

SHEFFIELD & DISTRICT ORCHID SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

JULY 2011



**JULY PLANT OF THE MONTH
PAPHIOPEDILUM MERCATELII**

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BUSINESS

The Sheffield Fayre will be upon us shortly after the August meeting. Their advertising material has a large article our involvement to the extent that we can't really drop out – despite being short of some volunteers to man the display. We should be able to come up with enough plants one way or another, but still require some volunteers to do a half day stint. Please have a think about it, and let Richard know at the next meeting. The dates are the August Bank Holiday weekend (Sunday and Monday only). The following exhibit will be at the EMOS annual show at Lowdham on 11th September. Once again volunteers are required for the setup etc. as well as plants. NB. There is no meeting at Ranmoor that day. Volunteers are still required to assist with the 2012 annual show – please see the note below.

At this year's Peterborough show, one supplier Ooi Leng had great issues getting their plants there on time despite the best of arrangements. They were eventually made available after the show and the traders had left. There is a wide range of plants available through Peter White, and a list is available on the PIOS website <http://www.peterboroughinternationalorchidshow.org.uk/ooileng.html>

Plans are still in the air for the November meeting, with a 'bring and buy' a possibility. Does anyone have any ideas on what they would like? The treasurer wishes at this early

point to mention that subs at the increased rate of £15 are due in October, and hopes that all standing orders have been updated.

Show Publicity

We need a volunteer desperately to undertake show publicity for 2012. Publicity is the vital element of a successful show. Computer access is essential.

The cycle starts in the Autumn by contacting the National gardening magazines where editorial teams work many months in advance. Other items go out at different intervals from early in the New Year depending on type of outlet. Richard will pass on details about publicity for 2011 with lists, specimen letters and (very crucially) timings which hit outlets for maximum impact enclosing information specific to them. A lot can be done by email, but to be thorough the task does take time. Items can be prepared gradually during the Winter months for timed dispatch. For 2011 Richard targeted 170 outlets (with an additional 90 bulk insertions). The computer made it easy with a common covering letter personalised making each recipient feel special.

2012 is our 40th Anniversary show so we have a very special event to advertise. Please contact Richard if you are willing to undertake this important task.

THE TABLE SHOW

Silvia volunteered for this month's show, and started with Beallara Eurostar. This complex Odont type is a good doer, and is a good starter orchid. It had 3 spikes of starry shaped off-white and purple, and 2 more still developing. Next was a good Vanda type with medium purple flowers. Amazingly this plant was a cast off from B&Q, and is vigorous. V. Hu Jiongzhou (*see back cover*) is a large purple mottled flower named in honour of JJ. It is a good grower and flowers twice a year. Asctm. *aurantiacum* is a lovely small plant with a mass of miniature orange flowers on a short spike. Usually 2 spikes are produced on this clone, but there was only 1 this year.

Phal. Diamond White was a large flowered white with flowers well spaced. Phal. Chih Shang's Stripes was a well shaped pink flower with a deeper coloured lip (It didn't have any stripes). Dtps. Kenneth Schubert is a well known plant with small, almost pale blue flowers that owe a lot to its Doritis *pulcherrima* parent. It is a sequential flowering plant that 'seems to go on forever.' New Jersey was a strong purple that looked as if it was a new plant growing from the crown of the existing plant with starter leaves and roots well up the plant. When it gets a bit bigger (more roots) it might be possible to split the monopodial growth and see what happens. Brother Golden Embers is also a frequently exhibited plant with pale yellow flowers (*see back cover*). It has a good heritage, and displayed a branched spike of many flowers.

Maxillaria *tenuifolia* is a small intermediate plant with short stemmed, small red flowers that nestle within the growth that you really need to look at to see them. Encyclia *tampenensis* comes from Florida as the name would suggest, and is just about the most northerly epiphyte in the orchid family, and as a result doesn't grow too tall. It had 4 short spikes of usually fragrant starry brown flowers with a purple blotched white lip.

Paph. Mercatelli 'Olive Stone' was a very well grown slipper with a tall spike of 5 flowers and 1 bud of good shape and substance. It was judged to be the plant of the month (*see front cover*). Paph. Moustache was a specimen sized plant that sadly only had a

single spike of 2 flowers and a bud. The petals droop significantly giving the impression of an old fashioned mandarin moustache. *philippinense* is a short growing species with 2 good but small flowers with pleasant twisting petals. This species makes up 75% of Moustache. *dayanum* is a species from Borneo with mottled leaves, and has a strong flower of purple and white. Henrietta Fujiwara is a sequential flowering plant that was just starting flowering and can go on for over a year. The first flower was malformed, but the second one was looking OK. *curtisii* f. *album* is slightly smaller flowered than the normal colourform. The tessellated leaves were paler, and the flower more of a washed out colour. Phrag. *besseae* was a very good clone with 2 flowers of good shape and a strong red colour.

Den. *christyanum* (syn. *margaritaceum*) is a small intermediate growing plant that needs to be dry in winter. The flowers are produced either singularly or in pairs on older growths, and are mainly white with an orange throat. Tolumnia Red Beauty was a striking plant that was well grown. This genus prefers drier conditions with its fleshy leaves. The slender spike was adorned with bright red and yellow flowers – very eye catching. *Leptotes bicolor* x C. Little Angel produced a small plant with small pink/blue star shaped flowers. The final plant was Bulb. *lobbii* v. *Claptonense* was a bark mounted plant of a creeping habit, and had just a single small clear brown flower with a very nodding hinged lip. Thank you Silvia.

JULY PLANT OF THE MONTH

PAPHIOPEDILUM MERCATELII

‘OLIVE STONE’

I bought my plant from Iven’s Orchids when Alan Smith had some of their interesting and unusual plants for sale at clearance prices at a British Paph. Soc. Meeting & was I the lucky one! I was tempted because I remembered the beautiful plants Jim Gieves used to show and of course the price was right.

When I tried to look up the history of Mercatellii, I was surprised to find that there seemed to be no reference to it in any of my books, old and new. However the RHS International Orchid Register told me that my plant is synonymous with Paph. Memoria Mercatellii (registered as *stonei* x *lowii*).

The cross was registered 1st January 1904 and was made and registered by R. Linaria using *P. stonei* as pollen parent and *P. lowii* as pod parent. I can find no information on who Mercatelli was or Linaria other than it was the only cross registered by him.

Between 1997 and 2002 it has gained 9 American Awards; 4 x AM/AOS and 5x HC/AOS, the best with 5 flowers. My clone ‘Olive Stone’ was awarded a bronze by the Cymbidium Society of America in 1997 when shown by Paphanatics.

Both parents are beautiful plants in their own right with *stonei* coming from Sarawak, Borneo, warm growing, bright light in high trees on moss, or on limestone rocks in

accumulated humus and *lowii* from Sarawak, Borneo also Sumatra, Malaya, Celebes, Java.

The growing requirements for the two parents are similar, Just! and tolerate my rather fixed intermediate conditions. Temp, summer months 70-75 F Day / 60-65 F night, winter months, 63 -68 F Day / 54-58 F Night. Light is moderate, Humidity 60-85 %. **Derek Jackson**

COELOGYNES

ROBIN McDONALD

Robin has been growing orchids for a long time now, and like many others started with a Phalaenopsis and some Pleiones. When looking for something else and different, she was directed to the Norfolk grower Alex Mellor. As it happened Alex was on the point of retiring, and selling up. Robin bought several mixed plants, one of which was a Coelogyne, and her interest in the genera has grown ever since. She still has that original plant some 20 years later – which is now a specimen. Around 10 years ago, Sam Tsui had a range of Coelogyne available, and several of these were added to the collection. The plants can be quite small as well as some that can become very large and heavy.

The genus comes from Asia, from the Himalayas through Burma, Thailand, Borneo, and into the north of Australia. Some of the species are endemic to their own islands, but many are well spread (common). Borneo has 65 species, and Sumatra has 34.

The genus is currently under revision (as are many genus's). They were first described by Lindley in the 19th century, and revised by Dressler in 1981, who classified them into 22 sections. Originally there were around 400 species, but many have been synonyms, and the true number is currently just over 220. The species type is *crisista*, of which there are 5 variants. The name Coelogyne can be pronounced many ways depending on where you want to put the accent, but the name comes from Koilos meaning hollow cavity (deeply excavated stigma) and gyne meaning female. As the plants come from a wide range of habitat they grow between 21-32C at sea level to 1000m with 3-9 months monsoon, and also up to 1800m where it is more cool, and up to 3700m in relatively dry forests with few trees. As a result, there are species in all of the temperature group ranges.

They have 4 methods of producing flowers – which is unusual in a single genus. These can be from the base of the mature growth, top of the mature growth between the terminal leaves, on a terminal node (rhizome), or produced as the leaves start to grow (immature growth)

The main reason for such a high number of sections is from flowering in these different ways, as well as the climatic range etc. It isn't possible to go over all of the species, so Robin covered 1 or 2 species from a section where relevant, although some sections are quite obscure and not commercially grown – in which case they are missed out.

Section 1 – Elatae. Contains *barbata*, which has large flowers that start to develop in February but don't actually open until November. These are white with a hairy trumpet lip that is brown inside, and will last 6 weeks on up to 20 sequentially produced flowers. *stricta* (syn. *elata*) is a large plant with a creeping rhizome, and modest white flowers with yellow lip marking.

- 2 – **Proliferae**. This has 6 species, with *longipes* most notable.
- 3 - **Fuliginosa**. These are tiny scramblers, very floriferous, with hairy lips. Flowers are produced sequentially. *ovalis* is a spindly plant with small waxy yellowish flowers, with narrow petals.
- 4 – **Micranthae**. *micrantha* comes from hill forests in Burma
- 5 – **Bractypterae**. *parishii* is a pale green form that flowers from the top of the bulb, often after the leaves have been discarded.
- 6 – **Speciosa**. This is a nice group, with *speciosa* having pendant yellow/brown flowers with a brown lip. *incarnata* has green petals, and *usitana* is a new species (2001) with large white flowers and a hooded red lip that are too heavy for the spike to hold.
- 7 – **Bicellae**.
- 8 – **Monofiliforme**.
- 9 – **Longifoliae**. Contains 28 species of sequential flowering plants that last a long time.
- 10 – **Cyathogyne**. These are multiflorals.
- 11 – **Vernosa**. This group have pendant flowers that generally smell of mould. *mayeriana* is a green form with a whitish lip and black mottling.
- 12 – **Tormentosae**. *tormentosa* (syn. *massangeana*) is a well known species with a floppy spike and brownish flowers. *rochusenii* is another with pale brown hanging flowers. Flowers in this section can be produced all year around, are perfumed and can last up to 6 weeks.
- 13 – **Hologyne**. *prasina* has pale yellow flowers
- 14 – **rigidformes**.
- 15 – **Veithchiaie**. This group come from New Guinea.
- 16 – **Ptychogyne?**
- 17 – **Lawrenceanae**. This section contains *mooreana* which is a large plant with long racemes of full white flowers with a yellow throat. This species likes to be pot bound to flower, and doesn't like being repotted – although 2 weeks after flowering is about the best. *lawrenceanum* is also a large plant with yellow – brown flowers reaching 4” across.
- 18 - **Coelogyne**. This contains the species type *cristata* which has crested keels. This is probably the most widespread species and has the most varieties. It rapidly forms heavy specimen plants with round bulbs on short rhizomes. Var. *citrana/lemoniana* is perfumed; var. *Chatsworth* has curly petals on larger flowers, and var. *hololeuca/f. alba* is a pure white form.
- 19 - **Fuscantes**. Contains *assamica* and *nitida* (syn. *ochracea*). *nitida* is a well known small perfumed plant – or does it stink?
- 20 – **Acellata?**. Contains *corymbosa*, a small plant with long spikes of small white flowers with yellow marks on the lip.
- 21 - **Lentiginosae**. Contains *chloroptera*, a yellow flowered species with a winged column. *mossiae* is a small flowered species with very pale brown flowers. *marmorata* has a hanging spike with pale green flowers with a distinctive white lip mottled with brown.

22 – **Flaccidae**. *flaccida* (syn. *lactea*) has a hanging spike with pale yellow to peach coloured small flowers. *viscosa* (syn. *graminifolia*) has arching spikes of open starry flowers from white to pale pink, and has very delicate leaves.

New species are still turning up, and there are still a few to be described. One of these has unusual brown leaves and brown flowers.

There are some natural hybrids, and a small number of registered man made hybrids. Notable amongst these are Unchained Melody (*cristata x flaccida*), Memoria W. Micholitz (*lawrenceana x mooreana*), Intermedia (*cristata x tomentosa*), and last but by no means least Burfordiense (*asperata x pandurata*) a huge plant with graceful arching spikes of pale green flowers.

A good round of applause followed this introduction to the genus. Not all the species were covered - either 'common' or rare (and some may be misspelt - **ed**), so if you would like to know more about them a good book on the genus is available (by Dudley Clayton).

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY...

MONTHLY MEETINGS AT RANMOOR – 10AM

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|----------------------------|--|
| Aug 14th | Jeff Hutchings - growing Hardy Orchids |
| September | No meeting |
| Oct 9th | Ian Parsons - Cymbidiums |

OTHER SHOWS

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| Aug 27 – 28th | BOGA Summer Fayre, Dinton Pastures, www.boga.org.uk |
| Sept 3rd – 4th | Orchid Festival, National Botanic Gardens, Carmarthen www.orchidstudygroup.org |
| Sept 11th | EMOS annual show, Lowdham *** SDOS Exhibiting *** |

Society website - www.sheffieldorchids.org



Above: - Vanda Hu Jiongzhou

Below: - Phal. Brother Golden Embers

