

# **SHEFFIELD & DISTRICT ORCHID SOCIETY**

## **NEWSLETTER**

**JUNE 2010**



**The SDOS silver medal display at Peterborough**

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# BUSINESS

The next meeting returns to Ranmoor following an absence of a couple of months. Will all members please note that the date is the **4<sup>th</sup> July** and not the 11<sup>th</sup> due to church events. There is also an ordination taking place on the 4<sup>th</sup>, which means that parking in the locality is likely to be constrained, and that some of the other rooms at the Parish hall will be in use. Thankfully our speaker has a good voice so we should still be able to hear him. Guido's talk will be on "Cattleya - a review with comments on the mess made by modern taxonomists". This is sure to be an interesting and thought provoking talk.

A small display of orchids will be made at Ranmoor on the 11<sup>th</sup> July to demonstrate alternative activities within the Parish hall. Ted Croot is co-ordinating.

The committee discussed the recent show at Bakewell in some detail. Some aspects were good, others not so good. A loss was made of nearly £300, although this was to be expected at a new venue, with a change of date as

well. The lighting was fairly poor, and we did have a few issues with the parking attendant. On balance, it was felt to be a better venue than Chatsworth, and we should continue with Bakewell in 2011, hopefully on May 8<sup>th</sup> (setting up on 7<sup>th</sup>).

Ivens Orchids are closing down after many years due to retirement. This has been coming for a while, but attempts to find a buyer for the orchid business have been unsuccessful, and the plants are now being sold off cheaply – with any remnants being skipped! For a list of stock, and a price list, call 01727 863178 or email them at [info@ivensorchids.co.uk](mailto:info@ivensorchids.co.uk)

## **VISIT TO THE EDITOR'S GREENHOUSE**

After several days of glorious weather, the day of the visit had rain forecast, and true to form, just after 2pm the rain descended, which put paid to the plans for a social gathering outside, with more external views of the custom built greenhouse.

The greenhouse was built in 2004 after demolishing an old concrete sectional garage. Thankfully the garage had an electric supply which was straightforward to reuse. The garage had a concrete base which was a more than useful start; however it did restrict the size that the greenhouse could occupy. Hindsight dictates that I should have built it bigger of course...

Many of you will be unaware that my father was a Market Gardener, and that was where my early horticultural talents were honed to a fine degree. Greenhouse building was an ongoing part of the business, so it wasn't a difficult undertaking to set about home design and construction. There are a several things to take into consideration of course such as which bits should overlap, and then it is pencil, paper and a large tape measure together with an internal wall measurement for my builder to construct the walls (that and the electrics were the only bits contracted out).

I had acquired a large greenhouse many years ago at a sale at a real bargain price, and this provided the wood and spars that were to be used. The design was to construct with brick walls up to the bench level, and then triple wall polycarbonate panels above. The size of the polycarbonate panels were the key to the size at 1.05m wide and allowing for expansion room etc allowed 5 panels to fit the length of the base with a few inches to spare. The width was also calculated according to the length of the panels together with the angle of the roofing irons that I already had. This worked out at just less than 2m for each slope and with the side panels at 1m allowed perfect use of the 4m long

polycarbonate sheets. Once again the width fitted the base with just a few inches to spare.

The greenhouse came together over 4 weekends, and with a bit of evening painting was ready for the summer of 2004, just 6 months after we had moved in. The floor was sealed with a bit of concrete around the edges, and with the gentle slope in my favour allows the floor to be permanently partially flooded to maintain humidity even on hot days when the window and door is open. The benches were constructed on site as wooden slatted ones, and are 1 long side bench wide enough to reach across, with others fitting around it to maximise bench size without compromising on reaching to the back. Consequently it looks a bit odd, but the width is too wide for 2 side benches, but not wide enough for a central one as well (something to bear in mind for future building projects).

The iron strengthening pillars were drilled along the top allowing wires to be run the length of the greenhouse so that internal shading can be easily slid into place, and this is usually put on in early March to prevent scorching (the greenhouse runs directly east/west), and removed in October. An external layer is used in spring/summer to protect from excess heat. This does actually make it dull on certain miserable days, but still bright enough for the slippers that I mainly grow. This year I have abandoned the inner shading on the north side to try and get some extra light inside, and am considering removing a bit more just for those plants that need additional light such as the multifloral Paphs and Cattleyas.

Being close to the house, the greenhouse gets used for a variety of things – tins of paint, the mop & bucket, as well as the compost and empty plant pots. An extra shelf was built last year to hold a few more plants. At the time of the visit many of the cooler growing plants such as the Odonts and Cymbidiums were outside, and a decent spring clean made the greenhouse look a lot tidier than usual (see back page), but it soon returned to normal afterwards.

Is the greenhouse perfect, and does what I want? Nearly I would say. One major flaw is that it is all the same temperature zone meaning that some things don't do as well as I would like them to. And of course it isn't big enough. It is heated by electric fan which is expensive to run compared to a gas boiler. In reality it works well for me and is just about maintenance free. There's now a few year's worth of algae on the roof which needs cleaning this autumn for a bit more light.

Altogether about 24 members made the trip 'up north', and most appeared to have enjoyed the experience, especially with a healthy buffet on offer as well.

**JG**

# PIOS 2010

Now in its fourth year, the PIOS incorporated the 2010 BOC, resulting in just a few changes to the judging, layout and lectures. As it was the BOC, SDOS entered an exhibit, and were duly awarded silver. Due to the high number of exhibits from both the trade and societies, a relatively small display size was requested/supplied, which given the more usual summer flower shortage meant that the display wouldn't have too many gaps. In the end, there were more plants than enough for the display, with several large pots of hardy orchids to the fore. The long, cold winter seems to have delayed the hardies, and they tended to be in their full glory at this weekend, rather than just going over. The good numbers of *Dactylorhizas* were complemented by several colourful *Disas* (also late this year), *Masdevallias* and other assorted warmer growing plants (see front cover).

Five amateur displays this year won gold. Four of these were the usual suspects (see below), but the other was more of a surprise, as well as winning the Best Society Display trophy as well. This was Hinckley OS, who are a fairly small group, but enthusiastic and passionate about what they do. They had been given an appropriate corner plot where they constructed 2 part greenhouses focussing on 'old times' with clay pots etc., and 'new times' with black plastic pots etc. None of the plants were good enough individually for rosettes, but the display was eye catching and well done. It will be interesting to see if they can follow this up next year.

NEOS (Gold) had a huge display packed with quality flowers. A large tray of *Phal. Bijou Pearl* was the centre piece, and a huge pot of deep purple *Dact. fuchsii* won the best Hardy class. Some superb *Miltonias* – *Ouaisne* and *Noirmont* completed a near perfect display. EMOS (Gold) had their large framed display, and exhibited a huge range of plants. They had a very tall *Ophrys apifera* with several growths. *Laelia* (now *Sophronitis purpurata* f. *carnea*) was a beautiful white with an apricot trumpet. Lots of *Lycastes* and *Stanhopeas* were dotted around. Bournemouth OS (Gold) had a large patio umbrella with a handcart underneath with a lot of plants on it – a theme used by them at the Dijon WOC. It did look a bit dark when it rained outside, but was still effective. They had a wide range of plants from hardies to *Vandas*, with several well presented *Eulophia guineensis*. OSGB (Gold) had a very large display that was well crafted to show off a huge number of plants. Best plant was the pendant *Cym. lowianum*. A good number of hardies were shown, with the 3 spiked *Cyp. kentuckiense* at its best.

Darlington OS (Silver) had a huge display packed with various plants that couldn't have been far from winning gold. They had a Chinese theme with

their backcloth as well as some impressive plants. A huge Masd. *coccinea* was quite eye catching. Devon OS (Silver) had the show Grand Champion Species with a huge Bulb. *graveolens* 'Roger Lane'. They had some gilded deckchairs, but few other plants of note. Solihull OS (Silver) had a display packed with colour, and nicely banked. Harrogate OS (Silver) had a floor display mounted on small tables/boxes. It allowed the visitors to see plants from several angles; however, it needed a magnifying glass to get a good look at *Schoenorchis manipurensis* – the champion Vandaceous plant. This tiny plant has been grown by Dr. Stuart Knox for over 25 years, and is now a ball about 3" (8cm) across with miniature pink flowers. It is so small and obscure that the judges almost missed it! TVOS (Silver) had a good display as usual, packed with colour and foliage. Their plants were well colour matched with Disas and Paph. Clair de Lune(s) well to the fore. Wessex, Central OS, and Sussex OS won silver with fairly modest displays.

Other Society displays won bronze, whether thinly populated or single genera – such as Mike Mcillmurray with his national collection of Maxillarias, or the Paph. Society who had the best slipper in show with Ian Dorman's excellent Phrag. *caudatum* var *warscewicianum* with 2 spikes each of 3 fully open flowers with very long tails.

In the trade section RYANNE won Gold, and also the Best Professional exhibit for the 'umpteenth' time. Somehow she is able to come up with a different theme, fetch it from France, construct it, and fill with plants. No doubt she will win it again next year (or is that level of expectation the kiss of death!). This year she had erected a jungle tree house with associated epiphytes on the branches and terrestrials on the ground. Dave Parkinson also won gold for his colourful display of Disas despite the late flowering season resulting in a shortage of plants in flower. Asendorfer Orchideenzucht also took gold for an excellent 'standard' display packed with plenty of Paphs, but also a superb large flowered V. Black Magic, and best Phal. species with the multi spiked *equestris* f. *alba*.

Lawrence Hobbs (silver) had a decent display in large ceramic tubs. Burnham (silver) had a decent display as did PLEDSTED. Rolke (silver) once again used their striking blue cloth which really shows off their slippers, as well as a few huge *Prostecchia cochleatas*. KJ orchids had a bit of a mish-mash display with some quality plants as usual. *Tricopilia tortilis* x *turalvae* was the Grand Champion Hybrid and best Oncidinae. It was also good to see Paph. *esquirolei* 'WOC Dijon' again (the reserve GC from that WOC) – it is a huge flower. Jac Wubben (silver) had some very nice plants on a more modest display. In-CharM (silver) had a colourful display of Paphs with some nice

new hybrids alongside their stock plants such as Gloria Naugle & Dollgoldi. This year they also fetched some flasks of better quality than we tend to see in the UK.

Chantelle orchids were new to me, and they had bare rooted plants at decent prices, as did Water Orchids and Ooi Leng Sun. Heritage and Laneside Orchids both featured UK hardy plants in an ever increasing range, and it was good to see a huge Lizard orchid – *Himantoglossum hircinum* (or should it be the Goat orchid?). Kopf, and Stocklbusch both had Bronze as did Elsner with a nice display of *L. purpurata* and Ros. Rawdon Jester. Other vendors had modest displays or were selling books or sundries.

The BOC lecture program was mainly UK based talks which have been to, or are coming to Sheffield. All in all it was a good show, with more exhibits than previously, and with better quality. The poorer winter resulted in UK hardies being better timed, which filled out many displays.

Congratulations to Brian Woodward and the EMOS members for their organisation. **JG**

## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY...**

### **MONTHLY MEETINGS AT RANMOOR – 2PM**

- July 4<sup>th</sup>** Guido Braem - Cattleya - a review with comments on the mess made by modern taxonomists.
- August 8<sup>th</sup>** John Gay - Phrag Kovachii – a Peruvian experience. An enticing subject on one of the most fascinating discoveries of recent years.

### **OTHER SHOWS**

- August 7-8<sup>th</sup>** Scone Palace Orchid Show, Perth.
- August 28-29<sup>th</sup>** BOGA Orchid Fair at Dinton Pastures, Berkshire.



Above; Old and new techniques of the Hinckley OS display at PIOS  
Below; Inside the editor's 'tidy' greenhouse.

