

SHEFFIELD & DISTRICT ORCHID SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2012



**NOVEMBER PLANT OF THE MONTH
*DENDROBIUM OLIGOPHYLLUM***

OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

President

John Williams
Whitecroft, 170 Watt Lane
Sheffield S10 5QW
0114 230 4568

Vice Presidents

Julie Binks
Jeff Wilson
254 Abbey Lane
Sheffield S8 0BW
0114 236 1900

Chairman, Treasurer, Membership Secretary & BOC Representative

Richard Baxter
Hall Farm House
Shelton, Newark,
NG23 5JG
01949 850713
sheffieldorchids@ineedbroadband.co.uk

BOC Representative

Silvia Maunder
14 Whitechapel Close
Leeds LS8 2PT
0113 273 1347

Programme Secretary, & Vice President

Ted Croot
11 Marsh House Road,
Sheffield S11 9SP
0114 236 2283
annette.ted@talktalk.net

Editor and Publicity

John Garner
159 Lightridge Road
Fixby
Huddersfield HD2 2HS
01484 548764
denise.hosker@virgin.net

Librarian

Janet Kirk
Any other member
Jeff Williams
42 Whirlow Park Road
Sheffield S11 9NP
0114 234 0168
janet.kirkwilliams@gmail.com

Administration Secretary

Carolyn McQueen
3, Milton Court,
Swinton,
South Yorkshire,
S64 8RE
01709 587208
carolyn.m.mcqueen@gmail.com

Additional Members

Jeff Bagnall
128, Huddersfield Road,
Meltham,
Holmfirth,
HD9 4AG
01484 318113
jw.bagnall@ntlworld.com

EDITORIAL

The cover picture this month isn't of Ted's plant as I neglected to take a picture of it at the recent meeting. Instead I have borrowed a picture from Orchidwiz (Ed Cott) as an example, and I acknowledge their copyright.

Writing up the lectures is often a pleasure, sometimes a pain, and this month being my own I was almost tempted to take a shortcut – and simply say to read a glossary from an encyclopaedia which would have far more detail than I can give out in the available timescale. However, that would be somewhat unprofessional, so I've written what I think will be interesting, and left out some of the duller bits...

BUSINESS

The Society did reasonably well at the BOC with 2 firsts and 2 seconds. Our display was classed as reasonable but not as well designed as other society displays.

The Treasurer would like to remind the few remaining members who haven't paid that their subs are now due, and he will gratefully accept them.

The December meeting will be the AGM, and a buffet will follow the official part of the meeting. The accounts etc. are appended. Julie is co-

ordinating the buffet, so please contact her to see what may be required on the day. Will any members with trophies from last year please return them for re-presenting. The list of winners will be included next month – Ed. The library is now downstairs in the annex, so is slightly more accessible for members, although still not ideal.

THE TABLE SHOW

Ted kindly volunteered to do this month's commentary, and feeling rebellious started at the right hand end with *Spiranthes cernua* 'Chadd's Ford'. This North American terrestrial grows during the summer and flowers at the start of autumn. It has a single tall spike of tiny white flowers spiralling around the stem. *Zelenkocidium Cherio Kukoo* was a well grown member of the *Oncidium* group with 3 branched spikes of small yellow flowers. The plant remains in flower for several months. *Den. oligophyllum* was a small plant with white flowers that was the plant of the month.

Phrag. Pink Panther (*fischeri x schlimii*) is a small plant for the genus with a small pink flower. *Paph. tranlienianum* is an unusual species from Vietnam. It isn't that pretty, and is one for the connoisseur. *Paph. spicerianum* is a very close relative and is far prettier and useful in breeding. *Maudiae* is an old primary hybrid, and this one was a tall white/green. *Clair de Lune 'EVB'* is larger white green flowered hybrid and this clone is a natural 4n. *Sophistic 'Ice Cap'* is a large white hybrid that is very nice. *Albion* is a very old white hybrid that was really the start of white breeding, and is a good grower. *White Lightning* is a modern white now just past its best.

Bct. *Golden Mul 'Orient'* was still looking well despite now only having a single spike. *Laelia pumilla* is a small plant in a basket with nice pink flowers with a purple lip. It isn't watered whilst in flower and a bit of a debate was had on the subject. *C. Princess Bells* had 3 large white flowers that were very good, although 1 flower had a dorsal failure as happened last year. *Enc. alata* (formerly *elata*) is a plant with small bulbs and moderate sized leaves, however it had a long spike with several small flowers of purple and brown with a pale lip. *Phal. Jiaho's Pink Girl* had 4 short branched spikes of smallish deep pink flowers. Being compact it produced a very pleasant affect. An unnamed phal had clean yellow flowers with a contrasting red lip that was quite attractive. The final plant was *Den. Thailand Black* with 2 spikes of deep purple flowers that were well balanced and spaced. The name was quite appropriate.

NOVEMBER PLANT OF THE MONTH

DENDROBIUM OLIGOPHYLLUM (AKA DEN TIXIERI)

This plant was a piece of a much larger plant growing at Papa Rohl's nursery in Paradies, near Souest, in central Germany. We were on a visit in 2005 with Nev and Ruth Brown who knew the Rohls well and had been there several times before.

In the wild it grows in mainland Thailand (not, apparently, in peninsular Thailand), Cambodia and Vietnam where it flowers through most of the year. It occurs at altitudes of between 2000 and 2500 feet and where there is good light. Summers are wet with temperatures between 20C at night and 30C by day so it's really a warm-growing orchid. "Winters" are drier and while the temperature may drop to about 15C at night it rarely falls below 30C by day.

In my greenhouse it does get good light but the thermostat is set at 16C at night (it drops lower when there's a power cut!) and 24C by day - only on a *sunny* day might it shoot up to 30C. It's not exactly ideal but it survives and flowers pretty well. It only flowers in the autumn though but the flowers are long-lasting and it's usually in bloom for several weeks.

Clearly it is a very tolerant and adaptable species! **Ted Croot.**

ORCHID NOMENCLATURE, TAXONOMY AND TERMINOLOGY – JOHN GARNER

John started by explaining that the origins of the talk go back many years to a table show commentary which included a plant which was something like *xx. viridiflora* that was pink. The commentator said that this wasn't what he expected. To cut a long story short John didn't realise that the *viride* part was the Latin for green. Obviously there is a lot of terminology (Latin & Greek) that most of us know little about, and this could be a worthwhile talk. As the talk was developed it became clear that most of the explanations are required around the basics of nomenclature and taxonomy, and so the talk evolved that way. In fact the original concept of explaining colours was dropped out of the end product – 'ce'st la vie' as they say abroad.

In fact the English language is made up of so many other languages that we have several meanings for the same spellings, and many different spellings pronounced the same, and this causes confusion as well as misinterpretation. Several examples were given. One was around the name(s) for Linnaeus, who is the father of nomenclature around his binomial system. The system is quite simple with a genus name (a group

of closely related plants), and a specific epithet which completes the species name. In itself it is simple, but there are many other rules wrapped around it. The genus name should be in Latin (ending in 'ium', 'a', etc.), start with a lower case letter, and be in italics. The species name should also be Latinised, ending with a corresponding 'ium', 'a', etc, start in lower case, and be in italics. A hybrid name should be in roman form, and start with a capital. Terms like Latin and roman can easily be confused as well... Within a species there can be a subspecies (large difference), variety/variety (moderate differences), and form/forma (minor difference such as colour). Variations as such don't exist for hybrids as they would be endless due to the natural variation you would expect. Instead these are differentiated by clonal names for quality, also used to differentiate clones within species. Clonal names should be in Roman. There are other rules which apply that are necessary when registering hybrids or clonal names for judging which aren't necessary to cover here.

Within taxonomy the genus has a specific rank. However starting at the top, all living things fit within either animals or plants (botanics). The highest rank is the family, of which Orchids are one. Next come the sub-families, of which there are 6 within the orchid family - Apostasioideae, Cyripedioideae, Spiranthoideae, Orchidoideae, Epidendroideae, & Vandoideae. Beyond this are tribes, and then sub tribes before we reach the genus level. Below this are section, and sub-section. It isn't necessary to have all these levels – just the subfamily and genus. With the species being part of the genus the lower levels are just to divide or group species within diverse genera such as Cattleyas or Paphiopedilums. A couple of examples were given-*Vanda coerulea* is in sub-family Vandoideae, tribe Vandae, sub tribe Sarcanthinae, and Paph. Rothschildianum is simply in sub family Cyripedioideae, but split into section Paphiopedilum, sub-section Coryopedalum.

Cladistics is part of Taxonomy that was touched on, and is a complicated area that tries to confirm each species rank within the genus. This is now being conducted through DNA, and this has been responsible for some genus realignment such as within *Oncidium*. This is a really complex area that takes a scientist to understand and explain.

Moving into terminology John split this into various areas starting with the flower. The flower is of course what identifies an Orchid from any other flowering plant. There are 3 sepals on the outside and 3 petals inside. One of the petals is modified to form a lip of various shapes. There is a central column which has evolved by combining stamen to form the staminode as well as the pollen sacs and receptive surface. The vast majority of flowers

are twisted 180degrees to be upside down. Flowers that don't do this are known as non-resupinate.

The flowers are of course connected to the plant by a stem (usually). There are many different names for this depending on how the flowers are arranged etc., and isn't quite as straightforward as it might seem. Spike is the most obvious term in usage. It means an un-branched stem with sessile flowers (sessile meaning without stalks – so the flowers just have the ovaries behind them). Spike has become common in usage to denote simply the whole of the inflorescence. Similar to spike is the raceme which is un-branched, but with stalked flowers. A panicle is a branched raceme. (I haven't been able to determine a name for a branched spike - JG). A peduncle is the stem/stalk of a solitary flower, and a pedicel is the stalk of an individual flower. A scape is a leafless/bractless peduncle. If all the flowers come from the same point then this is termed an umbel (as in umbrella).

In Growing habits, orchids are either terrestrial (grow in the earth), epiphyte (grow in the air, on trees), or lithophytes (grows on stone). Orchids are not parasites. In growth they are either deciduous (mainly terrestrial) from tubers/rhizomes, or either monopodial or sympodial. Monopodial means with a single foot (root) and no terminal inflorescence, whereas sympodial plants have several growths joined by (usually) a short rhizome. Each epiphytic growth will usually have a psuedobulb to store moisture to get them through dry periods, whereas this is normally missing in terrestrial species that grow all year around.

There are far too many leaf types to document here without becoming tedious, but elliptical, spherical, needle, oblong, ovate & obovate are the most common. A further mass of terms are available to describe the notching of the end of the leaf. Plicate is a folded leaf, whereas conduplicate is the central fold of a most leaves. Ligulate is strap shaped, and equitant means opposite and overlapping (like in Vandas). Leaves can be plain coloured, or tessellated with fancy irregular patterns of differing shades.

Orchids are classed as Monocots within the plant world. This is short for Monocotyledon, which simply means that at germination they have just a single leaf (like grasses do). Most other plants have seeds that develop a pair of leaves, and these are Dicotyledons.

Lots of clues to orchid species or genres exist within the Latin or Greek names in use. Bi-, di-, or tri- need no explanations. Epi and Aer both mean air, which is why there are a few of these in the vandaceous group eg. Aeranthes. Dendro means tree, so Epidendrum is an air plant growing

on a tree (as are most epiphytes, but you can only use the name once!). Dact is finger, so Dactylorhiza has a finger shaped rhizome. Cera is horn, and chilus refers to the lip, so ceratochilus has a horn shaped lip. Rhynco is all about the nose, and stylis (or stelis) means column, so rhyncostylis should have a column in the shape of a nose. Koilos (coel) is hollow, and gyne is woman, so Coelogyne is a hollow woman (?...). Falcate is sickle shaped, ensate (ensi) is sabre shaped, Reni is Kidney shaped, cordate is heart shaped, and not to be confused with caudate which means having a tail. Genuses that end in –ella, -illa, or –opsis means a diminutive of or a likeness to, so Cymbidiella is a lesser form of cymbidium, and phalaenopsis is simply ‘moth like’ – hence the common name of moth orchid.

Finally, Orchis is the genus type for the whole family, and means testicle, and is a smallish round tuber. Several other genres include orchis in their name, so you should expect a deciduous terrestrial when seeing the name – but this isn’t always the case (I blame the botanists for this error). Kynos is Greek for dog (which evolved into the Latin canine), and combined form the genus Cynorchis of which an example was shown. With his usual sense of humour John described this as being truly the “dog’s bollocks” – probably a first for an orchid lecture. With that the talk ended – with no questions. This is really a limitless subject, and a lot more can be found just by looking through the glossary of a decent orchid encyclopedia.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY...

MONTHLY MEETINGS AT RANMOOR – 10AM

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| Dec 9th | AGM, followed by a buffet |
| Jan 13th | Gianpiero Ferrari – Australian Orchids |

OTHER SHOWS

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|-------------------------------|---|
| 12-13th Jan | CANWOS at Gordale Garden Centre, Burton, Wirral |
| Feb 24th | Harrogate OS annual show, Bramhope
** SDOS exhibiting ** |

Society website - www.sheffieldorchids.org



Above: - *Dendrobium Thailand Black*
Below: - *Epidendrum alata*

