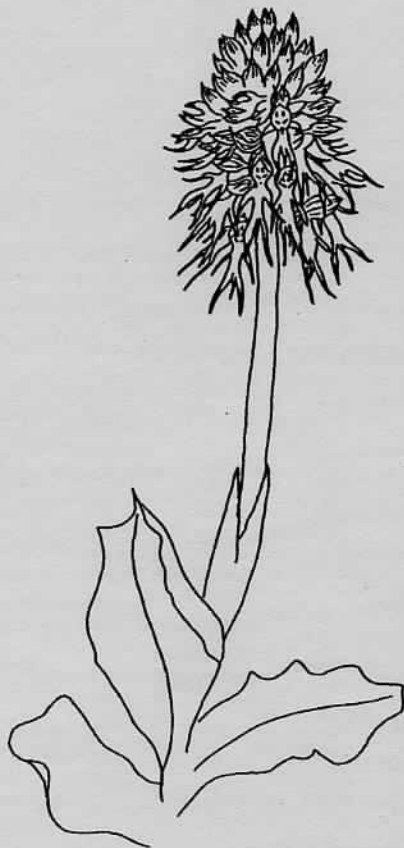


The Hardy Orchid Society
Newsletter



No. 13 July 1999

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Cover illustration: *Orchis italica* by Sarah Marks

Contents

- p.2 Society news and information
- p.4 HOS Show, Pershore by Tony Hughes
- p.6 HOS Internet Website by Tony Hughes
- p.7 Orchids of the North by Steven Davidson
- p.16 Orchid memories of Wales & North West England by Simon Andrew
- p.21 Basic Orchid growing: report on a talk by Richard Manuel & Alan Dash
- p.24 Field Trip to BBONT Reserves by Tony Hughes
- p.26 Orchids in the News
- p.28 Members comment

Newsletter

It was noted at the AGM that the society newsletter has been a major factor in the recent growth in membership, and is particularly important for those members who are unable to reach the two annual meetings. Carol Dash was the first editor and will be a hard act to follow as she charmed a lot of members into contributing a wide range of quality material.

Please help me to build on this success by continuing to contribute. Articles should be sent, preferably in MS Word-compatible electronic format to:

Moira Tarrant, Bumby's, Fox Rd, Mashbury, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 4TJ. (E-mail : m.tarrant@virgin.net)

Back copies can be purchased from me for £2.50 per issue or £8.00 for four issues. Cheques should be made payable to the Hardy Orchid Society. (See elsewhere in this issue for a report from Tony Hughes on the development of the society website. Apart from other useful and exciting information, the site includes a full index to the newsletter).

Seed and Fungus Bank

Please can I remind members to set and collect seed, from any hardy orchids they may have in their collection, for distribution to any members requiring seed. Seed should be from cultivated stock, and not from wild sources. Techniques for packing and storage of seeds appear in Newsletter 2, p.11. A seed and fungus list will be available as soon as all seeds have been received.

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

Important Notice Change of date for next meeting

The next meeting of the Hardy Orchid Society will now be on **Sunday 31st October 1999**. The venue which will be HRI at Wellesbourne is unchanged, but you may have the provisional date of Saturday in your diary. The programme already looks good with a promise of Jonathon Leake of Sheffield University talking on Mycorrhizae associated with orchid seed germination, the photographic competition which always produces some outstanding entries and the possibility of the website demonstrated on the 'big screen'.

Colin Clay, Meetings Organiser will be publishing a full programme in the next newsletter.

Membership Renewal

Members who have not yet renewed their subscriptions are reminded that this is the last newsletter they will receive. Don't delay – renew today, or better still, complete the Standing Order Mandate which appeared in the April 1999 issue.

HOS AGM, 9th May 1999, Pershore

Pershore and Hindlip College once again provided a welcoming venue for the AGM, which for the first time was held on a Sunday. This was in response to the problems that members were finding with other horticultural commitments for Saturdays in May. A brief report of the proceedings follows, but the bulk of the newsletter is given over to either the full text or notes of the excellent talks which took up the majority of the day.

After the minutes of the previous AGM had been accepted, the Chairman urged members to consider volunteering for the committee. The society needs new blood among the officers if it is to stay innovative and forward looking. Membership now stands at 360.

Several new people were welcomed to the committee and all nominations listed on the agenda were accepted. The current committee can be found listed elsewhere in the newsletter.

Report from the AGM HOS Show, 9th May 1999, Pershore

Tony Hughes

Many thanks and congratulations to the 9 members who brought such a wonderful collection of plants to our latest Show. Our judge, Kath Dryden, managed to award prize cards to all the competitors (without any fiddling!), so justice was obviously delivered. It was really great to see so many different varieties grown and displayed so well, and the row of *Cypripediums* in Class 11 was probably the best I have ever seen. However, pride of place was reserved for Richard Manuel's entry in Class 12, a magnificent stand of Man Orchids, *Aceras anthropophorum*, which deservedly won the trophy for 'Best in Show'. Since Richard also won the trophy last year, the rest of you should feel challenged to prevent him

getting 'three in a row'! (Incidentally, does anyone know where our trophy is? We couldn't find it last year).

The downside is that three classes (1, 3 and 9) had no entries and three others (5, 10 and 12) had only one entry. There is plenty of room on the benches to accommodate loads more pots, so please don't feel shy about entering next year.

Alongside the Show, the Exhibition Area looked better than ever, with several interesting plants and two superb displays of orchid pictures on postage stamps. Many thanks to our enthusiastic exhibitors for taking so much trouble for us.

HOS SHOW RESULTS, 9th May 1999

CLASS	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
2 3 pots, European	Ian Rodgers 3 <i>Serapias</i>	Nick Storer 3 <i>Serapias</i>	-
4 1 pot, British	Carl Hardwick <i>Coeloglossum viride</i>	Nick Storer <i>Orchis laxiflora</i>	Norman Heywood <i>Platanthera chlorantha</i>
5 1 pot, European	Nick Storer <i>Dact. cordigera</i>	-	-
6 1 pot, non- European	Alan Dash <i>Cyp. margaritaceum</i>	Carl Hardwick <i>Cyp. henryi</i>	Norman Heywood <i>Cyp. pubescens</i>
7 1 pot, <i>Dactylorhiza</i>	Nick Storer <i>Dact. kerryensis</i>	Nick Storer <i>Dact. sambucina</i>	-

8 1 pot, <i>Orchis</i>	Richard Manuel <i>Orchis fragrans</i>	Mike Powell <i>Orchis morio</i>	Nick Storer <i>Orchis coriophora</i>
10 1 pot, <i>Serapias</i>	Nick Storer <i>Serapias lingua</i>	-	-
11 1 pot, <i>Cypripedium</i>	Adrian Blundell <i>Cyp. montanum</i>	= Alan Dash <i>Cyp. fasciolatum</i> = Carl Hardwick <i>Cyp. tibeticum</i>	Norman Heywood <i>Cyp. pubescens</i>
12 1 pot, any other	Richard Manuel <i>Aceras anthrop.</i>	-	-

Report from the AGM HOS Internet Website Tony Hughes

Some time ago it was suggested that the HOS should have its own Internet website. Members who were 'connected' would then have ready access to Society information, and we would also spread the word about hardy orchids to a wider audience and hope to attract new members. Recently I have been co-ordinating the development of our website, with plenty of help and encouragement from various committee members. Thanks to Simon Tarrant's portable PC, we were able to demonstrate an early version of the site at the Pershore meeting. Reactions were generally encouraging, and several members with Internet accounts were able to offer to host the website for free!

It is planned to include a comprehensive set of pictures of British orchids within the site, produced by as many HOS

members as would like to contribute. If you have some good pictures of British orchids, particularly rare or local types, could we use them? Pictures already in digital form are best, but we can easily process good quality slides; prints are the least satisfactory. Any offers?

Also, I expect there are several members who publicise the HOS while giving slide shows and lectures about orchids and other natural history subjects. If you would like to be listed on the website, just let me have your name and address, list of lecture titles, charges, etc.

Offers, suggestions and questions to Dr. A. J. Hughes, 8 Birchwood Road, Malvern, Worcs., WR14 1LD; Tel 01886-832647.

STOP PRESS! Thanks to the generosity of Ian Rodgers, the website is now 'live' at <http://www.drover.demon.co.uk/HOS/> let us know what you think of it.

Report from the AGM Orchids of the North

Text of an illustrated talk by Steven Davidson

Introduction

First a word of warning to those of you who are new to orchids. Some years ago, Linda decided to learn about wild flowers, and I was shown a British orchid. Fatal mistake, these plants are more habit forming than the opium poppy. They don't just take over the summer months, but their growing takes over the whole year and Linda's kitchen too.

Secondly, a word of warning to others not quite so new to orchids. A year ago a friendly face at the front of this auditorium asked for members to help the Society. Linda and I live a fair distance from meetings and only attend once a year - but - we could contribute to the annual meeting by introducing our orchids to you couldn't we. Linda got her own back and here I am.

Where is the North of England? North of Watford Gap? I come from Yorkshire and living in Northumberland am referred to as a Southerner! I will however look at those plants growing in Lancashire and Yorkshire as well as those further north. And to tantalise, will throw in a few specialities from north of the border.

Lost Orchids

Most of you will know the story of *Cypripedium calceolus*. The species that needed man's help to bring it back from the verge of man made extinction. Other species have not been so lucky. Where was English Nature when *Gymnadenia odoratissima* was last seen in 1912 or *Orchis laxiflora* in 1873? And what was done to protect the colony of *Orchis simia* in East Yorkshire that existed from 1974 to 1982?

Current Residents

Cypripedium calceolus

Perhaps the most famous of our orchids, and it lives in the north of England too. These plants were seen at a site in north Lancashire, and their origin remains a question of debate. To my mind the fact that they are growing in natural conditions in natural habitat says it all. For good reason, we are asked not to visit the known native site, but as the species recovery plan continues, more opportunities should become available to see this wonderful plant.

For the first time the recovery project is holding an open day this year.

Cephalanthera longifolia

To many of you this may seem a common plant. In the north of England it has retreated from former sites in the east, and is now located at only a few locations in the west. We have seen it growing under beech.

Epipactis palustris

To see a dune system white with the flowers of this plant is a truly magnificent sight! Holy Island provides such a spectacle, which is appreciated by humans and *Oryctolagus cuniculus* (Rabbits) alike. The latter clearly find that the flower spikes make an excellent desert, for within a short time of flowering, most heads are eaten.

Perhaps we shouldn't complain, because it is the grazing of the rabbits that make the vegetation what it is. On Holy Island, it grows in the dune slacks where it is associated with *Salix repens*, *Epipactis dunensis*, and *Dactylorhiza incarnata*.

Epipactis helleborine

Grows in many different locations, and in many different colour forms. Some forms are very appealing. The leaves of this plant contain oxalic acid crystals which give them a sandy texture, and seem to protect them from browsing by *Capreolus capreolus* (Roe Deer). The flower spikes are less fortunate, and often find themselves browsed.

Epipactis leptochila

The start of taxonomic problems. *E. leptochila* grows on metal spoils in the Tyne valley. In these locations, it appears to grow with *E. dunensis*. Every possible variant between the two is

also present, causing some observers to think that the two are one species. Note the long narrow lip. The sites we have seen show it to grow under regenerating oak, ash and birch.

Epipactis dunensis

Richard Bateman has used molecular techniques to distinguish between *E. dunensis* and *E. leptochila*. The largest plants we have seen grow on Holy Island if the rabbits don't get to them first. The lip is as broad as it is long. Here it grows amongst *Salix repens*.

Epipactis youngiana

Very easy to confuse with *E. helleborine*. Generally a more delicate plant with apple green leaves. The flower is more box like, and the leaves are smooth. No viscidium is present when the flowers open, and hence the plant self-pollinates. Now shown to be a hybrid between *E. helleborine* and *E. leptochila*, but its seed is viable. Grows at three locations in Northumberland and one in Durham. It has been said to be a specialist of spoil heaps, but the type locality and the latest two sites in Northumberland are unlikely to be contaminated with spoil.

Epipactis phyllanthes

Quite a rare plant in the north, it seems to prefer heavy shade where it does not suffer from competition from other plants.

Epipactis atrorubens

This is a plant of limestone, it grows on exposed limestone, and we have seen it growing in the base of an old limestone quarry, and limestone pavement. Unlike many of the *Epipactis*, it prefers full sunlight. It grows with *Gymnadenia conopsea*, *Ophrys apifera*, *Coeloglossum viride*, *Anacamptis pyramidalis*

& *Listera ovata*. At Bishop Middleham quarry, it can be seen with *Hesperia artaxerxes* ssp *salmacis* (the Durham Argus).

Spiranthes spiralis

Really a plant of the south, having sites in Yorkshire and Lancashire.

Spiranthes romanzoffiana

A beautiful plant which hides amongst *Molinia caerulea* (Purple Moor Grass). We saw this specimen on Colonsay. At a site which is inundated with water during winter and spring. Sites subject to winter cattle appear to be favoured.

Listera ovata

Common throughout the region.

Listera cordata

An orchid of heather moorland, where it hides under heather, generally growing on sphagnum moss. We have seen it associated with *Potentilla erecta* (Tormentil) and *Vaccinium oxycoccos* (Cranberry). It also grows amongst moss in damp dark woodland.

Neottia nidus-avis

Probably well known from the South, this species grows well under *Fagus sylvatica* (Beech) where lack of light maintains an environment free from competition.

Goodyera repens

Growing in forests of *Pinus sylvestris*, this small orchid thrives in the underlayer of pine needles and moss. Northumberland offers an excellent site for this species, as it flowers at the same time as the fruiting of *Vaccinium myrtillus* (Bilberry).

Hammarbya paludosa

For those of you who haven't seen this beauty, think of the smallest orchid you know, and considerably reduce it in size. It grows in sphagnum moss saturated in acidic water, but is so easily overlooked that attempts to find it frequently disturb it! Any successful germination in vitro would really be undertaken by micropropagation.

Corallorhiza trifida

Another orchid that follows the maxim small is beautiful. It grows in totally separate habitats. In dense willow / alder carr, raised mires and lowland loch margins, and well-established dune slacks. When growing under trees the flowering stem is green, whilst in open situations it is yellow. It would be interesting to know whether this difference was genetic or environmental.

Coeloglossum viride

Quite widespread but local.

Gymnadenia conopsea

The most common subspecies here is *borealis*, but subspecies *conopsea* is recorded as far north as Durham. Ssp *densiflora* does also occur.

Pseudorchis albida

Another northern speciality, found on well-drained upland pasture on unimproved land. This habitat is rare, but extremely rich floristically and can be a riot of colour at flowering time in late June / early July. It can be found with many commoner orchids at Gowk Bank. Surprisingly it can be difficult to spot, and can be mistaken for alpine bistort.

Platanthera chlorantha

Exists in widely spaced localities in the north of England, usually on grassland pasture.

Platanthera bifolia

This plant has two forms a woodland form most common in the south of England which is more elongated with narrower less pointed leaves than the moorland form. The latter is more common in northern England.

There is a site close to home where this plant grows in abundance with *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* (Common Spotted) and *Dactylorhiza purpurella* (Northern Marsh Orchid).

Ophrys apifera

A plant approaching its northern limit just north of the Tyne. On one of its two northerly sites it grows on an old colliery spoil heap under *Betula pendula* (birch). It appears to be spreading northwards, having crossed the Tyne in the late 80's.

Ophrys insectifera

Also at its northern limit which it reaches in Durham.

Orchis ustulata

This plant is retreating southwards. It has lost its four most northerly locations, and clings onto a sand dune in Durham. Reintroduction is a favoured option, but germination and growth of the plants presents problems.

Orchis morio

Summerhayes suggests that this was one of Britain's commonest orchids, but it is rapidly changing in status, having vanished from Northumberland and Durham in the last 20 to 30 years. On the west coast it still grows at sites in Ayrshire.

Orchis mascula

Widespread throughout the region. Those from the Hebrides are thought by some to belong to a separate race.

Dactylorhiza fuchsii

Commonly found in normal and white forms. Subspecies *hebridensis* is particularly attractive.

Dactylorhiza maculata

Found in a variety of habitats from streamside bogs to well drained upland hay meadows.

Dactylorhiza incarnata

The red of *D. coccinea* is a really wonderful sight at locations such as Holy Island, but for an early marsh, *incarnata* can be seen on the Pennines in July.

Dactylorhiza praetermissa

OK so you know all about this plant. Well we have it too, and it gets as far as the Tyne.

Dactylorhiza purpurella

Northern Marsh Orchids are really quite common here, often growing with *D. fuchsii* in hybrid swarms. It also occurs in an upland form.

Dactylorhiza traunsteineri

Grows on limestone its main location is Yorkshire, but it does grow in Durham and has been reported from Northumberland.

Dactylorhiza lapponica

We haven't seen this plant yet, and when we do, it will probably be in Scotland. We have however seen the subspecies

ebudensis on North Uist (*D. scotica*). This is a truly beautiful plant with an almost velvet flower.

Anacamptis pyramidalis

Grows on dunes and limestone areas.

Where from here?

Habitat is being lost, and climate changes. Some species appear to be expanding their range, with *Ophrys apifera* having crossed the Tyne and now being known from two sites in Northumberland. The status of *Cypripedium calceolus* continues to improve with opportunities now available to see it in its former haunts. Other species are not faring so well. *Orchis morio* used to grow in the Dene close to home. It was last recorded there in the 1970's and has now gone in a rapid retreat southwards. The nearest colony consisted of a few plants in the early 90's and is three counties away. *Orchis ustulata* used to grow on the sand dunes close to home and now barring a small coastal colony of only a few plants only exists an hour and a half away (if that site hasn't fallen to the trowel.) Could we see an extension of the range of southern species such as *Spiranthes spiralis*, and *Ophrys insectifera*? Will *Pseudorchis albida* finally lose its grip and retreat into Scotland?

I hope that efforts will be made to protect and enhance populations, and that societies like ours will be thanked by future generations for their work in returning natural biodiversity. It is good to have challenges, it gets us moving. If only someone could show me how to germinate and grow *Orchis ustulata*, the challenge of a reintroduction may not be too great.

Report from the AGM Orchid memories of Wales and north-west England

Summary of talk by Simon Andrew

After an orchid initiation on the southern chalk - via an enthusiastic botanical uncle who loved Box Hill - we moved from the Thames Valley (near the famous Monkey Orchid site) to mid-Cheshire in 1968. We wondered if our days of easy, home-based orchid hunting were over, and set out to find out what likely places there were within a reasonable day-out's drive of Northwich. This, with the then brand-new M6, encompassed southern Lakeland, much of the Pennines and all of North Wales. Surely there couldn't be much in Cheshire and the industrial areas to the north, but we would find out! Twenty years later we returned to the south - and, looking back, the orchid riches we found during our northern sojourn seem both rich and surprising. And as interesting in their own way as what we found in our more or less annual continental excursions!

Back in the sixties there was little serious literature about UK orchids - really only Summerhayes - and our earlier trips were inspired by entries in two other 'New Naturalist' books. These were J E Lousley's 'Wild Flowers of Chalk and Limestone' and W M Condry's 'Snowdonia National Park', both of which gave many tantalising hints where orchids might be found. So our earliest explorations were on the north-western carboniferous limestone and the southern Snowdonia bogs. These were soon extended to cover the coastal dune systems (Summerhayes was the lead here), and later the industrial sites nearer to home, which were just beginning to be discovered and explored then. These four settings, limestone, bogs, dunes and chemical tips, form a convenient set of subdivisions for telling the story.

First the dune flora - at sites ranging from the Morecambe Bay area; through Lancashire (Ainsdale, Formby, later Merseyside) and North Wales (Point of Air) to Cardigan Bay (Harlech, Morfa Dyffryn); and finally, a bit off-course to South Wales (Kenfig). The drier parts of these, with their well-drained shelly soil in a mild climate, were the nearest approach to the southern chalk flora, featuring especially abundant Pyramidal Orchids and a scattering of Bees. But the damp places, the slacks, produced the more exciting finds. The beautiful Marsh Helleborine was everywhere, as also the splendid crimson *Dactylorhiza incarnata* var. *coccinea*, accompanied by other Marsh Orchids, including both Northern (*D. purpurella*) and Southern (*D. praetermissa*) and an indecipherable array of hybrids involving all three.

Added to these were a number of curiosities, less beautiful and spectacular, but no less interesting, and of some rarity value. At the most northerly site the curious sub-alpine saprophyte *Corallorhiza trifida* was plentiful early in the season, and at the most southerly (Kenfig) the rare Fen Orchid (*Liparis loeselii*) from warmer climes.

And then the specialised helleborines.... The Dune and Pendulous versions were found throughout this range, and were specially satisfactorily displayed on cue à la Summerhayes at Formby with Pendulous in the planted pinewoods, and Dune on the edges of the slacks. Of course the taxonomists are constantly changing their minds about classification of these Helleborines; are the 'Dune Helleborines' Mr Davidson showed from the north-east really the same species as I showed from the north-west? How many distinct species of *Epipactis* are there? Whatever the answer, they are always interesting and attractive plants to find.

After the dunes the limestone rocks. The limestone pavements round Morecambe Bay were the most exciting of these, with a



**Big white-flowered specimen of *Gymnadenia conopsea* var *densiflora* at the Witton lime beds, Northwich, Cheshire.
(Photo by Simon Andrew)**

fascinating flora in the 'cracks', of which the Dark Red Helleborine is the undoubted star. It is also found high up on rocky crags in Flintshire, where the band of limestone running south from the coast offers abundant sites for the commoner limestone orchids, including plenty of Early Purple, Green-winged, Fragrant and, of course, Spotted, with a scattering of Frogs and Lesser Butterflies. And we were pleased and a bit surprised to find the Fly Orchid on a steep scree-slope in the Pennines, with Fragrant Orchids and helleborines for company.

In complete contrast, but with some species in common, were a number of orchid-rich boggy areas in North Wales where the drainage water from the mountains was less acid than usual - especially in the area round Cader Idris. These sites, to which we were originally led by Mr Condry's book, had a surprisingly varied orchid flora amid most beautiful scenery, albeit a bit wet under foot. In addition to the inevitable Heath Spotted Orchid, three colour varieties of *Dactylorhiza incarnata*, the Northern Marsh Orchid, both Butterflies, and the Fragrant Orchid were found, with now and again a few Twayblades. Nothing very rare here, but most enjoyable to explore.

Then the last category, and the most unexpected: the 'industrial sites'. Living in mid-Cheshire, adjacent to the factories associated with the alkali industry, we were aware of the lime-beds on to which limey effluents from these operations had been pumped to settle. As this process continued a sort of lime-rich marsh was formed, which was colonised very rapidly by Marsh Orchids, then the impressive marsh version (var *densiflora*) of the Fragrant Orchid, and then the Marsh Helleborine - a sort of artificial creation of a dune-slack type of flora. Having observed these, and made contact with conservation groups in neighbouring areas, we found that such artificial 'orchid spectaculars' were by no means rare in the

region, and were usually dominated by extensive ranges of *Dactylorhiza* species, with *D incarnata* var. *coccinea* - from seeds blown in from the coastal dunes? - contributing its rich colour to a splendid range of hybrids. Such displays were to be found in a remarkable range of places in exotic sites such as the Irk-Irwell industrial valley between Manchester and Bolton, Wigan Power Station and waste land bordering the M6 at Billinge. Some of these are among the most spectacular and colourful orchid communities I have seen anywhere - the best Mediterranean spots included - and include numerous *Dactylorhiza* hybrids of great beauty. Many are now being looked after by local conservation groups, and I must make sure I go and have another look at these after a gap of more than ten years. Certainly they have been the source of many of my best photographs, which have caused quite a stir among my Italian friends, for whom these massed and often massive *Dactylorhizas* are as rare and exotic as their huge range of *Ophrys* species are to us!

The title of my talk included the word 'memories' because it is ten years or more since we saw any of the sites concerned. I wonder how they are doing now. Probably not too badly, as they are all by their nature relatively immune from the agricultural pressures which have caused so many southern orchid habitats to deteriorate or disappear. But this does not mean they do not need looking after! Over the 20 years we were 'up north' we observed loss of quite a few boggy sites in Wales through drainage improvements. And many of the industrial sites are ephemeral by their nature, and pose considerable - possibly intractable - problems of conservation. But people are working on it, and these exotic and unexpected sites are some compensation for the more traditional grassland ones which have been largely lost to changing farming processes.

Report from the AGM Basic Orchid Growing

Notes on a practical talk by Richard Manuel and Alan Dash

Richard and Alan divided this session by growth habit i.e. Richard focussing on Mediterranean type orchids which are winter growing and summer-dormant, and Alan on hardy summer-green species (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1 Principal Genera of tuberous European orchids, grouped by growth habit

<u>Globose tubers, mostly winter-green</u> <i>Orchis</i> <i>Ophrys</i> <i>Serapias</i> <i>Himantoglossum</i> <i>Anacamptis</i> <i>Aceras</i>	<u>Palmate or elongated tubers, summer-green</u> <i>Dactylorhiza</i> <i>Platanthera</i> <i>Nigritella</i> <i>Coeloglossum</i> <i>Leucorchis</i>
<u>'Fat roots', green most of year</u> <i>Spiranthes</i>	<u>Non-tuberous roots, storage organ a pseudo-bulb, summer-green</u> <i>Liparis</i> <i>Hammarbya</i> <i>Malaxis</i>

Richard described the growth cycle which begins in December/January (*Orchis* a little bit later) with the tuber extending into distinctive root-like protuberances. The new tuber which forms through the spring will sit through the summer, impervious to drought. Above ground, when the new tuber is fully formed, the plant is withering and forming ripe seed pods (Fig. 2).

Richard's growing regime respects this cycle and the plant's natural habitat:

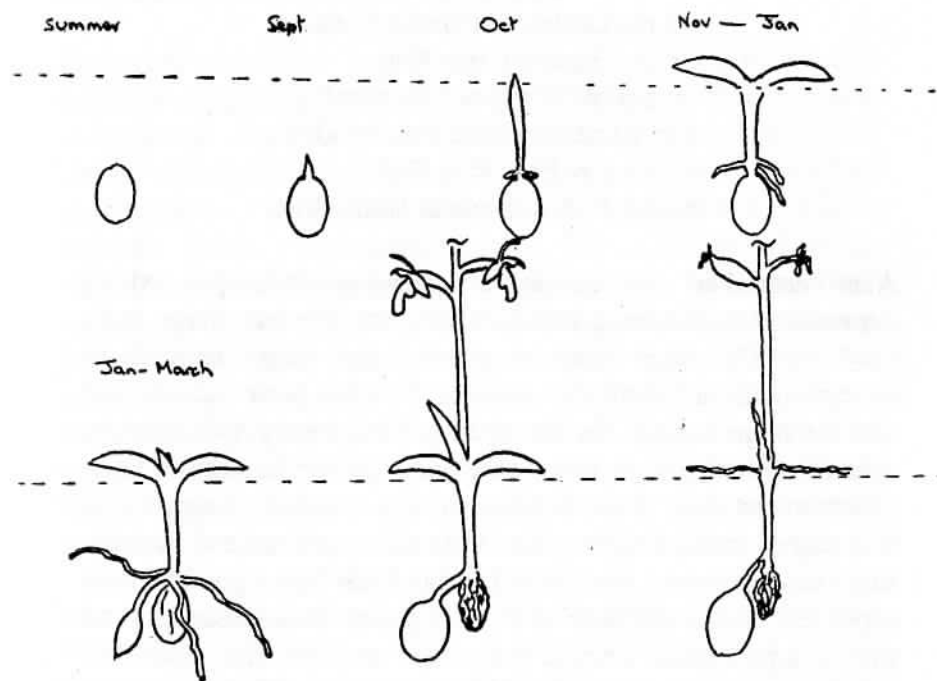
November onwards – water lightly

Jan to Feb – water just enough to keep moist, not wet

Feb towards flowering time – water copiously

Summer – keep dry

Fig. 2 Growth cycle of winter-green orchids



Hardiness: his experience is that most species can take several degrees of frost but dislike being drenched then frozen. Suitable conditions would be a frost-free greenhouse or a cold frame.

Compost: A suitable compost would be Cribb and Bailes basic mix:

3 pts (by volume) Loam
3 pts Gritty Sand or 6mm size Grit
2 pts Leafmould
1 pt Pine Bark
Hoof and Horn at 10ml/10Lt

Richard has modified this with success for Mediterranean species, especially *Ophrys*:

2 pts Loam
3 pts Leafmould/Broken Leaf
3 pts 4-6 mm Grit
1-3 pts Sharp or Grit Sand
1 pt Limestone Grit/Poultry Grit
1 pt Fine Pine Bark
Blood, Fish & Bone at 10ml/10Lt

Alan described his successful growing technique which depends on maintaining constant moisture. He uses large pots, (10" - 12") either clay or plastic, but large enough to accommodate a lot of root growth. Wooden patio tubs would also be large enough. In the open garden, heavy soil must be opened up with grit or peat, or the plants grown in a raised bed. Plants are at their most dormant in late summer (August). At this stage a faded flower spike exists above ground and the new tuber has horizontal root growth. Alan finds this a good time to repot. He uses a compost of JI no.2, a peat based compost and grit in equal parts. During the winter months, the roots will continue to grow so pots should be kept moist although rosettes will not show above ground until early spring. Alan covers his pots with glass although he is not sure this is necessary. He sometimes adopts the gamble of twisting off the new tuber as he repots and repotting the old tuber. Sometimes a further smaller new tuber will form from the old one over the winter.

Field trip to BBONT Reserves, 22 May 1999 Report by Tony Hughes

There are those who think of 13 as bad luck, but when that number of HOS members were escorted around three closely guarded BBONT reserves by Bill Temple, the luck was all good. Not only was the weather kind (though some photographers did complain of wind!) but the orchids and their surroundings were superb.

First stop was at an excellently managed reserve where the majority of the English Military Orchids (*Orchis militaris*) are to be found. Here the warden explained the rather chequered history of the woodland site and its orchids, and then showed us his treasures - a superb collection of Military spikes, all at their absolute peak. The neighbouring Fly Orchids (*Ophrys insectifera*) and Twayblades (*Listera ovata*), also excellent specimens, scarcely got a glance! The expense of maintaining the rabbit and deer proof fencing seemed well justified, the main danger now being the risk of trampling by over-enthusiastic photographers. But it wasn't only the botanists who were catered for - the ornithologists had excellent sights of Red Kite and Buzzard, and the lepidopterists were entertained by Small Heaths, Orange Tips and a single Green Hairstreak.

Lunch-time, which came all too soon, was taken at the Warburg Reserve near Henley - we were even provided with picnic tables and chairs. A leisurely stroll in the woods after lunch revealed a fine collection of Birds' Nest Orchids (*Neottia nidus-avis*), a few Large White Helleborines (*Cephalanthera damasonium*) and several spikes of Greater Butterfly Orchid (*Platanthera chlorantha*), some of which had a few flowers open. There was also a promise of things to come, with a couple of Bee Orchids (*Ophrys apifera*) already showing

flower buds and some disgustingly vigorous clumps of Broad-Leaved Helleborine (*Epipactis helleborine*). By now the sunshine was quite warm, and the open grassy areas were a-buzz with thousands of Garden Chafer beetles - rather like miniature versions of the May bug. Since their larvae feed on the roots of grasses and other plants, it was a wonder that any plants had survived; perhaps that explains why none of the White Helleborines 'rescued' by HOS members a couple of years ago could be found. The warmth also brought out lots more butterflies, particularly Brimstones, but also a very early Common Blue. On one south-facing bank, several slow-worms and a couple of lizards were found - basking beneath the sheets of metal laid out to accommodate them. As we drove away from the Warburg, several more Red Kites were spotted, some at close quarters, indicating how successful their re-introduction has been.

Our final destination was a grassland reserve on a chalk hillside overlooking the Thames. Among the typical chalk-loving plants such as Chalk Milkwort and Clustered Bellflower, over 100 spikes of Monkey Orchid (*Orchis simia*) were in full flower. Again we were escorted by the reserve warden, but he had one more trick up his sleeve - a Lady Orchid (*Orchis purpurea*) in full flower! Apparently no-one is sure how she and her two non-flowering neighbours got there, but there is a suspicion that the seed may not have arrived on the breeze! However, one must be delighted that the site is obviously to their liking.

Thanks and congratulations go to Bill, not just for making all the arrangements for this trip, but also for ensuring that the flowers, insects and birds were all lined up and on their best behaviour!

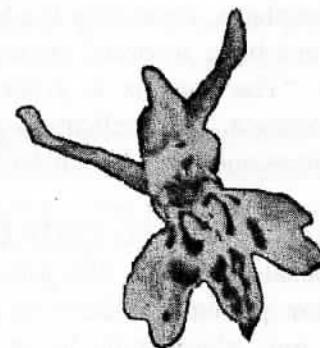
Orchids in the News

Press and media reports sent in by members

Invisible clues

Species of the *Dactylorhiza* orchid are often stunning, but they can also be notoriously difficult to identify. Some are so similar that even skilled taxonomists have trouble identifying them, but recent research in Denmark suggests that bees might find it easier than humans.

Bees see ultra-violet light, which is invisible to humans, and this gives flowers a distinctive appearance. Researchers suspect that each orchid species has its own UV pattern, which helps bees to recognise them and find the flowers' nectar source.



(Photo - W. Temple)

(From BBC Gardeners World, sent in by Shirley Pierce)

And the saga of Staffordshire Irish Ladies' Tresses goes on.....

RARE PLANTS FOUND ON PLANNED JAIL SITE

Campaigners fighting plans for a new 600-place prison in Staffordshire have been thrown a lifeline in their bid to have it stopped, by evidence of four rare plants found at the site. A group set up to challenge the £50 million scheme in

Marchington, near Uttoxeter, has been backed by Staffordshire Wildlife Trust.

One species of plant, *Spiranthes romanzoffiana*, commonly known as Irish Lady's Tresses, has never before been recorded in the county. Experts also say that the fern grass, basil thyme and saw-wort found there are also rare.

Sue Lawley, of Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, said conservation of the plants, especially the *Spiranthes*, was very important. "It has not been recorded before outside Ireland or Devon," she said. "The area is a grade one site of County Biological Importance. The application goes against the grain" (Express and Star, March 10th 1999)

PLANTS FAIL TO STOP £50M PRISON PLAN

Proposals to create 400 jobs in Staffordshire with a new £50 million prison are likely to get the go-ahead despite protests that rare plants will be at risk. Members of the county's planning committee are raising no objections to the project and are recommending that local planners approve the scheme. And they say that plants which may be destroyed by building work could be saved by moving them to landscaped areas of the site. (Express and Star, March 16th 1999)

100 TURN UP IN RAIN TO PROTEST AT PRISON PLAN

Around 100 demonstrators turned up to the site of a proposed 800-inmate category B prison in the Staffordshire countryside today, as councillors prepared to make a final decision on whether to give it the go-ahead.

Campaigners against the site of the Marchington development today claimed that a report to East Staffordshire Borough Council is misleading and they wanted a judicial review if plans are passed.

(Express and Star, March 29th 1999)

All from cuttings supplied by Christopher Toogood

Members Comment

If you have a tip, a thought or further information on any orchid topic raised in the Newsletter or at a meeting, the Newsletter Editor would like to hear from you. (Attributable comments please).

From: Bill Bond on a discussion about pest control at the HOS AGM during which Polysect was recommended by some members.

I checked on the chemical in Polysect. The active ingredient is the pyrethroid insecticide/acaricide bifenthrin which is effective against a broad range of pests including mites. According to the Pesticide Register (issue 1 1999), the same chemical is in the following products:

'Polysect Insecticide Ready to Use'

'Polysect Insecticide'

'Blitz Bug Gun'

'Sybol Extra'

'Bio New Sprayday'

Bio New Greenfly Killer Plus'

All carry the warning that the products are EXTREMELY DANGEROUS to fish and other aquatic life, and to bees. So users must follow the label instructions carefully.

From: Dr. Tom Norman on a query in the October Newsletter about use of superglue in propagation of tubers. (Issue 10 p.26)

1. No orchid ever produces a botanical corm – a term which should never be used in connection with the Orchidaceae.
2. A true tuber such as we see in e.g. *Ophrys* or *Orchis* does not normally produce more than one eye. Thirty years ago, before methods for vegetative propagation had been

worked out, several fruitless attempts had been made to propagate by cutting a tuber in half. Theoretically this might have been possible by cutting the single growth point through the middle: a tricky operation to say the least, and I am not sure whether it would work. Orchids with a rhizomatous rootstock, such as *Epipactis*, are a different matter and can easily be propagated (with or without superglue) by division of the rootstock.

3. As far as Cyclamen are concerned I know that division of the tuber has been used to propagate a particularly precious clone. It is true that the eyes do not produce new tubers. They simply rely on their portion of the old tuber, giving you two for the price of one. The process is most hazardous and has not been widely used because of the danger of lethal rot. I can well imagine that the use of superglue could act as an efficient seal against infection, but I can see no logic in gluing the two halves together since the whole object of the exercise is to obtain a greater number of plants.

Orchid Survey Forms

Members are reminded that photocopyable masters of all the paperwork needed for surveying orchid sites were included in the April 1999 newsletter. Norman Heywood has offered to receive and hold the information which will provide a vital source of information on trends in orchid populations. He looks forward to receiving your completed forms.

Hardy Orchid Society Membership badges are available for sale for £3.00 each from the Treasurer.

SPRING WHEN NATURE BURSTS INTO NEW LIFE ..
RE-AWAKENING ENTHUSIASM
FOR ALL THOSE NEGLECTED JOBS



" PETER I'VE GONE TO STAY WITH MOTHER

DINNER IN FRIDGE ... COOKER BLIPPED. FUSE BLOWN ... DIRTY DISHES IN SINK ... DISH WASHER LEAKING ... CAT MESS IN CONSERVATORY NEEDS FEEDING ... NO TINS ... HOT WATER ON BLINK PHONE BILL TO PAY ... PAY MILKMAN ... AND YOUR ORCHIDS NEED WATERING ... YOU ARE OUT OF RAINWATER

BE GOOD!

LOVE KATH . "



Orchids by Post is a joint venture made up of both amateur and professional growers. Our aim is to supply seed raised plants grown where ever possible in association with Mycorrhizal fungi. The production of high quality seed raised plants is vital for the protection of wild populations and over the coming seasons we aim to expand the range of material available.

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Have you the space to grow a few of these beautiful and undemanding little gems? We produce them from seed in a laboratory, usually with the assistance of a symbiotic fungus, weaning them out into pots, and growing on for a further three to eight years depending upon the species or hybrid concerned to raise them to flowering size. Some are produced vegetatively. We have a comprehensive list produced in the early Spring and Early Autumn, each year.

The catalogue includes, plant lists with details and availability.

The nursery is only open by appointment. Send two first class stamps for our current catalogue.



Orchis



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I have moved! Please note my new address. I hope to circulate my 1999 catalogue by early July, but it may be somewhat delayed by the likely chaos of moving. All those who requested one in 1998 will be sent a copy, and these will all go out at once, whenever that is! New customers please send a C5 size S. A. E. to:

Richard Manuel, Wye View Cottage, Leys Hill, Nr Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire HR9 5QU ☎ 01600 890644

