

**Sheffield & District  
Orchid Society  
Newsletter  
June/July 2013**



**June Plant of the Month  
Rossioglossum Rawdon Jester**

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## Editorial

I try to get the newsletter as accurate as I can, but occasionally I do make mistakes, and I'm always happy to set the record straight. Such an error occurred last month in the Chatsworth results, where I incorrectly recorded Masd. *veitchiana* as belonging to Ellis Eyre, when in fact it was grown by Hilary Hobbs, and was on the Harrogate display. Apologies to both parties.

There will be no newsletter for July as we have no meeting, and therefore nothing to report, so this edition is slightly larger than usual - more of a holiday special. Our next meeting will be 11th August when Mike Armstrong will cover Cattleyas and photography. I'm badly in need of

photographic tips, as at the June meeting I arrived with a flat battery - Doh! My thanks to Derek Jackson for the cover photo of Rawdon Jester.

## Business

Brian started by commenting on the recent annual show at Chatsworth, which had been very successful making a decent profit for the society to help underpin our other activities. Enormous thanks were due to all who contributed, but especially Jim Charlesworth for the organisation, John Garner for the publicity, Ted and the display team, and Julie and her very busy catering team. Two awards were gained, including the grand Champion plant for Ted Croot with *Dendrobium delacourii*.

A provisional date has been booked for 2014, and this is a week earlier (Sunday May 11<sup>th</sup>) as this combines with another themed weekend at Chatsworth called 'Florabundance'. We'll see how this may all pan out in due course.

At the date of this meeting it was still unclear whether the planned trip to Sussex would be going ahead – although indications were that it wouldn't. In light of this, not having a speaker, and it being holiday season it was announced **that the July meeting would be cancelled.**

Anyone who would like to get involved with the monthly judging now and then will be welcome. Please see Brian. This is really an opportunity to see how it is done, and will be an education.

## The Table Show

Ted Croot volunteered for this month's commentary, and started with a small group of *Masd. coccinea*. The first was var. *xanthina*, a tall yellow flowered plant with 9 flower spikes and a few buds. There were 2 x var. *alba* – which isn't a true *alba* as the flowers are more of a cream colour. The final one was var. *lilaceana*, which was a strong deep cerise colour. All of these are cool growing, and will take temperatures close to zero, and are easy to maintain. *Barbosella prorepens* is another cool growing plant that is quite small with several tiny yellow flowers (similar to *Restrepia*). It prefers damp conditions. *Pogonia japonica* is also a 'hardy' plant from Japan with 3 spikes of lovely tiny pink flowers. It is fairly easy to grow in wet conditions. *Disa Unilangley* was a lovely pink, again grown cool and wet in a peat/perlite mix. *Aerangis citrata* 'June' has grown larger than last year, although still a small plant. This was the Best Amateur Plant at PIOS

in 2012, and now has 11 spikes of tiny white flowers, although some are still to open.

*Podangis dactyloceras* is a small plant from the Angraecum tribe with over 5 short spikes of small crystalline white flowers. It grows best in intermediate conditions. *Vanda tricolor* var. *suavis* is an intermediate growing plant with a long spike of almost a dozen decent white, brown and pink flowers.

Ctt. Loog Tone is a *Cattleya* with an odd name (from the oddly named registrant T. Thongprasit, 1987 – Ed.). Despite this it is a small plant with a pleasant deep yellow flower with a red lip. Rth. Burana Beauty is a red and yellow flower that is peloric.

Ros. Rawdon Jester is a cool growing plant with several large starry flowers of barred yellow and brown that was adjudged the plant of the month. *Onc. alexandrae* (syn. *Odm. crispum*) is a renamed species that was growing well with several mainly white flowers. Historically this is an important plant as it was widely used in creating many of the ‘Odont.’ hybrids that are around today. *Gomesa varicosa* ‘Baldin’ (syn. *Onc. varicosum* var. *insigne* (or is it *Gom. insignis*? Ed) was well grown with 2 spikes of arching small yellow flowers with a brown centre to the lip. *Psychopsis Mariposa* (*papilio* x *Kalihi*) had large mottled yellow flowers on both very tall spikes. This pretty flowered plant needs to be kept drier than many of the *Oncidium* family.

Phrag. *Sedenii* is an oft seen hybrid, and it grows into a large plant. It had 1 spike in flower, and 2 others still developing which will ensure that it stays in flower for months – despite each pink flower being fairly short lived. It was nice to see several Cyps on the table this month to fit nicely with the lecture. *parviflorum* var. *pubescens* had 3 strong growths with 3 yellow flowers in full bloom. *calceolus* is the native UK slipper orchid, and is fairly small, yellow and brown flowered. Two of these were on show, and displayed the variability of species. The next was labelled ‘White’ as an example of the Dutch marketing program, and was actually *x alaskanum* – a natural hybrid between *guttatum* and *yatabeanum*. It is a small plant originally from Alaska, and is fairly tricky to grow. The small plants have a small white flower that has a few red spots on it. Lastly was the hybrid Philipp (*macranthos* x *kentuckiense*) a round shaped pink flower.

The final plants were a couple of Phals - Chew Ging Hoe, and Penang Starbright. Both have yellow flowers on shortish spikes hidden between large leaves. Thank you Ted.

# June Plant of the Month

## Rossioglossum Rawdon Jester

I was working in the Netherlands in early 2011 & one weekend went to a small orchid show taking place in a corner of a large garden centre organised by a grower in the south of Holland. I was just starting out in orchid growing & was looking to progress from the "Ikea Phalaenopsis special" but the show itself was rather disappointing to me then since the main exhibit was a large fish tank filled with small species orchids. Luckily on a side table he had also obtained a few plants from Orchideen Lucke, a nursery based just over the border in northern Germany. I bought this plant along with two hybrid and two species Cattleyas. The two species Cattleyas soon went to the great compost heap in the sky but somehow the others survived my amateurish fumbblings. I have dealt with three German nurseries and find their plants consistently good.

I have one greenhouse which I keep at a minimum of 12 degs C. It is not a thing of beauty since it has been built by me with 4"x2" & polycarbonate (the roof is composed of the permanently tinted type which is great in the summer but does restrict light rather in the dark days of winter ). My plant sits at the cooler east side of the greenhouse and gets some direct sun early in the morning. During really hot days in summer ( remember them ?! ) the plant is placed down on the floor. Rossioglossums do rest in the winter so I keep it on the dry side but I read they are supposed to like decent light during this time. I prefer to use Ray Creek's cocoa fibre potting material for almost everything I grow mainly due to its ease of use and longevity.

The name Rawdon Jester indicates that this cross comes from the breeding programme at Mansell & Hatcher, and they registered this cross back in 1983 as a primary hybrid between Ros. *grande* and Ros. *williamsianum* - both of which look extremely similar in shape and colour, although Jester has the added hybrid vigour. At that time it was an *Odontoglossum*, but following the recent renaming exercise it is one of the few that hasn't moved to become an *Oncidium*.

This flamboyant hybrid has become highly successful over the years with several clones being awarded around the world, including an FCC/AOS for the clone 'Damiano' in 1996 with 31 flowers and 10 buds on 6 inflorescences - that must have been a sight. These days it is produced *en-masse* by the Dutch as a pot plant. **Peter Battle**

# A Year with the Hardies

## Steve Clements

Steve is a member of the Lincolnshire Orchid Group, and was responsible for their wonderful display at Chatsworth which consisted entirely of hardies. He started his orchid growing career with hardies, mainly by accident, and also now includes a few cool growing tropicals such as *Restrepias*. The first plant was *Dact. fuschii* – a common native plant. This was spotted at a plant fair, and looked like worth growing, so was purchased. A few more followed from rare plant fairs, along with some *Serapias* (the tongue orchid), and the rest is of course now history.

It is necessary to define just what ‘hardy’ means, both to the general UK, and the local environment. There are a wide range of temperatures in the UK, and you need to carefully check out the claims of plants purchased from eg. Nurseries in Cornwall compared to Scotland. Generally hardy can mean that a plant can survive a harsh winter, but might die in exceptional conditions. Survival is a harsh reality, but thriving is more of the key, and thankfully the UK natives will thrive, as will orchids from northern Europe. Many hardy orchids from southern Europe will not survive outdoors in UK conditions, and this is mainly due to our cold wet winters. Steve has decided to take no chances with the weather, and keeps all his hardies under cover over the winter to avoid water logging. This is in a range of shelters. An 8x6 greenhouse is used for the less hardy plants where some heat can be used on the coldest of nights. It is only used in winter. A smaller 6x4 greenhouse is used for the *Pleiones*, and an even smaller 4x2 alongside the house is used for the *Cyps*. During the winter the rest of the garden becomes covered with cold frames to accommodate the ever increasing collection. As the bulk of the plants are dormant over winter they can be stacked on shallow shelves to utilise most of the available space. It is only when growth starts that the extra frames become necessary. Well grown hardies should bulk up reasonably quickly, so surplus plants tend to be distributed around his local society.

The great benefit of growing hardies (apart from the obvious ones above) is that they are quite different in cultivation than trying to spot them in the wild. As they go dormant, and are re-potted there is an element of planting them, nurturing them, and then watching them flower – unlike eg. *Phalaenopsis* that don’t alter from one month to the next...

There are 3 main types of hardy orchids. These are ‘summer green, winter dormant’, ‘winter green summer dormant’, and ‘evergreen’.

Summer green, winter dormant – as the name suggests these plants grow during the spring & summer, dying back in autumn. These include a wide range of genera including *Dactylorhiza*, *Bletilla*, *Cypripedium*, & *Epipactis*. None of these are ever totally dormant as they do develop the new shoots over Autumn and winter. Most of these will bulk up well given good growing conditions, especially those with hybrid vigour. Many of the *Dactylorhizas* interbreed easily, and most plants sold as the species may not be true to type – especially true of eg. *Dact. Foliosa*. Many Cyps are now becoming freely available through mail order with production now on a massive scale in the Netherlands. Unfortunately they are inclined to use trade names rather than the species or registered hybrid names eg. ‘Kentucky’ rather than *kentuckyense*, and ‘Kentucky Pink Blush’ rather than *C. Lucy Pinkepanke* (some are obvious, others aren’t!). It is important to avoid offers from non specialist retailers such as Thomson & Morgan (and even the RHS) as these are most likely straight from the flask and need greater care. *Bletillas* (and *Pleiones*) are available from Garden Centres, and these should also be avoided as they are likely to have dried out too much prior to reaching the shelves.

Winter green, summer dormant – shouldn’t be taken as the opposite of the first category. Many terrestrials from Australia have developed to be dormant during summer as it is too hot, so they tend to grow during the cooler period and flower at the earliest opportunity. These include *Ophrys* and *Orchis*. *Ophrys apifera* is a terrific flower, but the plant is a difficult grower. It flowers later in spring, and a really hot spring can cause it to disappear for a few years or even kill it if it has been unable to develop a new tuber. All of this group need to develop new tubers to sustain the next year’s growth. Death is inevitable for those that don’t. Most grow from small tubers, and these can be bought mail order as ‘bare rooted’ plants quite cheaply – although you may not get what you expected! *Orchis* is a strange genus with many having a 5 pointed lip resembling a primate.

Evergreen may not be a true term for native orchids, but there are several non-native species that will thrive. The term evergreen is used rather than the others as they don’t die back annually, but maintain the previous year’s growths for energy storage. This group includes some *Calanthes* and some *Cymbidiums*. *Calanthe striata* is from Japan, but will grow well in the UK, and needs to be kept moist over winter. *Cym goeringii* comes from China (where it is a cult plant) and Japan, and is small for the genus, often growing on grassy slopes where it produces a few small flowers on a short spike.

For Steve, the hardies year starts in **August**. Most plants are dormant or just about starting to grow, although *Serapias lingua* will flower. Some re-potting will take place, but careful observation of some plants is necessary as *Ophrys* can suffer from neck rot. Compost is based on John Innes no. 2 with extra perlite. Feeding is with a weak solution of either Tomorite or Miraclegrow used in rainwater.

In **September** *Pterostylis coccinea* is in flower, and more repotting goes on. In **October** *Spiranthes spiralis* is in flower. Start to bring some plants indoors. **November** is a troublesome month as it is a battle for light with the green plants versus protection in the darker bubble wrapped greenhouse.

**December** is a poor month with frost and cold. Some fleece is used for extra protection in the corners of non-airtight greenhouses. Some daily air movement is useful to penetrate the compost. Check for bugs and slugs, and it is worth noting that hardies don't react very well to Provado.

**January** is still a dark winter month, but signs of life are around as *Barlia* (*Himantoglossum robertianum*) (the manikin orchid) starts to flower.

**February** is a bit brighter, and the earliest of the *Ophrys* start to flower – including *fusca* and *lupercalis*.

If it is possible to get an *Ophrys* overload, then **March** is the time, with *lutea*, *bombyliflora*, *speculum* and *tenthredinifera* all at their best. The earliest of the *Dactylorhizas* start to flower with *sambucina* which has red or yellow forms.

In **April** a large range of plants will be growing strongly, and a variety will be in flower including *Cyp. macranthos*, *Calanthe brevicornu* and *Ophrys insectifera*. Self seeded *Dactylorhizas* are likely to start appearing in the garden and all of the pots. Are they a nuisance – or just an endless supply of free plants?

**May** sees everything out of the greenhouses and frames, and a riot of colour. This is a time for several of the later antipodean orchids to flower such as *Diuris behrii* (a yellow donkey eared flower) and *Thelymitre nuda* (a rare blue flowered orchid). Lots more *Cyps*, as well as *Anacamptis morio*, *laxiflora* and *elegans* can be seen. The first of the *Serapias* will start to bloom now.

**June** sees the wintergreen plants going dormant, with many of the others not rampant. This is the main period for *Dactylorhizas* with plants up to 1m tall. The *Cyps* are now starting to reach the end of their season, with *reginae* usually the last to flower. The hybrid *Bletillas* will be in full bloom, and strangely, so too will the hybrid *Pterostylis* *Dusky Duke*.

**July** is the 'end of the year' for Steve with few plants in flower. The long lasting *Bletilla* hybrids will still be going strong, and an interesting small orchid – *Ponerorchis graminifolia* will be in flower. These grow from a tuber the size of a pea, and are quite colourful.

Steve likes to re-pot the plants every year apart from the *Cyps* and *Calanthes* which prefer to be undisturbed for at least 2 years.

With such a variety of plants and colour throughout the year – why not grow them????? 10 years ago there were few hardies around, and now they are almost freely available, and are relatively cheap.

A hearty round of applause followed.

# Malvern International Orchid Show

The first staging of this new show was in conjunction with the Three Counties Agricultural Show at Malvern, and replaces the older (but still recent) series of shows at Peterborough. The staging of the show was quite different from Peterborough in 2 main ways. Firstly was the lack of a hotel adjacent to the show so onsite drinking was out of the question (I was probably poorly the last time that I had 4 dry days!), and secondly there is no onsite traffic during the show. This was more of an issue as it meant that the Societies had to set up their exhibits on the Thursday and be around for an extra day, and then on breakdown on the Sunday there would be no traffic onsite until 18.00, so there was no quick escape. Perhaps we were spoiled at Peterborough, but this didn't detract from the new event.

The Orchid marquee was centrally positioned within the grounds, and was quite large, although restricted in size to fit between the tarmac drives/avenues. Generally the Societies were around the outside, with the trade in the middle. The showground staff had made up tiered stands in advance for all who wanted them, and also had tacked black sheets to them so that there was no need for backcloths etc. This was a great advantage for someone like me who doesn't have much in the way of design and style, and my efforts for the Paph. Society combined with In-Charm Orchids from Taiwan looked pretty good even if I say so myself!

Not all Societies were present as this event clashed with the NEOS show at Tatton Park which also included Harrogate OS. This may also have constrained some of the traders as well...

In the trade Asendorfer (Hilmar Bauch) had one of the largest plants that I've seen for a long time with Epi. *steinbachianum* (back cover). It must have been well over 2m tall plus the pot - another .5m. How they managed to get it to the UK in one piece is a mystery. It won Best Trade Cattleya, but not best trade species as it had a few old flower bracts which needed trimming off. They won 4 first prizes and 3 seconds amongst an outstanding series of plants, especially amongst their slippers. The Best Trade Hybrid was won by KJ orchids with a large and colourful Den. *amabile* amongst an array of interesting and unusual plants which also won him the Best Trade Display Trophy. M&M Orchideen had a fine mixture of species and hybrids with a huge yellow Epi. *Ballerina*, big *Vanda limbata*, and a spectacular spotted *Renanthera matutina*. Roelke had a good mixed display with lots of Paphs on display as well as an interesting *Prostechea Elfin* which has more flowers out together than its parent *cochleata* (x *prismatocarpa*).

Ryanne always takes great care in staging her displays, and this year her theme was a series of picture frames with the display orchids inside, and it created a good visual effect. It presented 2-3 Rawdon Jesters at their best, along with

Trichopilia Senne Star (*tortilis x turialbae*). Her father Jac Wubben had a display of smaller plants this year with several true miniatures alongside lots of the new Dutch Cyps.

Roy Barrow and Ecuagenera were adjacent to each other, and had a wide range of cool growing South American plants (mainly from Ecuador and surrounding Andes). Water Orchids had a huge range of bare root Cattleyas and allied species/hybrids as did Ooi Leng Sun who also had more of the unusual SE Asian species

Chantelle had an excellent display of mainly Cattleyas, and won Best Trade Hybrid with a huge plant of Rth. Young-Min Orange which had many flower spikes of an even height with the orange colour being intensified by the number of flowers - quite a superb plant! She had another first with Ren. *imschootiana* with a host of vibrant red flowers. Laneside had a vast array of Cyps on display and for sale. This really was just the right time for them, and the display had specimen plants arranged in enamelled blue buckets topped with perlite. A few had gone past their best by the end of the show, but they had served their purpose with a lot of plants being sold - possibly the success story of the show. Dave Parkinson had a good display of Disas, although they are probably not just yet at their best.

Burnhams had their usual range of plants, with the accent a bit more on the hardies this year. Orchid Alchemy had a wide range of small seedlings, and Ray Creek had the more common retail plants.

In the Societies TVOS had a large display with some very good plants with some large Cyps amongst them, notably Monto. Linclonshire OG had a display by Steve Clements with a high count of Hardies amongst them. Despite the hardies, they won the Ray Bilton Trophy for the best Phalaenopsis with a stunning pink *schilleriana*. OSBG had a large display (but smaller than previously at PIOS) and had some specimen plants of *Sarcochilus hartmanii* along with strong orange Anguloas amongst a range of plants.

Darlington staged a railway themed display with homage towards the popular Severn Valley Railway. They had a huge range of small-medium sized plants with lots of colours to create a good effect. NEEOS had a magenta backcloth which showed off their plants very well, including lots of Dactylorhizas.

EMOS had a very large display (winning gold), and filled it with some superb specimen plants. Their effort won them the Best Amateur Display trophy along with the Best Amateur Species - *L. purpurata*, Best Amateur Hybrid - *Oncidium Splinter 'Fragrans'*, which also won the Maunder Trophy for the Best Amateur *Oncidium*. Their well admired plants included several rosette winning plants, and other notable plants included *Vanda cristata*, and Cym. Little Black Sambo, which is a warmer growing *Cymbidium* with a pendant spike of 1m long full of small almost black flowers (See back cover - which doesn't do the colour

justice!). Cheltenham & District OS won the Laneside Trophy for the Best Amateur Hardy Orchid with a huge Dact. *fuchsii*.

Bournemouth won a gold for their excellent display, and it was obvious how much trouble they had gone to, with some twig epiphytes being attached to some overhanging twigs. Their plants ranged from the hardies up to warm growing Vandas and Paphs. Well done to them! Devon had a more modest display, and Paph. Black Jack caught my eye as a good vinicolor hybrid. Writhlington School had an informative and educational display (winning gold) along with some very good specimens that they have grown for several years. They seem to go from strength to strength as their collection gets enhanced with donations, and *Polystachya galeata* was an interesting plant from Tropical West Africa.

My memory of the show will be the vast array of hardy orchids on show, and on sale. The Dutch are now into them in a big way, producing seedlings and specimen plants at a vast rate. The RHS committee had recently been at one of these 'facilities' with Anthura who propagate Phals as well as Anthuriums (where their name comes from). The Dutch ride around the glasshouses on bicycles as it is that big, and plants are grown raised off the floor so that they can work (including driving) underneath. Chris Purver showed me several photos that he had taken there, and it is almost unbelievable what they are achieving, and the scale. Most of the technology is brand new, and leaves the EYOF behind!

The Orchid show will remain at Malvern, and the 2014 dates are June 13-15th. Sadly I won't be there, but it promises to be even bigger and better - make a note in your diary. JG

## **Dates for your diary...**

### **Monthly meetings at Ranmoor – 10am**

<b>July</b>	<b>NO MEETING</b>
<b>Aug 11th</b>	Mike Armstrong - Cattleyas and Photography
<b>Sept</b>	<b>NO MEETING</b>

### **Other shows**

Aug 24-25th BOGA Show, Thatcham, Berks

Society website - [www.sheffieldorchids.org](http://www.sheffieldorchids.org)



Above:- *Cymbidium Little Black Sambo*

Below: - *Epidendrum steinbachianum*

