

**Sheffield & District
Orchid Society
Newsletter
August 2014**



**Dendrobium *unicum*
August Plant of the Month**

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Business

There are some flyers from Peter Williams of Mae Tang Orchids advertising his next trip to Thailand for his guided orchid tours (March 2015). Details at www.theorchidman.com.

Anyone interested in the proposed trip to the London EOC next April should contact Ted.

The October meeting will be the Photographic competition. Entries should be forwarded to Ian Wilson ASAP. This is the final newsletter reminder as the next newsletter will be too late for entries to be submitted.

Although it still feels like high summer, note that the AGM isn't that far away, and as part of the Society's constitution it is necessary at this point to remind members that any nominations for the committee need to be proposed, seconded, and lodged with the chairman by the October meeting.

Notes from your Treasurer

Gift Aid Scheme

For anyone who pays tax and agrees to sign up to this scheme, as a charity, we may claim back from HMRC, 25% of their membership fee, even if they subscribe to other gift aid schemes.

This for your society, is a win win situation, benefiting your society and incurs *no* cost to the member. Thanks to members who already subscribe, we reclaimed £133 from HMRC this year.

So for members who originally were not able to participate but now feel willing to join, please complete the attached Gift Aid Form to help boost our Society income. Please pass it to me for inclusion in our next year HMRC claim.

Annual Membership Fees.

Despite increasing costs, the membership fees remain at £15 for the coming year, commencing 1st October.

It helps the administration considerably, if fees are paid via the Standing Order Mandate (Copy attached). When complete, please pass direct to your bank. It saves members having to remember cash/cheques at the first meeting, but of course either will always be accepted.

The Table Show

Silvia gave the August commentary, and started by commenting on the volume of Phals that were on show this month – no doubt drawn in by the speaker's subject. First up was *bellina*, a species with smallish flowers on a short spike. These are produced serially, and this just had a single flower. Zuma Aussie had a couple of colourful brown flowers, and Kiska was striking with medium sized white flowers with a contrasting orange lip. Leopard Prince x Meidar Prince produced a tall pendent spike of several finely spotted pink flowers. *amabilis* is a white species that is at the base of the majority of standard white hybrids. Taipei Gold was a very nice yellow with good freckling and an orange lip that was well presented. As well as these named plants there was a tall branched white with purple spots, a medium sized yellow with red edges, and a pink that had re-flowered on a couple of branches that were well balanced. The final Phal was another that was re-flowering, and had 3 short side branches. 2 of these were pink; however the 3rd was an oddity having flowers that were more gold. It will be interesting to see what this might look like on a future flowering.

Onc. (Miltonidium) Katrin Zoch was a smallish plant with a spray of small purple flowers. The plant may get a bit bigger in the future, but not massive. Only a single slipper was on show and this was the smallish Paph. *braemi* with a medium sized pale brown flower. Dendrobium unicum was mounted on cork, and had 4 flowering spikes of orange flowers with a paler lip. This was judged to be the plant of the month. Cda. *noezliana* is a small cool growing orange coloured Oncidium that has been the basis for many of the older named Odontiodas. Catasetum fimbriatum is a deciduous species that has produced 2 flower spikes

for many a year. This year, since being repotted into the new bark it has produced 3 spikes with several yellow flowers, most of which are yet to open. Sadly we won't see them at their best as they will have been and gone by the next meeting. Cattleya Hawaiian Wedding is a tall hybrid doing very well with a couple of pristine white flowers.

Vanda Kultana Dark Violet x Kultana Flame produced a good sized plant with a strong spike of mottled brown flowers. Renanthera imschootiana was a very tall example at over 1m tall with several branched growths. The well branched spike topped the plant and was still opening with a good number of red starry flowers, and many more buds to follow. The final plant was Zygopetalum Ladybird, which was almost specimen sized, and had medium sized flowers of brown and green with a purple lip. Thank you Silvia.

August Plant of the Month

Dendrobium *unicum*

This species of Dendrobium can be found in Northern Thailand, Laos and Vietnam growing at altitudes of 800m to 1500m on low shrubs and rocks, with seasonal rainfall and strong light. The flowering season in the natural habitat is winter into spring, but in my greenhouse it has flowered from late June to mid August.

I purchased mine at The Britannia Hotel, Bramhope, in February 2014, courtesy of Phoenix Orchids.

Grown on a slab of cork on the cooler side of intermediate, it is protected from the sun on the south side of the greenhouse and gets the full northern light on the north side. My growing temperature ranges between 9 – 12 degrees centigrade on the cooler side to 20 – 26 degrees centigrade on the warmer side and occasionally 30 degrees centigrade when I am not looking!

Because the plant is grown on a slab of cork it requires regular watering but occasionally in cooler weather the plant is allowed to dry out, but not for long. I only feed intermittently.

Through trial and error I have found that keeping the greenhouse floor damp increases the humidity and compensates if the temperature gets too high. **J.A. Charlesworth**

Growing Orchids Indoors

Francis Quesada-Pallares

This was a change on the day to the advertised lecture on Phalaenopsis species owing to the fact that the speaker had inadvertently brought along the wrong

memory stick. Thankfully the 'wrong' stick did contain a lecture that Francis was able to substitute, which did contain a smidgeon of phals...

Francis has now been growing orchids for 12-13 years, and he successfully grows over 1000 mixed plants inside a 2 bedroom council flat (ground floor). He initially started growing a few supermarket tropical plants & Phals which he kept on the storage heaters to provide the warmth that they needed. This of course was a salutary lesson for him, and a rethink proved more successful. His first proper named Phal - Brother Pico Vallezar followed, which he still has, and flowers on a regular basis. His infatuation with orchids has led to him setting up an online business - www.phalaenopsisandmore.com.

His growing conditions can be divided into 3 separate areas, and these are terrariums for the cooler more humid plants, the window sills and coffee tables, and under lamps.

Terrariums are used for cooler growing terrestrials, mainly the Pleuros and miniatures. A terrarium is used mainly for reptiles rather than fish tanks which are built of thicker glass and have to be heavily built to be watertight. The fittings etc are still those used for aqua culture, with lights, as well as 4 fans - 2 each to draw air in, and 2 to expel air. Humidity is provided by a misting device used every 3 hours 4 times per day. It is a product called Lucky Reptile Super Rain (See the website - www.luckyreptile.com for details. They are available in relevant stores & through Amazon - Ed.). One plant grown is Pths. *schiedie* (syn. *Stelis villosa*) which is unusual in having dangling appendages on the petals that sway in the wind. The plant is only 2-3cm tall with 1cm flowers. *Porroglossum dreisei* is another small plant that has a starry orange flower with an adapted lip that acts as a trigger that keeps the pollinator inside for several seconds to ensure that pollen is collected prior to release. Other plants include *Restrepia guttulata*, *dodsonii* & *purpurea*. *Pleurothallopsis inaequalis* is another, although too large to be a miniature.

Windowsills & coffee tables hold smallish pots in individual saucers to keep some water around the roots to counteract the drier atmosphere. It doesn't suit all plants, and Francis definitely doesn't recommend it as a standard practise. Plants for the windowsill are placed according to how much sunlight they are able to put up with. In the SE window you would find *Angraceum didieri x mahavavense*, a low growing primary hybrid that flowers constantly with long scented flowers. the north window finds plants like *Aspasia lunata* that needs low light (as with many *Oncidium*s). There is also *Bletilla striata* - UK hardy, but would be stolen if put outside in pots. As it is a bit warmer than this specie's optimum the flowers only tend to last for a few days. *Bulb. fascinator* also grows here very successfully next to the Phals. Be aware though that this long flowered species has an odour of sweaty feet...

Den. fimbriatum var. *oculatum* will produce canes to 1m tall - which is the limit for growing indoors, but the pendant clusters of deep yellow flowers is the reason

to grow it. *Den kingianum* is a variable species that can often tend towards a similar height in mature plants. *Den. thrysiflorum* is another tall species, and is his favourite in the Dendrobiums despite the flowers being short lived. It is supposed to require a cooler dry rest, but is watered all year around with little downside - perhaps the environment suits it!

Not all the Pleuros grow in the terrariums as the warmer growing ones live in the room including Pths. (now *Acianthera*) *limae* - a lithophyte from Brazil that has tallish leaves that produce reddish yellow flowers from the base of the centre rib. *Epi. schlechterianum* is a small species 4-5cm tall that spreads fairly rapidly, and has 2 flowers to each growth that are the colour of the foliage, so can be overlooked. *Gastrochilus japonicus* is an interesting species with small yellow flowers with a lip that is semi pouched. *Polystachya rosea* has tiny pink flowers, and *Sarc. fitzhart* likes a bit more light as well as being a little bit cooler. A few *Cattleyas* live on tables, and these are the more compact hybrid forms such as *Chrystelle Smith* with apricot pink flowers. *L. anceps* is quite a low growing species, but it will produce flower spikes up to 1m long that need staking otherwise they will tend to snap. *Thunias* are the final indoor plants, and are deciduous growers to almost 1m tall with quite spectacular flowers.

Under lamps is the final growing area. This is the 2nd bedroom, and consists of 3 converted bookcases. These are substantial bookcases, and not as flimsy as some of the cheap MDF types that fall apart if they get wet. Each shelf is fitted with 2 fluorescent tubes - 1 each of cool light (red spectrum end) and warm light (blue spectrum end). As these are straightforward fittings they are cheaper to purchase and run as opposed to growlamps/lights. The lights are on for 12 hours a day, every day. These shelves are mainly for *Phal* species, as well as a few *Cattleya* species, and more recently a few *Paphiopedilums*. The higher temperatures and light levels are useful for all of these genera. In other genera *Polystachya pubescens* grows here with its unusual golden upside down flowers, as well as *Bulb. lobbii* that really enjoys the conditions. *Cynorkis fastigiata* is a terrestrial considered as a weed in its native habitat (Madagascar etc.) as it self-pollinates then the seeds grow everywhere (other pots etc.) The flower is not unlike that of the European *Man orchid*. *Max. gracilis* will produce lots of flowers if given lots of water. *Mormolyca ringens* is a genus close to *Maxillaria*, producing similar brown flowers. *Leptotes bicolor* is really at home under lights and is a small plant with large starry flowers of white with a purple lip. *Lycaste Kenneth* is a well known hybrid that is thankfully more compact than some of the other species and hybrids, but does produce leaves for only 4 months or so of the year. *Gastrochilus retrocallus* (Syn. *Haraella retrocalla*) is a favourite plant that is very low growing with delightful short yellow flowers.

Finally a few of the *Phal* species were covered. *amboinensis* is a fragrant flower of short spikes of yellow flowers with concentric red bars on the petals. *bellina* is now a species, having formerly been *violascens* var. *borneo* (and a number of

other varieties as well). It can get large leaved, but with short spikes of pretty yellow flowers with a reddish mask. It has a bit of a scent of cinnamon. The flowers are produced sequentially, and the spikes should be left intact once flowering has finished as they will continue to re flower for up to a further 5 years. Cornu-cervi has colourful small flowers on an ever extending spike that starts off round, then flattens out, and eventually branches. Each spike can produce flowers sequentially in excess of a year. *deliciosa* is a small and varied species that is nicely marked. *equestris* is very colour variable, and is useful in hybridisation allowing for branching on small flowered offspring. It is noted for producing keikis. *kunstleri* has flowers that don't look like Phal flowers ought to as the petals reflect somewhat along their length. It produced around 3 small orange & brown barred flowers per spike. *schilleriana* is a rarity with mottled foliage that is almost striped. The roots tend to be warted, and can also produce new plants from broken roots. *tetraspis* is a small plant that needs high light to produce the odd pink barring on the white flowers, otherwise it tends to appear as an alba. *violacea* is an almost triangular flower with a strong scent. the yellowish flowers have a deep coloured mask on the lower petals and lip. Although not the anticipated talk, this was still quite interesting with just a hint of what might have been...

Dates for your diary...

Monthly meetings at Ranmoor – 10am

Sept 14th

Ian Dorman, Paphiopedilums

Ian needs little introduction, and is an expert on growing these spectacular plants 'up in t'north'

shows/exhibits/conferences etc

Sept 7th

BOGA & Darlington show, Josephine Butler College, Durham City

Sept 10-14th

21st WOC, Johannesburg, South Africa
(SDOS definitely not exhibiting!)

www.woc21.org

Society website - www.sheffieldorchids.org



Above: - Phal. Taipei Gold

Below: - Vanda Kultana Dark Violet x Kultana Flame

