

**Sheffield & District  
Orchid Society  
Newsletter  
February 2015**



**February Plant of the Month  
*Paph. vietnamense***

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## Librarian

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# Business

We are exhibiting at the annual Harrogate Orchid Society show at Bramhope on the weekend of 22-23<sup>rd</sup> February. Arrangements for plants were covered which need not be reported here. The next show will be at Bowburn on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> march, and plants will again be required. Plans for Chatsworth are well in hand, and it will soon be here!

Discount tickets will be available for this year's Malvern Show between 12-14<sup>th</sup> June. As with previous years the charge is £6 per ticket, which allows full access to the showground. Normal day tickets are around £25, so this represents a real bargain. If you wish to take advantage of this offer, please let Carolyn know prior to the April meeting.

Members are reminded that there will be another photographic competition this year, so if attending any of the shows above then these offer a real opportunity for a classy snap or 2 – as well as any from your own collection of course.

NB. The June meeting will now take place on June 21<sup>st</sup> as the previous weekend clashes with the Show at Malvern.

# The Table Show

John Garner did this month's commentary, and started on the left with some Phals. Ariadne was first with small white flowers on a shortish branched spike. This is an old primary hybrid between *aphrodite* x *stuartiana* dating from 1896. This plant is probably from a remake. Next was Charmer with mottled bronze flowers. These are medium sized flowers on a decent sized spike, and the plant has been in almost constant flower since it was purchased at Chatsworth last year. The next was unnamed, and was a Garden Centre freebie. It had lovely mottled pink flowers on a medium spike.

Three former Potinaras were next with their characteristic smallish flowers. These are now Rlc. Firedance 'Patricia', a lovely deep red, and 2 different clones of Ctt. Gold Digger with 'Orchid Jungle' having yellowish petals with a reddish lip, and 'Fuch's Mandarin' which is a more orange colour with some slight red mottling on the lip. C. Karae Lyn Sugiyama is a frequent visitor to the table over many years. It is a large white of good shape. C. *percialiana* is a large flowered species with pink flowers. This was a smaller division of a specimen that we have also seen any times. This is now becoming well established and will romp away over the next few years. Cornerstone 'Compass' is a large flowered hybrid with very attractive deep purple flowers.

Two plants of Vanda Bangsai Queen were both very tall (over 1m) with very attractive spikes of mottled purple flowers. Both plants had new growths at the base of the plant, and should go on to become strong specimens in due course. Angraecum Veitchii was a smaller plant that we have previously seen, and had a flower that had just opened, with another in the process. The large starry flower was a little bit greener than we are used to seeing, but will still fade to that most pure of white.

After a glut of tall plants, Gomesa *crispa* appeared quite small. It isn't as large as many of the Oncidium group, but will form specimens, often with a bit of a climbing habit. The small & intricate flowers are pale yellow, and are on a pendant spike. Onc. *sotoanum* is now a fine specimen with a mass of tiny pink flowers produced in profusion on dozens of spikes. It is a small bulbed species with shortish leaves, so shows the flowers off well. It is grown in a clay pot to aid humidity around the roots this plant thrive in the cold house. It has a reasonable odour.

Dendrobium Gilleston Stardust was still going strong from last month, and shows its value as a rewarding plant to grow. Den. *kingianum* is a division of another large plant, and has several deep pink flowers on all of the tall canes. It can be difficult to flower as well as this, so well done to the owner.

Paph. *vietnamense* is a lovely species from that part of the world, and has quite large flowers of deep mauve with a very deep purple lip. It was named as the plant of the month; scoring 24 (out of 31) (see front cover). Lyro Petite Fleur is a

compact hybrid with a couple of well shaped small yellowish flowers that open with a green tint prior to turning buttercup yellow – well worth growing.

*Barkeria melanocaulon* was the final plant. This interesting genus is a member of the *Cattleya* tribe, despite having a reed like growth habit. It is also a climbing plant, with several roots above the compost so daily misting is required. It has several small pale purple flowers that need a close up look to appreciate. Thank you John

## February Plant of the Month

### **Paph. *vietnamense***

This plant was purchased as a small seedling that had been raised from flask, I believe the seed was collected in Vietnam.

I purchased it from Plested Orchids at the British Paphiopedilum Society AGM 17 November 2007 and it has grown extremely well in my small intermediate temperature greenhouse. This is only its third flowering, so you can see it was a while reaching maturity.

While I have seen plants with better shape to the flowers' although it had been out for a while and the petals were just beginning to curl a little, I think the leaf texture, colour and pattern will take some beating, which makes the plant decorative even when out of flower. **Derek Jackson**

## The Lectures

A series of short talks by members was today's theme, and is something that we will make more use of in the future. Today's talks were all similar in some ways, and yet quite different in many others. These talks were by Silvia Maunder, Ted Croot and John Garner.

**Silvia** gave the first talk, starting with her upbringing in Wensleydale. Where better to be in touch with nature! Walks around the area brought her into contact with local flora, including the early purple which can be locally abundant. Where species are native like this there is more of a tendency to take them for granted rather than as the spectacular group that we now regard them as.

By the early 1960s Silvia had married Cedric, and they were living in Singapore for a while. This is an orchid hotspot of course, and there were orchids available as pot plants, and once again they weren't a focus, this time the local trees and shrubs were more of an interest. Some orchids were grown in the Botanic Gardens, and were strangely grown inside 'cages'.

Upon returning to the UK they and their young family moved into an old house with a mainly derelict garden and spent several years growing trees shrubs and rhododendrons, but eventually added a conservatory. The local greengrocer stocked a few orchids for decorative purposes, and once flowered he tended to sell them off cheaply. With a conservatory they decided to try 1 or 2. The family tended to holiday on the south coast around Devon and Dorset, and once stayed local to the village of Plush where Keith Andrew ran his orchid nursery. A trip there really kick started their orchid interest, and some vandaceous plants were acquired.

Being a GP it was only a matter of time before Cedric bumped into Jim Binks – a fellow GP and stalwart of the Sheffield Society. Following a visit to a local show to see Jim's famous Paphs, an invite to a monthly meeting at Stannington was accepted, and the Maunders became members. They regularly visited Mansell and Hatchers who at that time imported bare root plants from all around the world (this was in the days prior to CITES), and some of these had of course to be tried. At SDOS the Maunders became BOC Reps to try and enhance their knowledge for the burgeoning collection. This then led to BOC judging qualification and trips to BOCs, EOCs, and ultimately WOCs, including Miami, Japan and New Zealand.

More recently the collection has been much reduced in size through lack of time and illness and the plants have been less well looked after, but they do seem to be starting to recover.

**Ted** started by saying that he was brought up on a farm on the Norfolk/Lincolnshire border, and as such he has always been around plants. After school he studied Botany and Zoology at University. Upon graduating Ted had to start working for a living, and so with little faith he applied for a teaching job (Biology) in Sheffield. To his eternal amazement he was accepted, and started as a probationary teacher. After 12 months he had failed to do anything wrong, and not only was he no longer on probation he actually became head of department. Within this role he had control of the labs and greenhouses, where his green fingered skills were able to flourish.

One of the Lab technician's fathers had a large plant of Paph. *insigne* that he was dividing, and Ted was asked if he wanted a division. 'Yes please' was the answer, and it grew away well in a cold frame apart from winter when it came indoors. This continued for several years until the troublesome summer of 1976 when it snowed in June, followed by the hottest summer heat wave 'ever'. This was too much for this plant and with focus elsewhere (water shortages etc.) it sadly passed away.

Prior to this Ted had frequently attended the Harrogate Spring flower show where SDOS usually exhibited, but Ted had avoided orchids as they appeared unreal and unnatural.

Annette discovered an advert in the local paper for a meeting of SSSYOS (Sheffield & South Yorkshire at that time) at Stannington. Attendance was a must, and upon arrival found the business of the day was an auction. Ted was able to bid for several plants (despite not being a member at that point). By the end of the meeting Ted had joined the Society. More plants were obtained through plant sales, and these rapidly began to fill the kitchen windowsill, then the dining room, then..... A greenhouse was essential, and once mentioned at the monthly meeting Jim Binks said he would help out. Jim was a noted Paph grower, and it was a route that Ted was following. This simple act of helping out turned into much more as Jim designed and then directed most of the building work. Jim was of course a man of many talents, and it is a testament that the greenhouse is still fully functional, and produces the wonderful variety of orchids that we see monthly on the show bench. Whilst growing many slippers over the years the collection is much more varied these days. Although Ted says that the quality of growing is declining we are all still more than envious...

**John** was raised on the South Manchester border with Cheshire (and is a Cestrian rather than a Mancunian). The family were Market Gardeners, and so green fingers were evident from an early age. He was encouraged into a financial career rather than horticulture as the pay was better and the hours shorter. Most of the produce was sold through Manchester wholesale market, and here he saw his first orchids in the florists with the large sized cut flower Cymbidiums, mainly in test tubes, but sometimes as spikes. Sadly there were never any plants to see what they looked like. Occasionally an out of flower Cymbidium (compact types) would be seen in a Garden Centre at expensive prices, but with no knowledge on how to grow them that was where they stayed!

Even by the late 80's there were few adverts for orchids, but eventually he saw an advert from Thomson & Morgan for 'The Orchid Factory' which was simply an advert for Pleione *formosana*. This looked good value, and too good to miss so a double pack was ordered. They flowered and grew rapidly producing at least 1 good growth and multiple tiny 'bits'. They were dried off towards the end of the year and subsequently almost forgotten. When potted up only an odd one got to flower as the bulbs were just too small, and new growths lacked their original vigour. They eventually died from neglect, mainly due to the arrival of some of the true tropical/semi tropical orchids that were so desired.

Thumbing through one of those 'Home' catalogues that arrive on spec revealed an orchid for late autumn delivery with an interesting flower. It soon arrived with 2 budding growths and it turned out to be a Paph. It was similar to the primary hybrid Lleanum, and became plant number 1 in his Paph collection. Knowing it needed to be kept warm it lived on top of the telly where it seemed to thrive, and lived for a number of years. Had this simply died then the hobby may have gone with it...

An advert for Mansell and Hatchers had been discovered in a pre-Christmas gardening magazine. The catalogue was immediately requested, and an eye opening visit soon followed, leaving with a 'cool collection' and many more Odonts followed as this was their speciality. Their catalogue advertised the North of England OS, so this was joined, and the education started to grow.

A trip to the WOC in Glasgow certainly opened his eyes to some of the truly exotic plants previously unseen. There were 2 amazing highlights, the Yamamoto Dendrobium hybrids were awesome, but the best was the Grand Champion of Paph. *rothschildianum* 'Mont Millais' from the Eric Young foundation. Slippers were fast becoming a favourite, and the growing environment was warmed up (to the detriment of the Odonts). The Paph Society was joined, and at the first meeting John was introduced to the large contingent from Sheffield, who offered the opportunity to attend SDOS meetings at the hospital. The meetings on a Sunday were more suitable than for NEOS on a Saturday, and the rest is now history.

A number of greenhouses have been constructed at various residences, and the new conservatory is now under construction where John hopes to be able to grow his slippers to their best.

Three interesting and varied talks that were well received. It is hoped that more members will be able to do similar talks in the future.

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

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

**March 8th** David Menzies is a regular speaker at SDOS, and today he will discuss his new greenhouse.

### **shows/exhibits/conferences etc**

**March 29<sup>th</sup>** North East of England Annual Show, Bowburn Village hall  
\*\* SDOS exhibiting \*\*

**April 9-12th** EOC Show & Conference, RHS Halls, London  
[www.eoclondon2015.org.uk](http://www.eoclondon2015.org.uk)

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



Above - Vanda Bangsai Queen

Below - *Oncidium sotoanum*

