

**Sheffield & District
Orchid Society
Newsletter
January 2013**



**January Plant of the Month
Paphiopedilum Icy Icy Wind 'Fixby'**

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Business

***** Please note the date of the February meeting has been put back 1 week since the January meeting due to a conflict with the BPS meeting. It will now take place on 17th February *****

Some conflicts with the 2013 programme have now been ironed out. David Menzies will now speak on the orchids of SW Australia in March. There will be no meeting in September as there is a BOGA meeting and judging symposium in Durham on the same day.

A list of library books is to be made available to make accessing the library a little bit easier.

Our next show is at Bramhope, details at the February meeting.

A company called Aquaculture in Sheffield stocks most of the supplies that you need to grow your plants. Charles thinks that if pool our requirements then we should be able to get a reasonable discount.

The Table Show

Silvia gave the first commentary of 2013 and started with *Laelia gouldiana* which had a tall spike and 2 purple flowers. The plant had been struggling, and is now recovering, and should go on to make a large plant. *Onc. Cooksoniae* had a very long spike with several branches of small pinky orange flowers (from *noezlianum*). The cross is very old (1909). *Angraecum Crestwood* 'Tomorrow Star' FCC/AOS (back cover) is a primary hybrid and is growing very well high up to get more light. *Den. Spring Bride* (Ise 'Pearl' x Mild Yumi) was flowering on a short spike. The flowers were an attractive white with red centre. It should look even better on a longer spike next year. *Coelogyne speciosa* was a well grown, plant now a specimen, with lots of leaves and almost hidden yellowish flowers. *Rhyncostylis gigantea* 'Orange' AM/RHS was growing well and has 2 clusters of pale orange flowers (see back cover). This attractive plant was featured on the cover of the *Orchid Review* when it was awarded in 2009.

Phrag. Sedenii (registered in 1873) was growing well with unmarked leaves and 2 pink flowers that are short lived, although thankfully new ones keep appearing. *Phrag. Raymond Farroult* was a strong grower and was also a pale pink (from its *Sedenii* parent). In the *Paphs - Saratinho* was an old fashioned type with a compact shape and a red spotted flower. *Borrowed Time* was a flat spotted deep red colour, *Swallow x Douce* was an open shaped spotted amber and white, *Snowbird 'Robin'* was a medium sized pure white, *Woodland Glade* was mainly yellow with a few spots and a dorsal stripe, and *Hunter's Point 'Terry'* is an amber spotted. *Paph. Icy Icy Wind 'Fixby'* was an especially good plant with 4 speckled white flowers that was selected as the Plant of the Month (see front cover).

The small white and orange *Phal. Mem. Liu Jin Chyaun* was fairly similar to the widely available *Mini Mark*, both having *lobbii* in their parentage. *Phal. Minh Princess x Taisuco Smile* was a nice medium Pink. *Masd. towarensis* was a large plant with several white flowers. Strangely amongst the species this has a tendency to re-flower on the same spike to give added value. *Pths. palliolata* 'Eva May' had small round flowers. It is a cold grower - down to 48F. Sadly the plants growing habit tends to look untidy as it sends out kiekies all over the place. *Pths. truncata* 'Silvina' has unusual strings of tiny round orange colour that emanate from the leaves.

Rst. Vexativum was still looking well from last month, and finally *Zygo. Louisendorf* has a couple of deep purple coloured flowers. This is a good plant that thrives under cool conditions. Thank you Silvia.

January Plant of the Month

Paphiopedilum Icy Icy Wind 'Fixby'

Even within my own large collection of Paphs this is one that stands out. I purchased the plant at Peterborough in flower 3 years ago in bloom off Hilmar Bauch's display - although it was grown by his drinking and travelling companion Freddie Horn. At this point it was a plant that had flowered 2-3 times and had 2 leads - 1 at each side. It was well rooted in a mixture of coconut chips and bark - which is what I am using these days. After 12 months I re-potted it into a larger pot which is where it still lives. In this time it has developed into 4 leads, and now 6. It currently has 4 in flower, and new growths are shooting up. It is very vigorous, and could have up to 6 flowers next year, however, it is due for re-potting once it has finished flowering, and I intend to divide it. This will likely be into 2 halves of 2 & 4 leads. I'm reluctant to split it further at this point as it might sulk for a while.

I have called this clone 'Fixby' as it is good enough for a name, and I would hope to breed from it in due course. I have a further clone in my greenhouse that is differently bred, and a more traditional shape that I bought in Singapore at the WOC (which took 6 months to reach the UK via the USA). This second plant was bred by Tokyo Orchids, whereas the first is probably from the original cross made at the Orchid Zone in the USA. The cross is Ice Castle x Stone Lovely, and has produced some very good flowers that are becoming awarded as much as the parents have been.

John Garner

Orchids of Western Australia

Gianpiero Ferrari

This was Gian's first trip to Australia just over a year ago, and was a change to the original plan which was to visit Queensland. However at that time that region was suffering from very serious flooding. A bit of re-planning saw a different flight to Darwin in the Northern Territories followed by a drive down the west coast to Perth. Whilst that might sound straightforward it is an enormous distance through mainly desert.

The area around Darwin is more tropical forest and you can find crocodiles etc. there. Once out of Darwin you are more or less on your own. Gian travelled by campervan, and in places the tarmac runs out and dust tracks

begin. Often you will only see a handful of traffic all day, and the secret to travelling is to fill up the tank and then venture on to the next town to stop overnight and take some pictures. You can stop just about anywhere, but camp sites are better as you can plug into the electric and use shower facilities. You are likely to encounter large road trains of freight up to 70 metres long. Much of the land is aboriginal, and sometimes out of bounds. This is mainly due to keeping natural habitats where humans don't interfere by introducing non-native animals or plants as well as pests and diseases.

The winter is very dry, and with desert conditions there aren't many orchids around - until you come to the south. Fortunately Gian is at home with wildlife just as much as plants, and we were treated to a colourful array of birds. Azure and Forest Kingfishers were stunning, and almost put the Kookaburra to shame. Others include the Lily Trotter, Herons, Musk Lapwing, Bandit Lapwing, and around 70 species of Finches - with the crimson a brilliant colour. The Emu is seldom seen, but is around - as are the ubiquitous Kangaroo. There are 29 species of pigeon, and the Rainbow Bee Eater is a flash of colour. It is worth noting that the weather is usually either very windy (the Freemantle Doctor) or full of insects.

In the southern hemisphere October is the start of spring, and flowers were starting to bloom in profusion. Kapok, Cassia, and Acacia were common, as was Sticky Kurrajong which had scarlet flowers prior to leaves growing. A plant that the Aussies know as Poison Morning Glory contains toxins that help to control introduced feral cats and dogs (the native animals are immune).

Moving down the coast to Shark Bay you will find a World Heritage site. This is a shell beach fronting a very dry bay. Many types of Banksia and Anemonies are found here. The banksias need fires to clear the ground and open the seed capsules for sowing. In this area there are lots of parrots and cockatiels.

Finally the long drive reached Perth. This is a very pretty city with lots of interspersed parks and lakes, and a good base to explore the hinterland. South of Perth the land is more of a scrubby woodland, and these contain the orchids that the trip set out to find. The custard orchid (*Thelymitra villosa*) is a yellow terrestrial - as are almost all of the local orchids. The Dancing Bee orchid (*Caladenia discoidea*) is a slender plant that sways in the constant breeze, and the lip mimics a dancing bee. the Blue China orchid (*Cyanicula gemmata*) was blue, and the Cowslip orchid (*Caladenia flava*) is yellow. The Dense Mignonette (*Microtis media* subsp. *densiflora*) grows in the thousands covering the forest floor. The Midge orchid

(*Cyrtostylis huegelii*), Praying Mantis orchid (?) has an interesting shape as does the Pink Fairy orchid (*Caladenia latifolia*). The Rabbit orchid (*Leptoceras menziesii*) has 2" flowers. Various Sun orchids (*Thelymitra* sp.) include a bright blue one, and there are 84 species of Spider orchids.

This was followed by a 10 minute slideshow of local flora and fauna including pea family, bottle brush, Freesias etc.. Many plants have thick leaves, or are succulent, and hairy leaves helps reduce perspiration.

All in all a very good talk despite being low on actual orchid content. Gianpiero is an excellent photographer and we were all captivated.

NB, I found the following list of SW Australian orchids on the web, and this helped me to put botanical names to the common names that Gian used - Ed. - www.atoz-visual.com/downloads/CompleteOrchid-List.pdf

TABLE SHOW JUDGING

In the hope of encouraging more members to enter their plants for judging at our regular meetings, here is a re-print of the article from the Newsletter of October 2006 about the scheme for the benefit of those members who didn't have the thrill of reading it then.

We currently have 20 classes available, including one class specifically for novices (i.e. anyone who has not won one of our classes before). The points in these classes are cumulative but there is also a 21st 'class' for the single best plant shown in the course of the whole year's judging.

To be eligible for judging, a novice must have grown the plant for at least 6 months prior to entry and anyone else must have grown theirs for at least a year. A novice has the privilege of deciding whether to enter a plant in the novices' class or in the appropriate class for that plant.

Each plant entered gets one point for being entered. If it is judged to be the best in its class that day, it then receives up to 15 more points for the flower quality plus up to 15 more points for the quality of its culture, giving a maximum of 31 points. The second in that class can get up to 10 + 10 points and the third up to 6 + 6 points.

At the end of the year (after the September meeting) all the points for individual owners in each class are totalled and the trophies awarded to the owners with the most points. Only in the 21st class is the trophy deliberately awarded for one individual plant.

It's quite painless really (except for filling in the cards – and for the judges who award the points during their coffee break). The judges incidentally, are all qualified judges under the British Orchid Council's internationally recognised scheme.

Have a go if you haven't entered anything before but even if you're not interested in the competitive side of orchid growing, please bring your plants to the table show for others to enjoy. You don't necessarily have to enter them for judging and we would all like to see them.

The complete list of classes is given in the December Newsletter each year when the results of that year's judging and the awards of trophies at the AGM are printed in full. TC

Dates for your diary...

Monthly meetings at Ranmoor – 10am

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| Feb 17th | Practical Judging demo - tricks of the trade
*** Note date change *** |
| Mar 10th | David Menzies – Orchids in SW Australia |
| Apr 14th | Chris Squire – In the Footsteps of the Old Orchid Hunters |

Other shows

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Feb 24th | Harrogate OS annual show, Bramhope
** SDOS exhibiting ** |
| Apr 7th | NEEOS, Bowburn Community Centre, Durham
** SDOS exhibiting ** |
| Apr 12-13th | RHS London Orchid Show |

Society website - www.sheffieldorchids.org



Above:- *Angraecum Crestwood* 'Tomorrow Star'

Below: - *Rhyncostylis gigantea* 'Orange' AM/RHS

