

**Sheffield & District  
Orchid Society  
Newsletter  
August/September 2013**



**August Plant of the Month  
Cattleya Mini Purple**

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## Editorial

How does this month's cover photo look - Good, indifferent, or bad? have a read of this month's article, and then have another think about it. It won't win any prizes, could be better, but in the time available at the monthly meeting I think it will do...

I notice from the latest update notes for the OrchidWiz database that a number of the genres within the Vandaceous group have been reduced to simply Vanda. This includes Ascocentrum and Neofinetia, as well as all the intergeneric hybrids such as Ascocenda. I had already written the table show notes, and have left it as it was for illustrative purposes. I assume

that (as with *Oncidiums*) this is down to DNA analysis. Whilst this will make it easier for the trade with CITES it will be a bit of a pain having to relabel many plants. I hope that in the future they might do the same for *Zygopetalum* and *Zygosepalum* as I can't see any difference! If anyone knows, please tell me, and I'll print it...

## **Business**

There is no meeting in September which is due to a conflict with the Durham Orchid Show and judging Symposium that several of our senior members will be attending.

Brian outlined the likely committee structure and positions for 2014 (to be included in the AGM agenda later), and the vacancy for an 'additional member' (without portfolio). If you would like to join the committee and help drive us forward then please let Brian know by the October meeting at the latest - when our treasurer will happily collect subscriptions.

Without a meeting in September the call was made for plants for the EMOS show on Sept 29th. Ted will be co-ordinating the display, and will gratefully appreciate plants to be taken down there by Thursday 26th. Please call first to ensure he will be at home. Jeff Bagnall will produce the labels, and please let him have the names of likely plants by Tuesday 24th. It is now just 12 months until the next WOC in Johannesburg (10-14th Sept 2014). Details are available at [www.woc21.org](http://www.woc21.org) Early registration ends on 31st December. You can sign up to newsletters etc, and they have a number of additional tours available to whet your appetite for a longer experience...

## **Errata & Correction**

I've put one or two little plants labelled *Disa Watsonii* into the raffle at recent meetings: if you won one, please note that it is in fact *Disa Kewensis* (not *D Watsonii*). The ones labelled *D Unilangley* are correctly named. Sorry about the confusion. **Ted Croot**

# The Table Show

Silvia volunteered for this month's table show, and had a decent number of plants to go at. Three Zygos were first up, with Zygolum Louisedorf Grex having 4 spike of large starry purple flowers (it now seems to be a grex rather than a straightforward name, which I can only attribute to its production as a pot plant - Ed.). Zygopetalum Blue Lake was smaller in both growth and flower. The petals tend to be mottled green and the lip can be quite blue - however in this case it was more purple. Zygopetalum James Strauss 'Scent-sation' was mottled purple green, and had a slight scent. All of these plants were grown cool and hanging up in the roof for better light. Encyclia *alata* was a smallish plant with a very long spike of small flowers that were generally pale yellow with the petals becoming brown towards the tips. C. Mini Purple was a smallish plant with 2 well coloured flowers (see front cover) that was judged to be the plant of the Month. Prostechea *cochleata* was a larger plant that had 2 spikes (it left the greenhouse with 3) of octopus shaped flowers.

A deep Purple Vanda displayed its *coerulea* heritage. This was Charles' bargain buy from Ikea a number of years ago on its second flowering of the year (and a 3rd spike is developing). Ascda. Suksumran Sunlight had a very nice display of small orange flowers. Vf. Little Blossom (V. Miss Joaquim x Neof. *falcata*) was a lovely pale pink compact flower on a tall growing plant. Aerangis *distincta* was a small plant with pure white starry flowers on a pendant spike. Den. Thailand Black was a very deep purple colour, and well named.

Epipactis *palustris* was a UK terrestrial that was now just about over. Disa *uniflora* 'Pink' was a nice plant of pink colour (*uniflora* is usually a red/orange colour). Disa Unidiorosa was more orange, and Disa Reheat was a strong deeper red as the name might suggest. All the Disas are kept cold, quite wet, and watered with rainwater.

In the slippers were a couple of *rothschildianum* hybrids - Gloria Naugle (with *micranthum*) a nice pink, and Dollgoldi (with *armeniicum*) which was mainly yellow. Both are fairly compact, and show what can be achieved with selective breeding. Paph. Clair de Lune 'EVB' is an old timer that still takes some beating. It is a tall greenish white Maudiae type, and is a noted good do'er. Paph. Daniel Doherty (*wardii* x St. Swithin) is a bit of a novelty hybrid between a small species and an often large

multifloral. This clone definitely favoured the smaller parent, and had a single *wardii* type flower with 2 buds still to open.

Three Galeandras were next up - with the 'usual' selection of *dives*, *lacustris* and *batemanii* on display. There are only subtle differences between these species in size, shape and colour, and they weren't at their best this year. We are reminded not to cut off the spikes as they will re flower, and they require a dry rest in winter. *Sobralia lucasiana* is a rare visitor to the table show (as are all Sobralias) for 2 reasons - the first being their height, and often being over 2m they are difficult to transport, and secondly their flowers only tend to last for 3-4 days! *lusaciana* is a pinky yellow, and thankfully short this year at around 4'. *Onc. Cooksoniae* is a real old timer (1909) with smallish lovely pink mottled flowers on a tall branched spike. Often these old timers are still better than many modern hybrids.

In the Phals, *cornu-cervi* was a well rooted plant and had leaves getting bigger each time, so it was very healthy and had a good display of mottled brown flowers. Phal. *pulcherrima* had 2 tall spikes of small purple flowers. This was formerly a *Doritis*, and was the parent of many *Dtps.* hybrids. Happy More was a pleasant pink with a purple lip. 2 plants of Leopard Prince x Mei Dar Fantasy had similar speckled pink flowers. The spikes were fairly short, and should get bigger as they are still young plants. Pink Blush was well named as it had large pink flowers with a blush on them. Slightly better spacing would aid the effect. An unnamed deep purple Phal completed the commentary. Thank you Silvia.

## **August Plant of the Month**

### **Cattleya Mini Purple**

This was a keiki taken two years ago from a plant I had had for many years. I potted it into coir chips and this is its first flowering. It lives in a south-west-facing conservatory with air-conditioning/heating kept between 19C and 26C with about 60% minimum humidity. I feed it about once a month with Orchid Focus - 'Grow' in winter and 'Bloom' in summer. The cross was first registered in 1965 by the Rev. M Yamada as a primary hybrid between *L. pumila* & *C. walkeriana*. Since then *pumila* became a

Sophronitis, and is now a Cattleya, so the original cross was an Lc., then an Sc., and now simply a Cattleya. **Valerie Minogue**

## **Photography with Cattleyas**

### **Mike Armstrong**

Mike is a long time member of EMOS, and during his long career has been a professional in both photography and growing Cattleyas. He is still recognised as an authority on Cattleyas although now retired they are 'just a hobby'.

His aptitude for photography started with his mother who ran a camera shop in Louth. Up to being 10 years old he had a box brownie125 - a very common camera at that time. At 13 he was using a Halina 35 - one of the 'new fangled' compact cameras. Mikes passion at the time included steam engines, and he would think nothing at jumping on the train to York (and elsewhere) to take black and white pictures of engines. As the SLR camera was developed he bought a Contac, switching to a Nikon in his early 20s, with which he would often use up to 30 rolls of film a day. At this rate, and turning professional he also got through 2-3 cameras a year. He is passionate about using film rather than snapping various things on digital as it makes you understand what you are doing, and how best to use the settings - modern cameras tend to do this for you, taking most of the skill and passion away. As a professional his pictures became awarded, and he also became a judge.

He does use digital of course, and started with a low pixel count Nikon D2, and is currently using a D800E that uses 36.2mpxl - far higher than most users would require. These use just 3 colour layers - magenta, cyan & yellow

Staging plants for pictures takes time, which is worth it to get that better picture. What might not be too obvious is that well grown plants tend to be easier to photograph - particularly with Cattleyas where the flowers will stand proud of the foliage. His preferred technique for growing this genera is to grow them in clear pots inside mossed baskets - which helps to keep humidity around the plant without having to have permanently damp roots. Remove all labels prior to taking a picture, clean the foliage, and optimise the staking of the flowers.

The biggest issue that amateurs get with their photography is a shadow of the plant on the backdrop. This occurs when a single flash is used, so it is better to use 2-3 additional lights - sides and rear as appropriate. These will have a dual function to both reduce the shadow, and to provide some backlighting which helps with the colouration of the flower as well as the background. A diffuser is always useful in this technique as it softens the light making it appear from more than a single bulb - which reduces the shadow.

The staging should include the camera on a tripod at the same height as the plant. Lift the plant to the appropriate height as necessary. Isolating the plant in this way ensures that a modern camera isn't distracted by anything else to focus on. Wrap the pot in black cloth so that it effectively disappears. This can also be used with foliage, but needs more care. A useful technique here would be to create a decent size 'Photo box'. Ideally this would be collapsible and portable. It would have a black back to it, with 2 sides of either white or of white muslin cloth to diffuse flash.

there are 3 different basic methods to take digital pictures - either as RAW, TIF, or (most commonly) JPEG. Raw allows more manipulation of the image with computer software. JPEG is all that any of us will ever need. there are a couple of decent software programs that can be used to produce the final image - such as sharpen up, brighten, or soften. Windows Live Gallery and Photoshop ('elements' only is good enough) are either provided with the operating system, or are easy to buy.

Several examples of Mikes photography were shown - including before & after software touch ups. Digital photography is a very easy thing to do as poor images can be discarded without any processing costs, unlike film. Have a go, do some experiments on photographing the same plant using different techniques and compare results (make sure you take note of which style is used for each 1). It can be great fun - don't just put the camera on the 'automatic' setting, and learn a bit more about what it can do for you. A hearty round of applause followed.

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

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

- Oct 13th** Bev & Ann Ellis - Our Charity school in Kenya.  
Although not a talk on orchids as such, this will be an interesting about what they get up to when in Kenya.
- Nov 10th** Malcolm Perry – The Nilgiri Hills of Southern India

### **Other shows**

- Sep 29<sup>th</sup>** East Midlands OS – Radcliffe on Trent  
**\*\* SDOS Exhibiting, plants req'd \*\***

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



Above:- *Dendrobium Thailand Black*  
Below: - *Oncidium Cooksoniae*

