

**Journal
of the
HARDY ORCHID SOCIETY**

Vol. 18 No. 2 (100) Spring 2021



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Front Cover Photograph

Re-introduced Lady's-slipper Orchid photographed at Gait Barrows NNR by Gillian Elsom. See Paul Redshaw's historical account of the species in the 1930s on page 41.

The Hardy Orchid Society

Our aim is to promote interest in the study of Native European Orchids and those from similar temperate climates throughout the world. We cover such varied aspects as field study, cultivation and propagation, photography, taxonomy and systematics, and practical conservation. We welcome articles relating to any of these subjects, which will be considered for publication by the editorial committee. Please send your submissions to the Editor, and please structure your text according to the “Advice to Authors” (see Members’ Handbook, website www.hardyorchidsociety.org.uk, or contact the Editor). Views expressed in journal articles are those of their author(s) and may not reflect those of HOS.

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Editorial Note

Mike Gasson

Two of our rare, iconic species feature in this *JHOS* but in rather different ways. Rosie Webb has contributed another ‘must come back’ travelogue, this time focussed on the Ghost Orchid in Switzerland. And we have an historical account of the quest for a Yorkshire Lady’s-slipper Orchid from Paul Redshaw. This is the product of some detailed detective work that was first published by the Yorkshire Naturalists’ Union and reworked here with their permission. Cultivation and conservation are two areas that do not get as much coverage as we would like but both are involved in an article from Svante Malmgren and Bill Temple describing their work with Tenerife’s *Himantoglossum metlesicsianum*. The issue is rounded off with a review from Richard Bateman on a new Romanian orchid book. In the anticipation of being able to get out and about later in the year (Covid willing), we have included a tentative field trip programme with an impressive schedule organised by Richard Kulczycki.

Chairman's Note
Carol Armstrong

On Sunday March 21st we had our virtual AGM via a Zoom conference, marking the beginning of our Society's new cycle of activities and events. I'd like to thank the members who joined the meeting and also the committee members who organised this. I am pleased to welcome a new Vice-chair (Andrew Parsons) and Secretary (Jules Macauley) and give my thanks to Colin and Angela Scrutton for the contributions to our Society as they retire from these roles.

I hope many of you were able to watch the enjoyable presentations, given by Members on the website in March, in lieu of a Spring Meeting. I do hope it has inspired some of you to offer your own stories for future meetings. In a new venture in response to being unable to hold our plant show this year, we created an on-line plant show to enable members to exhibit their greenhouse and horticultural achievements. The virtual plant show was hosted on the website, complete with a competitive element. I'm sure it felt uplifting to see the entries.

We have just passed the Spring Equinox. Soon, if the lock-down relaxation continues in the UK, we will be able to cautiously visit orchid sites again. Where we can responsibly and safely do so we have our Society Field Trip programme available for our Members. Details of possible Field Trips are included in this *JHOS* on page 56. It only remains for me to say that I hope you all have a successful 2021 that brings you cheer.

Online Summer Plant Show
John Haggar

This year there will be an additional online HOS plant show representing the orchids that flower between March and July. For many years, the Spring Show has favoured the growers of spring-flowering, mainly winter-green species. This new on-line show will offer an opportunity for the many Members who grow orchids that flower in the summer months to exhibit photographs of their plants.

The classes are yet to be determined but are likely to be somewhat different from those of the Spring Show and will include at least one class representing photographs of orchids growing outside in a garden setting. The online photographic entries will need to be entered in digital format via Email. It is anticipated that the new classes and entry details will be posted on the website immediately following the conclusion of the Spring Show.

The Lady's-slipper Orchid in 1930: a Family Secret Revealed

Paul Redshaw

Introduction

Since the formation of the *Cypripedium* Committee in 1969 to help protect our native Lady's-slipper Orchid *Cypripedium calceolus* and its habitat, much about it has been documented. However, information before 1969 is scant because the orchid and its location were kept a closely guarded secret for nearly forty years. Attempts to unravel the mystery of the orchid and its rediscovery have largely been based on the synthesis of correspondence between established naturalists and the credibility of that information. Up to now, the generally accepted story was that the orchid was probably rediscovered by the Jarman brothers in 1930 (Lee, 2015). The purpose of this article, by seeking an original source, is to investigate this claim and to attempt to uncover how an orchid, thought to be extinct in the wild in Britain since 1917, was rediscovered and to understand some of the history of what might have occurred between its rediscovery and the formation of the *Cypripedium* Committee.

The name 'William (Willie) Jarman' was my starting point as it was often quoted as being the name of the original finder (Frankland, 1975; Lee, 2015; Bersweden, 2017; Dunn, 2018). By working out the Jarman family tree (Figure 1) I identified one last surviving close family member, Barbara Smith, the only child of Jack Smith (Jack was a byname; his birth name is John Robert Smith) and Ann Elizabeth (Annie) Jarman.

It came as rather a surprise to her when we met and I asked if she knew about the orchid, and her surprise grew when I explained that the real story had never been told and it was my belief that no-one knew it. Though her eyesight was failing she appeared to hear well and spoke clearly with a marvellous depth of understanding that a long life can bring. Her memory was also exceptional, considering I was asking questions about issues from such a long time ago, but it soon became evident that being only aged one at the time the orchid was found, it was only later in life she became fully party to the secret and to the information herein. In most instances she was able to state names or facts backed up with sufficient clarity of detail that left me with little doubt about the authenticity of her word. One particular circumstance illustrates this. On 17th July 2019, when I met Barbara, I explained that I had been to Settle to view the manuscripts of Norman Frankland's 'A Flora of Craven', in which I had seen written a reference taken from A Supplement To The Yorkshire Floras by Lees (1941) that in 1937 the Lady's-slipper Orchid flowered in the 'known' location. Barbara seemed sure that it had not flowered in 1937 and spelled out that it flowered every year until 1935 then failed to flower for about 8 years. I subsequently looked into this and records written by her uncle Richard, held by Natural England, and also corresponding ones found in the Chatsworth Settlement Archival Records,

The rediscovery and subsequent developments as recounted by Barbara Smith

The Lady's-slipper Orchid was found on Friday 6 June 1930. Being Whitsuntide, a popular time for walks or strolls, Richard Jarman (Snr), Barbara's grandfather, at seventy years of age, had unusually decided to stay at home. He loved the countryside and, being a proficient naturalist, knew where all the locally rare plants were and, as a father, had enlightened his children with his knowledge of nature. Indeed, the desire for his children to appreciate nature was the very reason why he had moved to the hamlet of Brunthwaite near Silsden in contrast to the noisy and dusty workings of the textile mills the family were familiar with.

That same morning his nephew George, from Riddlesden, along with his companion Shadrach Fleet from Keighley, had arranged to go out cycling on their tandem. Normally Jack Smith (Barbara Smith's father) would have gone out cycling with them but because it was Whitsuntide local people were around so he had decided to stay behind and open up his popular fish and chip shop business in Stockbridge, Keighley. George Jarman and Shadrach Fleet set out to ride into the Yorkshire Dales towards Grassington. On their arrival they laid down their bike at a local wood and decided to go for an exploratory walk.



Figure 2: Lady's-slipper Orchid *Cypripedium calceolus* photographed at its Yorkshire site in 1930 (Source: Chatsworth Settlement Archives, with permission).

They moved through the enclosed woodland canopy, gaining height, eventually filtering through its rough fringes into the scar landscape typical of the area. Scrambling about on the difficult terrain, by chance they encountered the Lady's-slipper Orchid with fourteen shoots, one being in flower (Figure 2 & 3). George Jarman, like other, wider family members having knowledge of wild flowers, instantly knew the significance of the find. Shadrach Fleet, George's companion, on the other hand, was simply a friend to go cycling with and it is unknown if he had any knowledge of wild flowers or natural history. Being elated at its discovery they hastily cycled back to Brunthwaite to tell George's uncle, Richard Jarman (Snr). Upon the disclosure Richard was thrilled and he made an effort soon after to visit it himself. Barbara Smith intimated that Richard could not drive so she believes

it was very likely his son William (Barbara Smith's maternal uncle) who drove him there. Barbara also stressed several times on my visits that it was George Jarman who first set eyes on the Lady's-slipper Orchid that day.

Richard decided to keep the finding a close family secret. However, several years later he felt obliged to inform certain 'esteemed' people about its existence, including the 11th Duke of Devonshire, Andrew Cavendish, as the orchid was thought to be on his land. Barbara explained that it was her father Jack who informed the Duke about the existence of the orchid; though generally Jack would speak to anyone, he became shy at the thought of speaking to someone of a much higher status so he refused to meet the Duke himself but agreed to meet his agent instead to ask if he would view the orchid and relay the information to the Duke. This account of events has distinct similarities to the account given by Thomas Hey (1949) in the Dalesman magazine, though whether Thomas Hey is a pseudonym of Earnest Ellis Hey, the Duke's agent (in training) at that time, has yet to be ascertained. Hey's article mentions Cononley, a village only a mile from Bradley where the Jarmans worked and there is also a reference to the giving of detailed flowering notes which further supports the likelihood that it is one of the Jarmans detailing the find. Hey details how an expectation of a discussion regarding troublesome foxes turned into a surprise. My hypothesis is that the tale of the foxes was a ruse to ensure the true purpose of the requested meeting would not be divulged. In Hey's opening account there is also mention of his desk in Bradford which concurs with Benedict Heyes, the current Duke's estates director, who believed that there was an estate office in Keighley at that time as the Duke had land nearby (Heyes, 2019). Is this the referenced 'desk in Bradford'? It may be that we will never know who wrote this article and communicated knowledge of the orchid's existence outside the family circle.

On the death of Richard Jarman (Snr) in 1937 aged 78, Richard (Jnr), being the eldest son of the family, decided to take control of the orchid issue. He managed the interested orchid fraternity and kept a comprehensive log of the orchid colony's growth. Over the years he wrote many letters to people they held in esteem, detailing the fortunes of the colony. Each letter was signed R. Jarman, possibly the origin of references to 'Bob' Jarman (Lee, 2015) on the assumption that the 'R' refers to a Robert! In 1964 William Jarman also corresponded by letter, giving authority to allow two unnamed ladies to accompany a party to see the orchid (Jarman, 1964).

The true finders, George Jarman and Shadrach Fleet, were never disclosed by the Jarman family. When Richard submitted plant records to the trusted plant recorders Eric Lloyd Jones and Eric Hardy in 1952 (Kent, 1954) and to Joan Duncan (Secretary of The Wharfedale Naturalists' Society) in 1962 (Jarman, 1962) he ascribed the finding to his late father Richard. Barbara explained that when the Jarman family

told Kew Gardens of the existence of the Lady’s-slipper Orchid, Kew wanted to come and dig it up. Being deeply unhappy with this response the Jarmans decided not to immediately tell Kew where it was. Dr Mike Fay, Kew’s representative on the Cypripedium Committee, explained “I haven’t heard any stories about the site being kept secret because Kew wanted to dig the plant up – other rediscoveries (e.g. that of *Orchis militaris* by Lousely) were also kept secret for a number of years, so maybe this was the way such matters were handled at that time” (Fay, pers.comm., 2019).

Richard Jarman (Jnr) and his brother William, along with Jack Smith and Earnest Hey collectively formed a pact known as the Guardians to manage the orchid (Hey, undated). Earnest Hey collaborated with Rex Graham (Botanist at Kew Gardens), in part through a need for a confidant to address ongoing concerns. Worries had been raised due to the increasing list of other dignitaries, including Eric Lloyd Jones, Eric Hardy, John Raven, Rosse Butterfield, John Gilmour and many others, who had also been shown the orchid and had sworn to its secrecy (Hey, 1958). Some

had become more involved than the Guardians wished and of particular issue was Dr Arthur Sledge’s involvement in 1958, who hadn’t made an oath, but also Eric Hardy’s publishing antics, a few years earlier, which by plant association had likely enabled the orchid’s locality to be disclosed (Hey, 1958). After the sudden death of Rex Graham in 1958 a letter to him from Earnest Hey was finally unearthed in 1960 by Edgar Milne-Redhead, Deputy Keeper of the Herbarium and Library at Kew and correspondence with Kew was re-affirmed (Milne- Redhead, 1960). After many years overseeing the orchid project, age and infirmity took their toll on Richard Jarman (Jnr) and, prior to moving away from Silsden, he decided to relinquish his role and in 1969 a meeting was held which gave rise to the Cypripedium Committee. In 1971 William Jarman, the last Jarman family member living in Brunthwaite, died, leaving the vigil to the Smith family. Jack Smith customarily visited each year when the orchid was in flower.



Figure 3: Lady’s-slipper Orchid *Cypripedium calceolus* photographed at its Yorkshire site by John Armitage.

Some years his visits were quite frequent and worryingly accompanied by many neighbours or chosen friends (Warden's Report, 1977). In that same report and also in the Warden's Report 1979 it is rather strangely recorded that he had found the orchid in 1928, two years earlier than known, something Barbara was appalled to hear since, as far as she was concerned, it was the wrong person and the wrong date. Nonetheless, on her father's death in 1982, Barbara scattered his ashes in the woods near the orchid as she felt that would have pleased him.

Apart from Barbara's disbelief that the orchid's story had not been told and the true rediscoverers known, she felt quite concerned about what untruths had been told about the family. One in particular was a letter to naturalists Elizabeth and Brian Shorrocks, in which it is said that the finders of the orchid were the brothers Willie and Richard Jarman Jnr, both of whom were described as spinners working at Greens Mill, Bradley (Frankland, 1975). Barbara was displeased by this letter for not only had the Jarman brothers been erroneously identified as the finders but they didn't work for anyone else, being commissioned weavers running their own business and renting premises at Stirks Mill in Bradley, North Yorkshire (Green, 1965, Throup, 1987) until 1949.

Conclusion

William (Willie) Jarman was believed to be the original re-discoverer of the Lady's-slipper Orchid but, as explained by Barbara Smith, it was in fact George Jarman and Shadrach Fleet. William was a guardian who took an active interest in it, wrote the occasional letter and likely drove his father Richard Jarman (Snr) regularly to see the orchid. There is some evidence to suggest that Richard Jarman (Jnr) wanted his father to take all credit for its finding rather than let the names of the true re-discoverers be known. According to the Warden's reports in the late 1970s, Jack Smith worryingly showed the orchid to many and also, after Richard (Jnr) moved away, possibly made an open attempt to claim being the finder two years earlier than the recognised date.

Figure 4: Lady's-slipper Orchid growing at Gait Barrows NNR, Cumbria. These plants derive from tissue cultures taken from the original Dales plant and grown on by staff at Kew, under the auspices of the Cypripedium Committee.

Photo by J. Simmons



What is certain is that Barbara Smith, who up to now had not been asked about her family's involvement with the Lady's-slipper Orchid, has described her recollections of the family history and named George Jarman and Shadrach Fleet instead of William Jarman as the re-discoverers of the orchid, thereby shedding new light on a significant natural history event in Yorkshire that took place over 90 years ago.

Acknowledgements

Without help from the following I could not have achieved this work, thank you all: Barbara Smith for letting be known her great Family Secret (Barbara Smith sadly died in February 2020); Christine Hancock a cheerful neighbour who kindly helped to research ancestry; Dr Gerard McGowan for access to the herbarium at Cliffe Castle Museum; Dr Mike Fay at Kew Gardens for his opinion and direction; Professor John Lee for help in my queries and general support; Colin Newlands for access to The Natural England Archives and continuous generous help; Ben Heyes for access to The Chatsworth Settlement Archives held at Bolton Abbey and enthusiastic spirited support; Richard Selby for his personal support, historical research and continuously keeping me enlightened; Elizabeth Shorrocks for personal correspondence; and Michael Slater, a great trustee of The North Craven Heritage Trust for his charitable time. Finally, I am grateful to the YNU Editorial Board for their comments which improved the manuscript.

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This article was first published by the Yorkshire Naturalists' Union (NYU) in *The Naturalist* (Volume 144, Number 1102, Pages 165-170, December 2019). Many thanks to YNU for permission to publish the article here in *JHOS*.

I Will Have to Come Back Next Year 4: Ghost in the Valley **Rosemary Webb**

I have been visiting Switzerland for more than 21 years. The vagaries of the seasons and the opportunities to take holidays at the right time, have affected the possibilities of finding plants, especially orchids. I have always based myself in Kandersteg in the Bernese Oberland. The village is situated on a small upland plateau at the southern end of the Kander Valley. From here there are three cable cars up to different areas around the valley head and two toll roads up to other high-altitude valleys. There is an amazing range of geological features and terrain and everywhere is dominated by high, snow-capped mountains. I have tried to arrange visits at varying times throughout the alpine late spring and summer.

My first summer visit began in the last ten days of July. It was fine and warm throughout most of my stay and I was able to explore thoroughly. My favourite place is the Gasterntal, a high valley, only accessible in the summer months. There is a quite expensive toll road up to it and timing is critical. There are only 20 minutes in each hour in which one can make an ascent or descent. The other 20 minutes are divided equally to allow for overlap in the journey from top to bottom or vice versa. The first time one travels this route, it is quite frightening. The track rises steeply and is hewn out of the rock walls of high precipitous mountain cliffs with a couple of rock-cut tunnels. In places it looks hardly wide enough to take a car; one would be in deep trouble if one got the timing wrong and met a vehicle travelling in the opposite direction! Once at the top there is a sharp bend across a bridge over the river Kander which tumultuously seeths and froths over the cliff, down to the valley below. The track then widens out, following the course of the river into the Gasterntal, a long, quite narrow valley with snow-capped mountains on both sides.

Fig. 1: *Cephalanthera rubra*.

Fig. 2: *Goodyera repens*.

Fig. 3: *Neottia nidus-avis*.

Photos by Rosemary Webb

1



2



3



It is a wonderful place, the sound of rushing and falling water, the variety of habitat and paradoxically, a monumental silence. Within a few yards the river becomes still and wide with marshy islands and damp flood-plains. This is an area of bewildering *Dactylorhiza* marsh orchids and their hybrids, Marsh Helleborine (*Epipactis palustris*) and *Gymnadenia densiflora*. A little further down the small meadows are drier and *Neottinea ustulata* and *Gymnadenia conopsea* are quite frequent. On the left-hand side of the track, there are huge, fallen boulders with mosses and creeping willows amongst the pine trees. On the edge of the wooded area, I have found Bird's-nest Orchids (*Neottia nidus-avis*) and Creeping Lady's-tresses (*Goodyera repens*).

All the way along the track, there are woods clinging to the hill-sides. I have explored many of these, following steep tracks and wandering between boulders. There are many orchids, depending on the time of year. I have found both Greater and Lesser-butterfly Orchids (*Platanthera chlorantha* and *Platanthera bifolia*), Coralroot (*Corallorhiza trifida*), Lesser Twayblade (*Neottia cordata*), Dark-red Helleborine (*Epipactis atrorubens*) and the occasional *Cephalanthera rubra* as well as *G. conopsea* and *Gymnadenia odoratissima* in more open sunny glades.

On the last afternoon of my first summer visit, I decided to search my favourite spot one more time and walked up a steep path into the woods. I was particularly looking for *C. rubra* which was in bud earlier in the week. The sun was filtering through the trees and patches of light were illuminating the forest floor. The *C. rubra* was out – three spikes – they are not common in this valley. The *E. atrorubens* was in fine form, growing with them. The Bird's-nest Orchids were way past their best and the Coralroot was in seed. A few Lesser- butterfly Orchids (*P. bifolia*) were still good, Creeping Lady's-tresses (*G. repens*) were at their peak and there were a few plants of Twayblade (*Neottia ovata*) in fine shape. It was getting towards late afternoon and I had a final scan of the area, looking beyond a gully to some large rocks which had fallen from far above, probably in a winter avalanche a long time ago.

On the opposite side, beneath a tall pine tree, I spotted a little group of grey feathers. I recognised this as a baby owl. I scrambled over to see if it was alive as it must have fallen from its nest, maybe in the pine tree above. Sadly, I could see that it was dead. As I turned away, I spotted something which made me catch my breath. Very close to the young owl were five spikes of something waxy white and pinkish in tight bud. This was one of those moments which one would describe as bitter-sweet. This was my last afternoon, in fact I was actually making my way back to make the descent

Fig. 4: *Epipactis atrorubens*.

Fig. 5: *Epipogium aphyllum* in 1996.

Figs. 6 & 7: *Epipogium aphyllum* from later years.

Photos by Rosemary Webb





to Kandersteg and pack, ready to leave in the morning. My feelings were almost indescribable – these spikes were a group of Ghost Orchids (*Epipogium aphyllum*) and I was just too early to see them in full flower. Another week should see them out, I think. I could not get this vision out of my mind. The decision was easy – I will have to come back next year.

Of course, that is exactly what I did. I arrived about a week later this time for a two week stay. I thought that if they were there this year, I would find them in bloom at some time while I am here. I had to make the first trip of this visit up to the wood. I spent time carefully looking around and as I reached the spot where I saw them last year, I was rewarded. There were some beautiful spikes in full flower. Some were quite tall with up to five flowers on the stem and all were perfect. Morning shafts of sunlight were briefly highlighting the flowers. I counted many spikes in a fairly wide but confined area of woodland. It was just incredible. My excitement and admiration were to be rewarded even more when I found a couple of spikes with completely white flowers, looking very ‘ghostly’ indeed.

There was no one else about. All I had was the silence of the wood and the sound of the turbulent River Kander far below in the valley bottom. I had this wonderful array of orchids to myself. Which one should I photograph first? I spent several hours composing shots, investigating viewpoints and looking at the plants in the round. Sometimes a ray of sun would filter through and highlight a particular flower. It was so wonderful to be able to set up the camera at their level and work on photographs from many angles. Views through the wood and close-up portraits, anything is possible.

I have subsequently visited this site many times and the numbers of flowers have varied considerably. However, I have never visited and found there were none at all. Timing and flowering does seem to be dependent on good, moist ground. I can see that the site is extremely vulnerable and it would be very easy to squash plants hidden in the deep, loose humus. To see such a display ranks as one of my most memorable orchid experiences. I am so glad that I had to come back this year.

Figs. 8 & 9: *Epipogium aphyllum* from later years.

Fig. 10: *Epipogium aphyllum* var. *alba*.

Fig. 11: pale *Epipogium aphyllum*.

Photos by Rosemary Webb

Ophrys apifera var. *cambrensis*; a First Record for Kent

David Johnson

Ophrys apifera, the Bee Orchid, is more variable than any other orchid species. Much attention has been directed towards such variant forms, which has led to a number of the more recognisable and stable ones being accorded names, but many authorities oppose naming these phenotypes.

In June 2019 at Ranscombe (Plantlife) reserve, near Rochester in North Kent, Ade Jupp noted three variants flowering amongst a group of ‘normal’ Bee Orchids. The very striking flowers had an overall yellow appearance to the lip which was horseshoe patterned with two adjacent yellowish areas divided by a dark brown central stripe and dark brown edge and bottom. The petals were greenish-pink. At the time these variant plants were noted as unusual, but an apparently unnamed form of the Bee Orchid, and described as such by Geoffrey Kitchener in Kent Botany 2019, the magazine of the Kent Botanical Recording Group (Kitchener, 2020).

Then, in June this year, Daphne Mills came upon (presumably the same) small colony of Bee Orchids at Ranscombe. There were 43 flowering Bee Orchid plants and Daphne was surprised to find that scattered throughout the colony were 13 plants all of which displayed the same strikingly different lip patterning from the other ‘normal’ Bee Orchids. She showed me her pictures of the variants, and I recognised them as having the same distinctive patterning as those Ade Jupp found and photographed in 2019.

Since Bee Orchids are predominantly self-pollinating, variants can propagate by cloning and form localised patches, and so I thought initially that this (unnamed) variant might be unique to the site at Ranscombe. However, I then had a vague recollection of seeing this same distinctive patterning somewhere before, and I began trawling through my back copies of the HOS Journal. I soon came upon Michael Clark’s article “To name or not to name” in the April 2015 edition. Michael had previously published the description of a new variety of Bee Orchid from Wales (Clark, 2014) where a population of about a hundred abnormally patterned Bee Orchids had been found on the Glamorgan coast in South Wales. He accorded this variant the name var. *cambrensis* (after Cambria, the Latin name for Wales). From Michael’s description and pictures, I recognised that the Kentish variant plants from Ranscombe also equated to var. *cambrensis*.

Ophrys apifera var. *cambrensis*, 11th June 2020 at Ranscombe Farm, Kent.

Photos by Daphne Mills



The Kentish plants are not the first to be recognised outside Wales. Michael Clark mentioned in his HOS article that a plant keying to var. *cambrensis* had been found at Box Hill, Surrey a few years before. Then Mike Gasson documented in the April 2016 edition of the HOS Journal that an ‘unusual’ Bee Orchid found in a quarry on Portland, Dorset by Alan Ward also keyed out to var. *cambrensis* (Gasson, 2016). So, now that the same variant is known from Kent, it will be interesting to see where else in Britain the ‘Welsh Bee Orchid’ makes or has made an appearance.

The addition of var. *cambrensis* brings Kent’s list of named Bee Orchid variants up to six. The other five are *chlorantha*, *flavescens*, *belgarum*, *badensis* (formerly *friburgensis*) and *fulvofusca* (formerly *atrofuscus*). The ‘Hop County’ still has to record var. *bicolor*, and of course var. *trollii* (the ‘Wasp Orchid’) which seems never to have made its way this far east from its stronghold in the West Country.

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Field Trips 2021 Richard Kulczycki

At the time of writing with the Covid pandemic now in mid-March, we plan to run the following field trips. The proposed trips are provisional and depend on the detail of Covid restrictions that are in place at the time. These field trips are for HOS members only and must be pre-booked via email, quoting your membership number. Accompanying spouses/partners must also be members; it only costs £3 to upgrade to family membership. You may be asked to show your membership card so please take it with you. We hope that new members will take advantage of our field trips: they are an excellent introduction to the orchids across the country and an important means of meeting other enthusiasts. We normally collect a voluntary donation to any organisation that maintains a site visited.

You must make your decision whether you are fit and healthy enough to participate in any particular walk. General indications of difficulty are below, but on the day weather and underfoot conditions may make the trip more difficult. In general you should prepare as for a remote country walk and expect uneven ground. Please note

that participants are responsible for their own safety. Areas visited often have no mobile signal. The leader does not carry any first-aid or emergency equipment. The leader's role is to help you find your way around the area and help you to see more orchids than you would if you went on your own. Orchids tend to grow in wild or brownfield areas. Some trips may include steep slopes or boggy areas. Participants, if in doubt, should contact the organisation running the sites visited or look at any relevant web sites describing these places. General enquiries to Field Meetings Co-ordinator (see inside cover)

Friday 21st May: East Kent

Leader: Alan Blackman, email: blackman@hardyorchidsociety.org
Parkgate and Denge Wood to see Monkey, Greater Butterfly, Fly and Lady Orchids (in their best UK location). Up to 12 orchids are possible. Less than 2 miles of easy walking. Note that this trip requires car sharing between sites due to limited parking.

Saturday 29th May: North Downs, Surrey

Leaders: Ken & Gillian Elsom, email: elsom@hardyorchidsociety.org
Sheepleas is an orchid-rich SSSI on the dip slope of the North Downs. Expect to see Birds-nest, Fly & Greater Butterfly-orchids, White Helleborine and Common Twayblade, potentially others too. Moderate walking of about 5 km.

Monday 31st May (Bank Holiday): Northamptonshire / Cambridgeshire

Leaders: Brian Hodgkin and John & Judy Kingston,
e-mail: bhodgkin@hardyorchidsociety.org
Our first trip to the East Midlands for a long time. Barnack Hills and Swaddywell Pit. Man and Bee orchids. 7 orchids are possible. One to two miles of easy walking.

Saturday 5th June: New Forest

Leader: David Hughes, email: dhughes@hardyorchidsociety.org
For *Platanthera bifolia*, *Dactylorhiza incarnata*, *Dactylorhiza praetermissa* and *Gymnadenia borealis*. Some bog walking. About two miles of walking.

Saturday 12th June: Bedfordshire Chilterns

Leaders: Richard & Geraldine Hogg, e-mail: hogg@hardyorchidsociety.org
Cowslip Meadow, Luton for Bee Orchid, Common Spotted-orchid (CSO) and Southern Marsh-orchid (SMO), plus hybrids between CSO and SMO.
Barton Hills (NNR) for Pyramidal Orchid, Bee Orchid, CSO, Chalk Fragrant-orchid (CFO) and possible hybrids between CSO and CFO. Most years there are also CSO var. *rhodochila* (there were three plants last year, all different).

Totternhoe (BCN Wildlife Trust) for Man Orchid, Musk Orchid, Bee Orchid, Pyramidal Orchid and CSO (including possible var. *rhodochila*).

Short distances but some of the chalk mounds are steep, so good shoes are required. This is a great opportunity for new members to see many of our best orchids in substantial numbers, along with some of their varieties and hybrids.

Saturday 12th June: Minchinhampton & Rodborough Commons, Gloucestershire

Leaders: Colin & Angela Scrutton and Maureen & Nigel Denman,

e-mail: CScrutton@hardyorchidsociety.org

The commons support a rich flora of orchids including Common Spotted-orchid, Common Twayblade, Common Fragrant-orchid, Bee Orchid, Pyramidal Orchid, and Frog Orchid. Lizard Orchid is a possibility and *bicolor* and *trollii* varieties of Bee Orchid may also be found. If time permits also Selsley Common for Fly Orchids. <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/minchinhampton-and-rodborough-commons>

Saturday 19th June: around Leeds

Leader: Charlie Philpotts, e-mail: CPhilpotts@hardyorchidsociety.org

Three sites around east Leeds area to see Common Spotted-orchid, Northern Marsh-orchid, Southern Marsh-orchid, Pyramidal Orchid, Twayblade, Common Fragrant-orchid and Bee Orchid. There will also be a wealth of other wildflowers as well as birds and butterflies. Easy walking but good footwear essential.

Saturday afternoon 3rd July: Greywell Moors, North Hampshire

Leaders: Peter & Jane Vaughan, email: pjvaughan@hardyorchidsociety.org

The site's specialities are large numbers of Marsh Helleborine, including var. *ochroleuca*, and Marsh Fragrant-orchid. Southern Marsh-orchid, Common Twayblade, Pyramidal Orchid, Broad-leaved Helleborine and a few Bee Orchid var. *belgarum* are also present, although the latter has often gone over by early July. The site is relatively compact and so we will walk less than a mile, but the ground is uneven, wet and sloping in places, so good footwear is essential. We may also visit Bartley Heath to see Heath Spotted-orchid.

Saturday 10th July: Cumbria

(restricted booking – please only book if you have not been to this site before)

Leader: Alan Gendle, e-mail: AGendle@hardyorchidsociety.org

Burton Fell, a Cumbria WT reserve for *Epipactis atrorubens* plus var. *pallens* (yellow flowered), *E. × schmalhauseni* (*atrорubens* × *helleborine* hybrid) *E. helleborine* and *E. phyllanthes* var. *vectensis*. Over a mile walk and 200 metres uphill to get to a limestone pavement where the plants grow. Sure footedness and a sense of balance required.

Sunday 11th July: Cumbria

(restricted booking – please only book if you have not been to this site before)

Leader: Alan Gendle, e-mail: AGendle@hardyorchidsociety.org

Sandscale Haws, NNR (Barrow in Furness) for *E. phyllanthes* var. *pendula*, *E. dunensis* and *E. palustris*. Over a mile walk over dune slacks – relatively easy terrain.

Special Visits

This year we have three special trips to sites that are home to nationally rare orchids. There is some uncertainty about each of these visits as I write and they are each organised differently. All these trips are to see single groups of plants, so they are highly unpredictable in terms of flowering time.

Irish Lady's-tresses: Wales, July 2021

Leaders: Sue Parker and Pat O'Reilly, email: sue@first-nature.com

When flowering of these plants in 2021 is confirmed (probably around early July) joining instructions for visits (around mid-July) will be sent out by email (to the pre-existing list of interested parties) and via the HOS website and forum. See Sue Parker's Winter 2021 Journal article for more details about the site and how these orchids were found here.

Red Helleborine: Windsor Hill, near Princes Risborough, Chilterns. Late June (possibly first days of July)

Registrations to: hosft@hardyorchidsociety.org

This has recently been the only site where this orchid flowers in the UK. Violet Helleborine should be present too. Please note that there are very steep hillsides and these can be very slippery after rain, although the total walking is about a mile. The orchids are in an enclosure so you can only get within a few metres of them – bring your lenses. This trip will probably be on a weekday, although it may be on the weekend – please state if this affects your availability.

BBOWT (the local Wildlife Trust) always has a fee per individual for guided reserve walks and indeed the warden will be on site to explain the history and current conservation policies. We need to collect donations to match these fees and to contribute to the recent extensive conservation efforts at this site.

Tongue Orchids: nr Tiptree, Essex. End May/early June.

Leader: Jonathan Greenwood, email: jmgreenwood@hardyorchidsociety.org

Jonathan offered to show these *Serapias lingua* on our forum back in January. He may have room for a few more visitors. This site is sensitive as it is on private land and visits need to be in small groups. The future of these orchids continues to be threatened by development. For more background see Sean Cole and Mike Waller's article in the October 2017 Journal.

Balkan Beauties Book Review by Richard Bateman



Orchids of Romania by Nora De Angelli and Dan Angheliescu (2020). Published by the authors, Snagov. Hardback. ISBN 978-973-0-32586-7, 300 pp., 28 × 23 cm. £58.00 including P&P.

Purchase direct from noradeangelli15@gmail.com

When visiting the Balkans, it is inevitably difficult for European orchid enthusiasts to pass by the orchidological honey pot that is Greece. Its Mediterranean climate, snow-capped mountains, jagged coastline, plethora of islands and countless *Ophrys* variants render the country unmissable. Sadly, far fewer of us have thus far

been tempted to follow the reversed ‘S’ of the Balkan and Carpathian Mountains northward from Greece into the less well-charted terrains of Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary. Admittedly, orchid species lists for these more northerly countries tend to blend a modest number of archetypal Mediterranean species into orchid floras that are much more familiar to those of us who live in northern and western Europe. Yet the very existence of those mountains and their diverse geology should be enough to tell us that they are likely to harbour orchidological jewels.

A decade has passed since Attila Molnár (2011) published his superb monograph of the Hungarian orchid flora (reviewed in *JHOS* by Bateman, 2012), a book not only beautifully presented but also extremely rich in biological and ecological content, as well as reflecting what was at the time the cutting edge of orchid systematics. However, understandably – but frustratingly for most of us – Molnár’s text was written in Hungarian with a dash of German. Now, ten years later, arrives a monograph of the Romanian orchid flora with a text that, helpfully for most HOS members, has been prepared by the authors in English.

The Romanian volume is less ambitious in content, though it certainly matches the Hungarian volume in attractiveness. The book consists entirely of a series of treatments of each of the 26 genera and 71 species of orchids considered native to Romania. The authors have expended considerable effort in consulting widely to develop a modern classificatory framework for their book, thereby creating a classification that is well-informed but also lacks an overall unifying conceptual framework. At the genus level, the recircumscription of *Orchis* is accepted but *Coeloglossum* and *Nigritella* are retained as genera separate from *Dactylorhiza* and *Gymnadenia*, respectively. At the species level, the relatively recent (and apparently justifiable: Durka *et al.*, 2017) separation of *Platanthera muelleri* from *P. bifolia* is accepted, whereas the plethora of 19 *Epipactis* species reported here for Romania ignores recent evidence that several of these names are unjustifiable synonyms for misconceived segregates of species already well-known in western Europe (Sramkó *et al.*, 2018).

Discussion of orchid biology is confined to the comparatively small portions of text that constitute the species treatments, though additional effort is made to explore contrasting pollination mechanisms, peaking in the two full pages that are devoted to summarising pseudocopulation in the four *Ophrys* species native to Romania. The information provided is largely accurate but is also already known to most orchid enthusiasts; there is suprisingly little in the species treatments to ‘personalise’ the accounts as being specifically Romanian. The absence of distribution maps (and even of a map of Romania itself), and the lack of locality information in almost all the photographic captions, means that the book will be of little help to orchidologists considering touring the country. Erstwhile visitors are equally unlikely to be

encouraged by the traumatic account of the agricultural rape of the Bucegi Mountains that introduces the book; we need to be told about places that have not been ravaged as well as those that have.

Where this large-format book really comes alive is in its often superb and indisputably lavish colour photography; I estimate that the book contains approximately 700 images. These are used to good effect, not only to characterise each species and its habitat(s) but also to encapsulate much of the variation exhibited by the species and by any hybrids that are known to occur within Romania.

Each species is awarded at least one full-page portrait, some of which are remarkably arresting – one good example is a spike of *Epipactis atrorubens* bearing large flowers that are uniformly the colour of a particularly robust Burgundy wine. There are spectacular gems aplenty: uniformly yellow Slippers, clumps of Ghosts, majestic forests of Eastern Lizards all compete for attention. Some of the more reclusive species are equally intriguing, including Frivald’s Fragrant-orchid and the painfully elusive *Chamorchis alpina*. The photographs also exhibit an “inordinate fondness for beetles”, and indeed for any other insects caught visiting the orchid spikes. But even more impressive to me were composite plates presenting numerous variants of anthropomorphic *Orchis* and their hybrids, and of the various resident *Dactylorhiza* taxa. The accounts of dactylorhizas beautifully illustrate the need (and potential) for further integrated scientific study of some of the more taxonomically challenging groups present within the Romanian orchid flora.

This beautiful and passionate book is evidently a labour of love – one that will grace any coffee table. However, I can readily imagine a future second edition that is more consistent taxonomically and more informative for a potential visitor; such a book would be an essential companion for anyone contemplating a botanising trip to Romania.

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The Rise and Fall and Possible Rebirth of a Conservation Project Svante Malmgren and Bill Temple

Himantoglossum metlesicsianum, previously known as *Barlia metlesicsiana*, is only found on Tenerife in the Canary Islands. It was first described in 1982 and named after the Austrian botanist M. Metlesics. It grows on the lower slopes of the volcanic Mount Tiede in a harsh environment with a well known and easily accessible site near Santiago del Tiede. Our involvement with this conservation project began when Bill became aware that all of the orchids of *H metlesicsianum* at this site had been dug up.

After this was reported, Bill decided to visit Tenerife to see the orchids and meet the Chair of the Grupo Orquídeofilo Canarias (GOC) who had reported the theft. As a result of this meeting it was agreed that the GOC would seek a permit for the collection of some seed pods which would be sent to Bill in order for HOS volunteers to try to propagate the species in order to increase the natural population. After the permit was obtained a problem arose in that we were unable to discover the season temperature range and annual rainfall or their patterns for the habitat that the orchids grow in. This necessarily led to trial and error propagation attempts that took much time and effort. It also resulted in early total losses, although eventually Svante did discover how to succeed.

A rather different problem arose later when Svante had a good number of tubers to return to Tenerife. Bill wrote to the GOC who translated the letter and sent it to the Project Manager but it turned out that he had left and it took a further two years to get a reply from someone else. The new person was enthusiastic about planting the tubers that we had raised but within their Botanic Garden. The problem with this was that the species did not occur below about 650m altitude and the altitude of the Botanic Garden was about 15m. Also it was located near the coast where the winters were very mild. We knew by that time that the plants required vernalization during winter. He quickly suggested an alternative which was a totally different habitat (wet forest rather than the normal extremely drained volcano slope) at about 200m which was the highest altitude piece of land they had. Subsequent letters from Bill with suggestions for more suitable locations or possible ways to keep them in the Botanic Garden (storing them in a fridge after they have dehisced) have not been answered.

Figs. 1 & 2: *Himantoglossum metlesicsianum*.

Fig. 3: Seeds of *H. metlesicsianum*.

Fig. 4: Germination of *H. metlesicsianum* seeds.

Photos by Svante Malmgren (Figs. 1, 2 & 4) and Hans-Joachim Pischeli (Fig. 3)



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The actual progress and difficulties with the propagating part of this project follow. When Svante received about 150 seeds from Bill he had never heard of *H. metlesicsianum*. We joked about how difficult it was to pronounce its name! Well, the seeds were sown in early October and more than a hundred germinated nicely within a month. They were replanted to fresh medium, and we had some hope and expectation they would grow like Mediterranean *Orchis*, *Anacamptis* and *Ophrys*, producing nice little leaves and in springtime tubers of 5mm size or so. We had no idea about its temperature requirements as Bill's contacts in Tenerife couldn't find any recorded weather data for the region in which the orchid grows. In springtime they had produced very big protocorms, sometimes with a very small tuber, but no leaves. Then they went into a long dormancy or maybe they were unhealthy, Svante didn't know.

The following autumn they were kept at a significantly lower temperature, 8-12°C and very quickly long leaves and long roots were formed and in early spring big tubers. So, easily propagated – but needing two growing seasons on medium in order to produce leaves and a tuber, very likely an adaptation to a short vegetation period in nature. Other *Himantoglossum* species just need one season on growing medium. In spring, approximately 18 months after sowing, 110 good looking tubers were potted in soil. As we lacked volcanic soil, Fig trees and a symbiotic mycorrhiza, we used the same kind of calcareous natural soil Svante uses for all his other artificially propagated orchids

In early September watering was started and in Sweden there are no problems keeping the temperature down in autumn. They were grown together with a large number of other Mediterranean species at 10-12°C in artificial light. 105 plants developed rather big, seemingly healthy, leaves which died off in March. The leaves and the tubers were significantly bigger than *Ophrys* or *Orchis* after one year on soil. Svante was worried about how to keep them alive in the absence of weather data from their natural habitat at more than 900m altitude, as well as the unavailability of volcanic soil. Svante asked Bill to arrange to plant the tubers in Tenerife but, as mentioned above, that failed, due to a



Fig. 5: *H. metlesicsianum* after one year on medium.
 Figs. 6 & 7: *H. metlesicsianum* with leaves and roots.

Photos by Svante Malmgren

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lack of response. In the following September Svante started watering as usual. Now 92 very strong, good-looking plants produced long leaves, still growing at 10-12 °C. Again Svante asked Bill to arrange to plant the tubers in Tenerife. Well, that failed, as mentioned above, due to the lack of a suitable new home for the tubers.

Then Svante made a fatal mistake. Often people asked him about giving fertilizer to orchids, which he had never done before, but he gave the *H. metlesicsianum* plants a lot of fertilizer, not least nitrogen. The leaves turned a darker green, they looked very healthy and died off as usual in late March. The pots were carefully kept “almost dry” as usual during the summer dormancy – a technique very rarely failing with the 500 – 1000 other Mediterranean orchids – and in the same way as the previous year. Watering started as usual in middle September – but just three plants had survived summer dormancy. Checking the soil showed that the tubers were big, but crumpled. Possibly an over-dose of fertilizer produced big but unhealthy tubers. Nothing else had been changed.

The project continued with just three survivors. In the following years these plants were kept in an unheated green-house in September and October, then in another unheated but frost free room (actually an old cow-stable, with artificial light, perfect for Mediterranean orchids in winter!). Here temperatures were significantly lower over winter, never below 4°C, but with very long periods of just 4–6 °C. The remaining *H. metlesicsianum* just loved it, as did many other orchid species. In late March they went back to the greenhouse again and the leaves were green for a total of nine months. We have learned that some orchids very much prefer a long, but cool vegetation period instead of a short, warm one! For *H. metlesicsianum* 4-8°C was much better than 10-12°C during winter!



Fig. 8: *H. metlesicsianum* mature tubers approximately 18 months post-sowing.

Fig. 9: *H. metlesicsianum* mature tubers ready to pot in soil.

Fig. 10: *H. metlesicsianum* potted in soil.

Figs. 11: After drying out, the pots with tubers are placed in plastic bags for summer dormancy.

Photos by Svante Malmgren



H. metlesicsianum (& *H. robertianum*) grow quite differently compared to other *Himantoglossum* species. The latter produce the leaves slowly one by one, then have a resting period over winter before deciding if they intend to blossom in springtime. *H. metlesicsianum* produces all its leaves rather quickly, working with photosynthesis all autumn, winter and spring. Plants big enough to flower produce the flower spike very early inside the first leaves to appear, as with our *Orchis mascula* and *Orchis militaris*. So flowering often starts in January or even late December. Finally, seven and a half years post-sowing the three plants flowered nicely, starting early January 2018 when the temperature in the growing room was still just 4-6 °C! However, in this case, the plants were brought to a slightly warmer room. The main reason was the idea that it may result in the production of better quality seed.



When excess fertilizer killed 89 of the 92 plants, the three survivors were definitely not the biggest ones. So flowering could probably be achieved five and a half years after sowing if given better care. But surely worth waiting for! The plants were cross-pollinated and lots of big seed pods and healthy seed were produced. The 7-8 ml of seed was stored in a glass tube. This seed has been sown and 50-75% germinated within six weeks, hundreds of protocorms are growing on sterile medium and more will be sown in autumn 2020. We have grown ten years older during this project, but we keep on. Maybe the project will get a new life, fulfilled by us or other volunteers.

H. metlesicsianum is an endemic and very rare species on Tenerife, but it is easy to propagate from seed and will produce very big vital plants if given the correct light and temperature conditions. We have learned

Fig. 12: *H. metlesicsianum* first winter in soil.

Fig. 13: *H. metlesicsianum* bigger plants during first winter in soil,.

Fig. 14: Big *H. metlesicsianum* plants but too small for flowering.

Fig. 15: Two *H. metlesicsianum* spikes soon to flower.

Photos by Svante Malmgren

much from our propagation and growing errors. If these can be avoided there is a potential to grow them on a large scale to re-establish a large colony. The remaining questions are, does the symbiotic fungus still exist in the original habitats and is there anywhere safe to put them? Jean Claessens (2015) wrote about new colonies of *H. metlesicsianum* that have been found. However, Bill has subsequently received a personal communication from a friend in Tenerife who said that a wild fire had raged through the main site for *H. metlesicsianum* destroying the Fig trees that seem to support the orchids. The species, therefore, may be even less common than it used to be.

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Erdorchideen Naturschutz und Kultur Im Garten

A book on orchid propagation, conservation and growing orchids in a garden by Svante Malmgren and Irmin Vogler, is only available in German but an English version will be printed in due course. €78 on www.amazon.de
ISBN-10 : 3866594143; ISBN-13 : 978-3866594142

Video Competition at Leeds, 4th September 2021

The HOS Video Competition will be held during the HOS Northern Meeting in September. Full details, including the Video Show Rules, are available on the HOS website:

<http://www.hardyorchidsociety.org.uk/HOS%201012/Video%20Show.html>

The Tony Hughes Trophy will be awarded to the best video. The trophy may be held for one year, and must then be returned. Judging will be by audience vote. In the event of too many entries for a one-hour session, committee members will view the material and reduce the entry to the required number. If time permits, all entries will be shown at the Autumn Northern Meeting. The winning video will also be shown at the Autumn Southern Meeting.

For 2021 entries must be sent in advance by August 11th to the Video Competition Organiser Steve Pickersgill, either by email (hosvc@hardyorchidsociety.org) or for larger files, using one of the free transfer services such as WeTransfer or Dropbox. The Video Competition Organiser will supply instructions for using WeTransfer on request.

If the Leeds meeting is cancelled the competition will be held online as in 2020. Details will be communicated via the website, discussion forum, and the journal.



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