

**Sheffield & District  
Orchid Society  
Newsletter  
March 2013**



**March Plant of the Month  
*Coelogyne cristata* 'Chatsworth'**

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## Business

Our recent display at the Harrogate OS annual show at Bramhope was quite presentable, and rewarded with a few rosettes and cards. Thanks to Ted, Annette, Don & Margaret for setting up, and to the other members who supplied plants. Our next display is at the NEEOS show at Bowburn on Sunday 7th April. John Garner will do the staging, and will require plants - collecting from Ted's on Wednesday afternoon 3rd April. Please help us to put on a good show. Arrangements for our annual show at Chatsworth are going well and full details will be available at our next meeting.

Our library is now more accessible, and we have 2 new books - Growing Orchids on a Windowsill, and Gardens to visit in 2013.

Finally we welcomed a new member - Faye Steer, who has responsibilities for the orchid collection at Chatsworth house

# The Table Show

John Garner gave this month's commentary and started with an almost perfect specimen of *Coelogyne cristata* 'Chatsworth'. This is a plant that forms good specimens and is often seen at this time of the year. It is in a basket. It was judged to be the plant of the month. *Pterostylis curta* is another plant that is in flower at this time, and had 6 flowers and a bud. It was appropriate to have an Australian terrestrial present to accompany today's lecture. Cym. King Arthur 'Imperial' was an excellent hybrid with 4 flower spikes and almost too many yellow flowers to count. It is a noted good do'er, and was awarded the judges plant of the month. Cym. Strathblane 'Cooksbridge' was a different plant from last month, but was a division of the same. Once again it was in perfect condition and had a spike in bud as well to prolong the period in flower.

Plenty of slippers were on show, and Paph. Sapatinho was a good example of a very pretty flower on a reasonable sized plant. Hung Sheng Red Apple was a small plant with mottled leaves and a very dark purple coloured flower with hanging petals. It is very promising. An unnamed 'Complex Hybrid' was quite interesting with a spotted flower. Amandahill 'Posy' is an old Ratcliffe hybrid with a brushed red flower of a reasonable size (not too large). Two plants of *villosum* var. *boxallii* were divisions of each other, yet showed quite different flower markings and colouration. Sometimes the colour will 'run' as flowers age, but that wasn't the case this time. One was more like the true *villosum* whilst the other had the blacker mask on the dorsal that defines this variant. Pittsburg was a well grown plant with 2 compact flowers on the same spike of brushed red/brown colour. With 2 good leads we look forward to seeing it next year... Phrag Grande was another specimen with 3 spikes and 6 large yellowy green flowers with long tails. Another couple of spikes had previously finished, but a couple of weeks ago it was superb.

Several *Cattleyas* provided a good splash of colour. There were 2 plants of Gold Digger 'Fuch's Mandarin' each with a cluster of smallish orange flowers. Most of the 'bulbs' had small cracks around the top which it was suggested may be down to erratic watering. There were also 2 plants of a sister clone 'Orchid Jungle'. These were smaller growing plants (without the cracks), and had pale yellow flowers with a reddish lip. C. Rojo had a mass of small reddish orange flowers that created a really pleasant effect. *L. jongheana* was a short growing plant with a lot of leads. 2 were in flower with slightly streaky pink flowers, and another 2 buds still to open. C. Final Touch 'Lemon Chiffon' was a medium sized plant with a couple of peach flowers trimmed with orange edges, and it was a pleasant flower. C. Young-Min Orange was aptly named for its very clean pure colour. This was a very well grown plant as it only had 6 'bulbs', of which 3 were in flower! The flowers were of a smallish size and fairly tightly clustered together. If it can produce more growths and get a bit bigger over the coming year then we would look forward to seeing it again.

A small group of Phals completed the end of the table. It appears that the nomenclaturologists have moved all of Doritis and Doritaneopsis into Phalaenopsis, so naming of these plants is now far more straightforward. Ariadne is a very old primary hybrid, and is a fairly small white flower on a branched spike. It isn't fully open just yet, and will look at its best in a couple of weeks. A Leopard Prince hybrid looked lovely with its evenly spread fine pink spots. It isn't a large plant and had been successfully raised from a flask. Several others have been raised and are slightly different. Zuma Aussie Delight was a well grown large plant now virtually 2 separate plants. Each growth had a shortish spike with really attractive flowers of brushed colours of orange to pink. There was a little bit of leaf damage, but otherwise it was almost enchanting. The final plant was Zuma Camreal x Aphrodite. This is a medium sized white flower and was nicely presented with an arching spike over the top. Thank you John.

## **March Plant of the Month**

### **Coelogyne *cristata* 'Chatsworth'**

The plant was given to me several years ago by the late Brian Rittershausen of Burnham Nurseries, following his participation in our Annual Show – at Chatsworth. He felt it appropriate that a plant bearing this clone name should come to a member of our Society and, although he was not certain of the origin of the “Chatsworth” thought he may be able to track it down. Sadly his illness overtook him before he was able to do so. Various subsequent enquiries have failed to turn up any information.

For the first two or three years I had the plant it really struggled showing no sign whatsoever of flowering despite trying it in various locations. I had been told that this type of plant liked to grow “bursting out of the pot” and didn't like being repotted. However the time had come when desperate measures were called for. What was there to lose – only a non-flowering plant. Therefore, I moved it into a larger pot, dropping it on rather than a proper repot trying to disturb the roots as little as possible then filling in gently with a standard bark and perlite mix. The plant has since thrived and at its' best yet at our March meeting.

It is grown in a cool greenhouse with a minimum overnight temperature of (in old money) 48F. It hangs in the greenhouse roof and is watered weekly in summer and fortnightly in winter although it is occasionally caught by a passing spray being used on some adjacent plants. Feeding (weak) is done every other watering from Spring to Autumn and non in winter.

Could it be a coincidence ? After moaning to a friend about the lack of performance of this plant, she gave me another one slightly bigger and better than mine. That plant did OK for me and so I moved this plant alongside the bigger, better newcomer. Lo and behold – it flourished. Is competition a good thing?

**Brian Woodward**

# Orchids of SW Australia

## David Menzies

David is now quite well known to us from previous talks - mainly on some of his travels to the far flung corners of the world. His orchid career has been varied, being born in New Zealand, starting at Kew, and eventually becoming assistant curator at the Glasgow Botanic Gardens for over 24 years before his retirement. He also holds the national collection of Dendrobiums.

He started by saying that today's talk was on more than just the orchids of SW Australia, but including a look at the Perth orchid show, and touching on a few from New Zealand. He went to Perth last Autumn (Sept. - Oct. 2012) to attend the Australian National Conference, and then went to visit his native New Zealand. This period is Spring in Australia, and is when most plants are in flower - they tend to grow as terrestrials during the cooler winter, flower in spring, and then become dormant 'bulbs' under the summer heat. Perth is the west coast, and is actually nearer to Singapore than any of the major cities such as Sydney from which it is isolated by vast deserts. It is situated on the Swan river, just upstream from the sea port of Fremantle. the temperature is very benign, and although it can get cool in winter it is frost free. The soils are fairly thin and poor, and subject to wild fires. Despite this the local area has around 9000 species of plants. One of the commonest Orchid genus is the Caladenias of which there are over 100 species. most are known by their common names by the locals. They are quite spectacular, whilst still of a modest size. The cowslip orchid (*C. flava*) is of course yellow. *latifolia* is known as the pink fairy orchid, and *ranicula* is also pink, but of a spidery shape. Many of this group are collectively known as the spider orchids. *georgei* (Tuart spider) is a bit bigger with a 3" sepal that actually attracts bees. *discoidea* (dancing spider) is a plant that bends over.

The colours range over to the blues as well with the 'china' orchids of *Cyanicula*, and the enamel orchids (*Elythranthera*) have very glossy leaves. The donkey orchids *Diuris* are named for their petals that resemble donkey's ears. Often these plants are found in large colonies. The mignonette orchids - *Microtis* - all have a single hollow leaf and stem with a flower around 1mm in size, and these resemble *Spiranthes* in shape and form.

The *Pyrorchis* genus only flower after a fire, and are known as the beak orchids. *Pterostylis* is a genus that comes from this area, and *curta* is one that is frequently seen in the UK. Most of the group are a similar green and hooded. They grow in open woodland and have names like the jug orchid (*P. recurva*) or the bird orchid (*P. barbata*). Most however are called a variety of 'greenhood'.

The trips to visit these habitats were on days out from the conference. This moves around Australia in the same way as a BOC, EOC or WOC. Despite being the same country, there are strict rules governing the movement of plants (and

animals) to protect certain habitats from 'weeds' as well as introducing hidden bugs etc. As a result most of the plants were from the Western province, although flasks were available from NSW and Queensland. Cymbidiums grow well in this climate, and there were plenty on show. The overall GC at the show was a very nice red Lycaste.

One of the largest nurseries in the area is Ezi-Grow, and they have several huge Den. *speciosum* with numerous spikes of pale yellow flowers. Their nursery is a huge shade house with Cymbidiums, Cattleyas, Dendrobiums and Sarcophilus species and hybrids. the Sarcophilus are native to Queensland as are some of the Cymbidiums such as the 6' tall species *madidum*.

From here David moved on to Melbourne to visit a nature reserve of open woodland with many trails. There are a lot of orchids here, many similar to the west coast, but also several others that have evolved separately. *Pterostylis curta* grows here in huge colonies alongside *Pt. longifolia*. The *Caladenias* have more interesting colours with yellow and burnt shades. A local nursery specialises in Australian native species (and some hybrids) and sell plants just through the internet!

Over to New Zealand to see his sister and to Auckland which is built on extinct volcanoes that creates fertile soils. Many locals grow *Bletilla striata* (from China) and these grow extremely well in colours from white to pink as well as some hybrids. *Paph. insigne* is a unexpected species that has been here for dozens of years and is planted mainly in soil where it grows undisturbed for several years between 'repotting'. Auckland has its own Winter Gardens, and has many orchids in flower most of the year to add colour. These include Cymbidiums as well as oddities like *Vanda teres* hybrids. *Sarcophilus* also grows well in the better light conditions. There is an old quarry situated just outside of the city, and volunteers have taken it over for planting with whatever comes along. Whilst sometimes plants may simply be getting 'off-loaded', there are good plants including orchids that get donated. Many have now become established in the soil, and these include Cymbidiums as well as reed stemmed *Epidendrums* and *Dendrobiums* like *kingianum* and *delicatum*.

One of David's old orchid growing mates - Ron Maunder - used to have a nursery near the city, and in the remains there are 8' tall *Sobralias* and some great old hybrids without labels. 'Tis a great shame. Along the east coast there are plantations of *Vanilla* springing up due to good prices and soaring demand, and the habitat is just about perfect. Members of the local orchid societies all tend to meet at their houses where they grow lots of orchids under shade or unheated greenhouses.

David finished by showing us some pictures from around New Plymouth which is where his own roots are buried... This area is just about frost free, and there are *Cymbidium lowii* growing in an old tree fern stem, and *Masd. falcata* growing up in the trees as well as an odd *Pleione formosana* 10' up a tree!

Great pictures and a wonderful talk. Many thanks David.

# Dates for your diary...

## Monthly meetings at Ranmoor – 10am

- Apr 14th** Chris Squire – In the Footsteps of the Old Orchid Hunters. Chris is a member of SDOS, and this is the tale of his hunting expedition to South America.
- May 12th** Andrew Bannister - From flask to flower
- June 9th** Steve Clements - Hardy Orchids

## Other shows

- Apr 7th** NEEOS, Bowburn Community Centre, Durham  
\*\* SDOS exhibiting \*\*
- Apr 12-13<sup>th</sup>** RHS London Orchid Show
- May 4-6th** Raby Castle Orchid Show, Staindrop
- May 19th** **SDOS annual show at Chatsworth.**  
\*\*\* Plants required \*\*\*

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





Above:- 2 clones of Gold Digger, 'Fuch's Mandarin' on left and 'Orchid Jungle' on the right

Below: - Paphiopedilum Amandahill 'Posy'

