

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



**October Plant of the Month
*Dendrobium tetragonum***

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Business

Our AGM grows ever nearer, and plans are now in place. This newsletter is the official notice of the AGM, and the enclosed provisional agenda details what we need to cover, as well as committee positions. There are positions which are vacant, as well as positions where the sitting 'tenant' wishes to be replaced. There are some nominations for positions, but there isn't any competition for places. If you can spare some time to help ensure that your Society continues into the future then please contact Caroline by the November meeting at the latest.

Part of the meeting involves the annual award (or is it a reward?) of trophies, and these cannot be given out if they aren't returned first. If you have a trophy, please bring it with you at the December meeting, or if unable to attend, then please bring it to the November meeting. The AGM will be followed by a DIY buffet, and a list of requirements will be available in November (purely to avoid the issues of "feast and famine" (not the best pun I have ever used - Ed.))

The next meeting will be a walk around the orchid nurseries in the Netherlands. Some of these such as Anthura are truly massive, and it will be an interesting talk. Peter White is well placed to give such a talk, and he will also bring sundries for members who have ordered them. There won't be any surplus. If you want him

to bring anything, then you need to see what he has and call him. His website is <http://orchidaccessories.co.uk/catalog/index.php>

Any members still owing their subscriptions will still be able to do so at the November meeting.

The Table Show

This month's commentary was given by John Garner who started at the left side with Vandachostylis Charm 'Pink Star' with 4 small open pink flowers and a host of buds still to come. The size of flowers is controlled by the *V. falcata* parent with the colour from the other parent. The name of Charm is quite appropriate for this lovely plant. *Aerangis brachycarpa* is a medium sized plant with unusually thick odd shaped leaves, possibly indicating a succulent habit. The flowers are ivory white with a very long spur that must require a specific moth to pollinate it.

Cattlianthe Sagarik Wax 'African Queen' was quite a tall plant with 9 medium sized flowers of an intense purple. It has been open now for around 4 weeks, and is just starting to go over as a couple of flowers were deteriorating. It has a slightly pleasant scent. Epicatanthe Don Herman 'Gold Rush' was adjacent, and with a similar number of flowers bright yellow flowers created an excellent contrast. The lip on this clone is flat, and has some central red spotting(see back cover). It is something to put on the wish list! Cattleya Hawaiian Wedding Song 'Virgin' was another in the same tribe with a similar growth habit, being tall and having several medium sized flowers. In this case the flowers are pure white, and of a perfect shape - really lovely. The final plant in this section looked quite small in comparison, but still very attractive. We have seen Brassocatanthe Golden Mul 'Orient' on several occasions before, and it still retains its charms. The plant and flowers are smallish, but bright orange with maroon spotting across the lip.

The Complex Paph. season is approaching, and an early entry was Hunter's Point 'Terry' AM/AOS. This is an old hybrid (1957) that isn't as extreme as some of the more recent lines. The flower is a reasonable size with a yellowish background with modest freckles. *wardii* is a species from northeast Burma (Myanmar) that is growing very well and had 2 spikes with decent mottled brown green flowers. Phrag. Grande is quite a large plant that had 'recently' been divided, and hadn't yet fully re-established itself, so was consequently showing some signs of dryness and stress. Despite this it had a strong spike of a couple of long tailed tan coloured flowers (a third had just fallen off).

Dendrobium tetragonum was a well admired plant that I can't remember seeing previously. It was very well grown with a lot of top heavy growths that held a number of brown & yellow spiky flowers (see front cover). It was debated whether it should be staked to remain upright, or allowed to arch over, or even

grow downwards as some *Dendrobiums* do. The consensus was that it would look better upright. With 24 points, this was the Plant of the month (front cover). In the Phals, Pale Beauty 'Bünde' was a smallish plant with a medium sized spike holding 3 smallish 'classic' white flowers of a heavy texture. Pink Silk was an entry in the (non-existent) class for the tallest *Phalaenopsis* spike at well over 1m tall with several good sized pale pink flowers. This is a plant still in recovery, and hopefully after growing several more leaves it will produce flowers of a larger size. Hawaiian Dream is an unusual plant, not really deserving a place on the table, but there was a reason for it being here. It is one of those plants that looked to be terminal when the top of the original growth 'died'. Not wanting to throw it away it was given a chance to send out some new growths - which it did. 2 growths started from the leaf axils, whilst another started at the lowest node on the last flower spike (technically a keiki). One of the growths didn't last, but the other 2 have done so, and now with still small leaves there is a spike with 3 small white flowers and a spike on the other one. Long may it continue to recover... Thank you John.

EMOS Annual Show, Radcliffe on Trent

The show took place on Sunday 11th October, and as usual SDOS mounted a smallish display, with most of the set up taking place on Saturday pm, and the remainder early on Sunday am. On this occasion we were quite well rewarded with rosettes and cards, with Ted winning 1st with a huge *Masd. veitchiana* in *Masdevallia* species. Peter battle won 2nd in Vandaceous with *V. Siam Ink*, and an AM for *V. (sanderiana-boonchoo x Tawee)* and *Aerangis brachycarpa*. John Garner won 2nd in Laelinae hybrids with *Cattlianthe Sagarik Wax 'African Queen'*, and an AM with *Paph. wardii*. In addition to this, EMOS ensured that every society display would have 2 red rosettes by virtue of awarding one for the best species and hybrid on each exhibit. For SDOS this was *Masd. veitchiana* and *Ctt. Sagarik Wax*.

Many thanks to Ted for managing the display, as well as providing plants alongside Peter and John.

October Plant of the Month

Dendrobium tetragonum

Dendrobium [Den.] *tetragonum* is commonly known as 'the blotched tree spider orchid' or 'the banded tree spider orchid'. It is also called the rectangular bulbed *Dendrobium* on account of having almost square canes to the upper section - the Latin name *tetragonum* meaning 'four angles'.

The species comes from southern Queensland and northern New South Wales, virtually the whole expanse between Brisbane and Sydney, mainly close to the coast, but can spread inland up to 60 miles and just in the foothills of the Great Dividing Range up to 3000 feet as long as warm moist forest conditions allow. It was first described in 1839 as *Den. tetragonum*, although it has had other genus names since - such as *Callista*, *Tropilis*, and *Tetrabaculum*.

I bought my plant (*Dendrobium tetragonum var. giganteum*) at the last orchid show held in Peterborough and it has consistently flowered every year. The number of flowers have increased each year, culminating in this year's display, fingers crossed it will continue to do so.

It is grown at an intermediate temperature, high on a shelf under the apex of the greenhouse, with light shade all year round.

I water the plant well when it shows signs of growing but allow short dry spells. I have recently increased humidity in the greenhouse which may account for this year's display. **Jim Charlesworth**

The 2015 Photographic Competition

Ian Wilson was the conductor for this event, and started with several comments. There were 50% more photos this year than last, and the quality was better. The entries should have been displayed online, but due to issues with the site provider this didn't happen as expected, and should be better for next year...

Entries should have a large pixel count, and be preferably in raw format rather than JPEG which is more specific. The large pixel count allows for better cropping as well as tailoring through tools such as Photoshop. Virtually all cameras are now digital, and most cameras are quite good, meaning that the lens is now more important. For things like close ups of orchids a micro lens is quite useful. Good light is next in importance, and allows flexibility in staging pictures. If sunlight isn't available then flash is next best. A flash gun is far better (with a diffuser) than a pop up flash which creates shadows. Finally the background has impact, and black helps the camera to focus (less distraction), otherwise adjust the aperture to blur the background.

Judging will be on a 'first past the post' basis. The pictures are of varying types with groups as well as individual plants and even individual flowers, so these should be considered as to how well they appear within their own context. All entries are numbered with some gaps for dramatic effect.

1. *Vanda sanderiana* with lots of good flowers on 2 spikes and it was all in focus, however the leaves were spotted and the plant was generally poor.

2. A large white *Cattleya* with a red lip. This was a close up taken in decent light. It would benefit from better cropping.

3. A single flowered *Dendrobium* with sharp focus on the close up shot. The background was in the distance, and blurred, but one of the leaves was a distraction, and this could have been edited out to create a better picture.
4. A single flower lilac *Cattleya* taken without flash, but still had lots of definition with a black background. Sadly the flower wasn't central and the tip of the dorsal wasn't in the picture.
5. A white flowered *Cattleya* with a purple tinge to the lower lip. Good focus, and a black background. Good shading to the leaves added effect.
6. *Oncidopsis Nelly Isler* was a modest picture with close and distant background. The problem arises from the camera not knowing what to try and focus on, so tries to do all, with a loss of focus. Either a close up or a more distance shot would be an improvement.
10. A group shot of specimen *Dendrochilums* ready for judging. The background was white plastic that the photographer could do nothing about. As a distance feature picture it is OK, but a bit stark. A close up would be better, but with this genus how close do you go - to the plant, or to a close up of the tiny flowers?
12. *Dactylorhiza* plant in situ with close and distance background in focus. Possibly not quite enough emphasis on a bee on the flowers.
13. Three *Laelias* of white colour with purple in the trumpet. A good clear picture on a grey background. Only 1 downside with a single leaf - which could be edited out.
14. An artistic shot of the underside of an unknown flower. As a closeup it works although it could have been sharper than the soft focus let it be. The black background helped out.
15. *V. sanderiana* single flower taken in natural light, but not in sunlight. This decent photo would be improved by better light.
16. A spray of *Onc.* *Twinkle* showed the difficulties of getting several spaced flowers in focus. The 2 better shots would be very close up to a single (small) flower, or a distance shot of the whole flower spike.
17. A yellow *Paph* was a good composition, being central and with good light as well as a bit of shade.
18. An unknown *Dendrobium* wasn't a particularly photogenic flower, and as such is hard to take. Good light helped.
19. A specimen *Pleuro* taken at the Chatsworth show. There was perhaps a bit too much going on in the picture with other plants and staging. The plant became a little bit out of focus.
20. A similar picture to 12, but a bit closer.
21. A bee orchid in situ. The strong colour helped to identify the flowers against the mottled green background. A greener flower could be difficult to see. It shows the difficulty of pictures in situ without carrying black cloth for the background.

22. An artistic shot of a few flowers from a *Pleurothallis*, with sufficient detail to show the subtle colour changes. An insect on one flower could have been more of the central interest.
23. A *Phragmipedium* was in good focus, but lacked impact. Somehow it just didn't look right.
24. A well centred purple *Cattleya* in good focus. In this case the associated leaves added to the content.
25. A show display on a black background held a couple of groups of plants in short towers. The (display) structure was good with pink and purple flowers. Sadly the front was a bit dark, and shows the poor light present in the modern halls where shows take place. Unless you have major lighting a flash alone won't provide sufficient light.
26. The same picture as 12, but enlarged and cropped to show the bee in more detail, and this creates its own story.
27. An *Aerangis* with a number of white flowers on a black background. The whiteness has caused overexposure with some flaring. Some adjustment needs to be used to the white balance when taking the picture. In this type of shot a simple point and click doesn't work.
28. *Paph. lowii* was nicely in focus with lots of colour, and a contrasting green background. Sadly the tips of the petals were just out of the picture.
29. A group of white *Phaius* flowers were surrounded by leaves. It could be better in more of a close up.
30. A close up of *Prosthechea vitellina* flowers opening. This was a good composition suitable for a poster with the strong orange colour.
- Thank you to all who entered plants and apologies to those whose pictures were just a day too late (oops). The votes will be counted and the winner announced at the AGM when the trophy will be awarded.

Dates for your diary...

Monthly meetings at Ranmoor – 10am

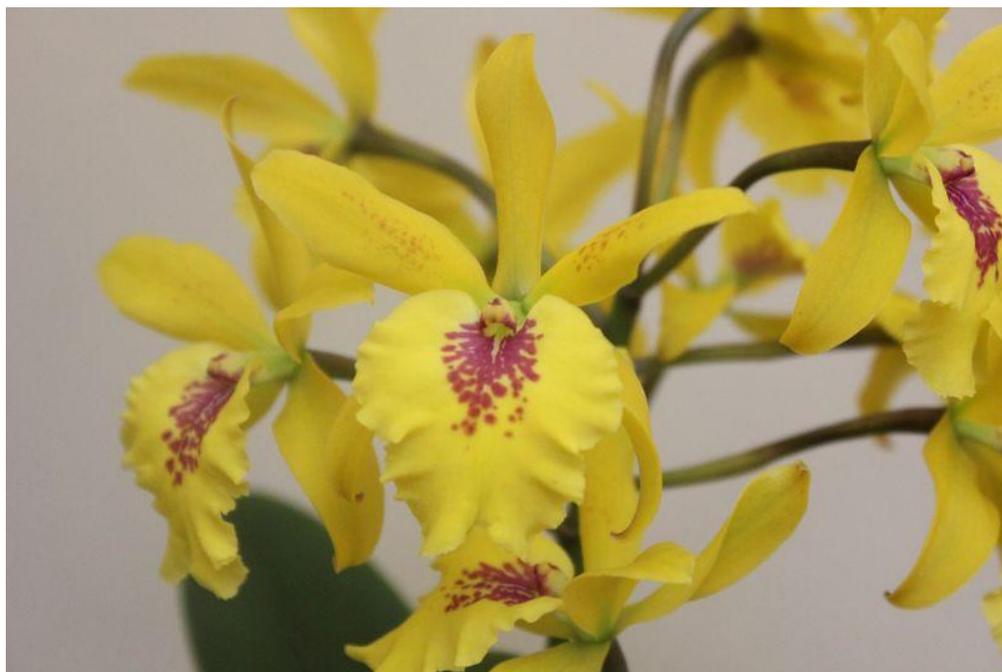
Nov 8th

Peter White talks about the Dutch Orchid Nurseries. You may sometimes wonder where and how the millions of orchids on sale come from, and with the help of some lovely pictures your eyes will be opened...

Dec 13th

AGM and finger buffet

Society website - www.sheffieldorchids.org



Above - *Epicanthe* Don Herman 'Gold Rush'
Below - part of the SDOS display at Radcliffe on Trent

