

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



**October Plant of the Month
Paphiopedilum Nimit**

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Business

The AGM is now just a couple of months away, and arrangements are now being put into place at various levels. The notice for the AGM is enclosed with the newsletter, together with committee nominations etc. Any trophies that various members may have won last year should be returned at either the November meeting, or December at the latest (if attending). (NB. the minutes of the AGM were within the December 2012 newsletter). The AGM will be followed by our customary buffet, which this year will be supplied by the Society rather than the DIY method that has been used in recent years.

The Society had a decent display at the EMOS show at the end of September, and Jeff Bagnall won the best Cattleya Hybrid class with Ted Croot second in the Catasetums. Well done to both of them.

The Table Show

John Garner volunteered for this month's table show, and started with the B&Q Vanda - now on its third flowering of the year, and with another spike well on the way. This purple flowered plant must surely have been the bargain of the century! *Stenoglottis longifolia* was next, and had just a single tall spike of the small pink flowers that it is well known for. It was marked with spots in the middle of the older leaves from the spring, and was thought to have been insect damage - which was similar to that seen by another member.

Five Phals came next. Diamond White was well named for the crystal clear large white flowers. Kiska was a medium sized white with a pleasant contrasting orangey lip. First Delight had 2 spikes of a clear and strong pink. Kenneth Schubert 'Blue Angel' needs little introduction as it appears quire regularly with a strong spike of many bluish flowers. The last one was a deeply veined white and pink similar to Newberry Parfait.

Masd. *ignea* was just coming to its best with 5 flowers and at least 8 buds of deep orange flowers on tall spikes. *Restrepia sanguinea* is a miniature with interesting deep purple flowers. *Ceratostylis retisquama* (syn. *rubra*) was a small plant with small reddish flowers. It is a member of the Eriinae subtribe of the Epidendroideae subfamily, and comes from East Africa - ed. *Den. oligophyllum* is a short species with random small white flowers that are attractive.

Cattleya Ports of Paradise 'Green Ching Hwa' is a large yellow form of this well known hybrid (see back cover). C. Golden Mul 'Orient' was well grown, and had 2 spikes of medium sized orangey yellow flowered with a few spots to create a good effect.

Enc. *alata* was the same plant as shown 2 months earlier, and still in good condition - and probably a bit taller than then to boot! *Zelenkocidium Cheiro Kukoo* is a nice small yellow flowered *Oncidium* type.

Now is just about the start of the slipper season, and several Paphs were on show. *henryanum* has a lovely little spotted flower. *barbigerum* is another small plant with a tiny flower of mainly pink. *helenae* is closely related, but even smaller, and more of a yellowy pink. *charlesworthii* was well

grown and had 3 good flowers with their typical pink dorsal and white staminode (see back cover). *braemi* was the final species, although some now class it as a syn. of *tonsum*. In the hybrids, *Maudiae* is one of the most recognisable types with an elegant flower on a tallish stem. Nimit was making a first appearance and was a smallish white flowered plant (see front cover) that was selected as the plant of the month. Wössner Tigerprim (*primulinum x tigrinum*) was a good mix of the 2 parents with a good shape and a yellowish tint. Golden Acres 'Go Boy' is now an old yellow hybrid that is a good doer that retains the older shape (rather than the more modern trend towards rounder flowers).

In the Phrags Pink Panther is a smaller plant for the genus with very nice small pink flowers. Betheva is a tall flowered plant with long tails from its *caudatum* parent and had a couple of lovely flowers.

The final plant was Coel. *fimbriata* which is an untidy plant, and has some cultural issues. It was suggested that it would benefit from being grown a bit cooler. Despite that it has interesting flowers that really need a proper looking at. Thank you John.

October Plant of the Month

Paphiopedilum Nimit

This is a plant that I have had for just over 12 months, and came from Jerry Fischer when he visited the UK last year for the BOC at Writhlington. Nimit is a hybrid between *primulinum* and Greyi (a primary hybrid between *niveum* and *godefroyae*). The cross was originally made by Ray Rands and registered in 1995. This was a remake by Jerry. The plant currently has 2 flowers and a bud. The sequential flowering habit comes from the *primulinum* side of the parentage as does the larger leaf size and count. The leaf mottling and floral colour are from Greyi. The flowers may look a little small for the size of the plant, but all of the parents are quite small - if the plant was restricted to a single flower then it would certainly be somewhat larger. The flowers are however a very good shape, and with the sequential flowering it should go on into next year.

I have grown it in intermediate conditions in my standard mix of coconut chips and bark, watering roughly on a 9-10 day cycle with weak fertiliser on 4 out of 5 waterings (it varies!). **John Garner**

Our Charity Schools in Kenya

Bev & Ann Ellis

This was a considerable change from our usual lectures - which are normally about Orchid related 'things', and instead touch on the impoverished side of life in Kenya. Bev and Ann are both members of SDOS and are frequently asked about their projects, so this is the full round up of how it all came about, the successes and future plans.

Several years ago they ventured on a safari to Kenya. It was full of stunning scenery, wildlife, and lots of smiles on the native's faces. Some of their friends had already ventured down the road of charity schooling by providing the basics. Starting with an outdoor classroom they were able (over a period of time) to provide books, then a kitchen, and finally an indoor classroom. Schooling was simple, working on the basics as this was all that was required for many of them living a peasant lifestyle.

Kenya is a huge country of great contrasts. It has some cities and modern holiday resorts, but away from the coast many people live in basic wattle and daub huts with almost no facilities or power. Most homes are just a single room with sometimes a shared toilet - but you have to fetch your own water. Often this is unclean, and where long distances are involved then a donkey is used. Occasionally there are more organised dwellings around a yard or compound which are made from corrugated tin sheets, but still a single room inside. Some of these in the larger villages can get up to 30 minutes electricity a day - a huge amount of progress! There are some government funded 'estates' built from blocks which have 2 rooms - but still no water or sanitation. Most cooking is by charcoal burners, and life generally revolves around no work, no food. Most food is vegetative, with possibly a bit of meat once a week. Villages near to a lake will eat fish. Virtually all goods are recycled. There are all sorts of shops both indoors and outdoors. One of the main activities is wood carving for the tourist industry (in the resorts). Away from the coast or cities there are few white people. Travel is difficult with few tarmac roads, and the others are filled with potholes and/or washed away in floods. Busses are totally overcrowded.

Most food is home grown, and these 'farms' are run by the women in a community. When not fetching water the shared donkey will do the ploughing etc. Often there will be a drought and life becomes really tough. Where possible the men will work in the townships for a meagre wage which helps with clothes and other things. Shoes are often home made using old car tyres. On top of all of this, don't forget that this is the home of many wild animals - big and small as

well as dangerous predators. Protecting your own animals can be tricky, especially in droughts. Thorn bushes are often planted for protection.

Life therefore is difficult, so where do you begin to start to make things better without spending a fortune? About 10 years ago and inspired from their earlier visit Ann and Bev first started their charitable efforts after finding the right location to make a difference. Self help is usually the best way to begin, and focuses the community. A large water tank was purchased, together with some guttering as none of the houses had any. The erratic rainfall had previously mainly gone to waste, evaporating after a few days. Collecting and storing water meant that the quality was improved, and saved some hard journeys to collect it. This was used to irrigate useful crops such as pulses, however it was used for cooking first, followed by washing before going onto crops. If you can do this for a small community then you attain a degree of importance, and they always have a crowd of local followers.

The Kenyan government are keen to see some basic education in the country, but are unable to fund most of it. A primary teacher can be funded, but that is about it! Ann and Bev started to provide books (both for writing and reading). As the education involved sitting on the dirt under a tree for shade then a need for chairs, desks, school house and kitchen (to ensure that all the children got some nutrition), then this all started to take shape - the locals built the school, and the children now are seated and get bean stew every day, and sometimes a 1" cube of meat.

Whilst this is a great step forward, and with others helping with similar ventures there are now a good deal of rural primary schools, but there are still vast areas without education. Although the government helps out with funding junior school teachers there is no funded secondary education whatsoever. One of the local communities decided to try and start one up with their assistance. This is a huge undertaking as many children of this age tend to work to help out the families at farming or work. This undertaking started with 10 pupils, and was added to each subsequent year. There are now 4 year groups in 4 rooms, and the school also contains a science lab and a staff room, with teaching in English and Swahili. The school is trying to be self funding with several chickens which are bred to produce meat and eggs for sale. Ann & Bev fund a child in the school. Profits are ploughed back and used for things such as crop sprayers, and even a donkey sanctuary. They have introduced some rabbits which are bred for meat.

At Musengo there is a larger secondary school which caters for orphans and abused children. It has a dormitory and the children work in the school at washing, gardening (food growing) and everything else. Proof that education is working are easy to be seen with school leavers going into finance and engineering, with some money coming back to the villages. There are now plans for a polytechnic for locals (non-fee paying) to help with adult skills in areas such as electrics and sewing machinery.

In Malezi there is a school for 20 abused girls. During school hours they are kept locked in, and escorted to and from school for their safety. There is a new section that they have been building, and this is for abandoned babies (from Aids etc.). They are toilet trained to UK standards, and follow strict routines for meals etc. At 3 they already have school uniforms. The school has a couple of dairy cows to help provide an income.

In kabiro health care and maternity services are the latest project for Ann & Bev to get involved with. This is firmly taking shape with small wards and beds, as well as a growing school room.

The talk included a lot more detail than I have been able to capture, and I hope this gives a flavour of their passion to make lives far more worthwhile in this part of the world. They achieve this by doing talks such as this, selling some of the wood carvings and trinkets as well as having at least 2 open days a year for a 'bring and buy' and other bits of fund raising. They collect old clothes to bundle up and sent to Kenya on a regular basis. By doing all of this (and more) the human population will be better able to survive (health & education), and this will reflect in the better environment and wildlife - all of which will make Kenya a better place.

A hearty round of applause followed.

Dates for your diary...

Monthly meetings at Ranmoor – 10am

Nov 10th Malcolm Perry – The Nilgiri Hills of Southern India
Malcolm has spoken to us on many occasions, and is very knowledgeable on a variety of orchid topics. These hills are deep in the tropics, and the orchids quite varied.

Dec 8th AGM, followed by buffet

Other shows

Nov 30th BOGA Fayre, Arden School, Knowle, Solihull

Society website - www.sheffieldorchids.org



Above:- Cattleya Ports of Paradise 'Green Ching Hwa'

Below: - *Paphiopedilum charlesworthii*

