



Solihull & District Orchid Society

Solihull Spring Show

April 15th at Arden School

Although it is still a couple of months away our Annual Show will soon be upon us.

Many thanks to everyone who has volunteered for the various activities on the day but there are still some gaps so the rota will be circulated at the next



meeting. If

you are not going to be at the meeting but are happy to volunteer your time please let Malcolm know.

Also many thanks for the donations to the Tombola and if you have any quality item that you would like to donate please see Heike.

Malvern International Orchid Show

The Malvern International Orchid Show will once again take its position as the premier orchid show in the UK between 16th and 18th June. The cheap concession tickets will, yet again, be available with more information available a bit nearer the time. Unfortunately, this year Solihull will not be putting on a display but if anybody is interested in taking Janet and Martins place please let your Chairman know.

BOC Photo Competition

If you haven't voted for your favourite photographs time is running out. Go to www.british-orchid-council.info and go to the pull down menu "Photo Competition" and run the current Gallery Slide Show. Once you have selected your favourites you can go to "View Current Photo Gallery" and take a more detailed look at those pictures you have selected.

All you have to do is select your favourite 10 (no need to place them in order of preference) and send them to Caroline Reid (caroline.reid1@blueyonder.co.uk) and she will consolidate the votes before voting on our behalf.

Next Meeting
Our next meeting will be on Saturday 4th March when Francis J Quesada-Pallares will be entertaining us with "Phalaenopsis species & more" plus bringing plants for sale. Francis is an active member of the Orchid Society of Great Britain being, at one stage, their Programme Secretary as well as being involved in their displays.

East Midlands Orchid Show

Their Annual Show is on Sunday 19th March at Bottesford Village Hall, Belvoir Rd., Bottesford, Notts NG13 0BG from 10.00 till 4.00.

Janet and Martin will be putting on a display on behalf of Solihull so would be pleased to have as many plants as you can donate. Please let Janet know at our next meeting on Saturday 4th March.

Besides Solihull there will be a number of other societies displaying plus a number of orchid nurseries offering a range of plants.

This will be an enjoyable day out.



You can follow Solihull & District Orchid Society on Facebook and Twitter



Chairman: Malcolm Moodie
01295 788159

If you have any pictures or information you would like to put on our website please email: caroline.reid1@blueyonder.co.uk or copy and pictures for newsletter: ballm1@mac.com

Dracula and the orchids of Transylvania

Caroline Reid

Caroline visited Transylvania to explore the wildlife and plants in the well preserved woods in the heart of Romania. The area is unique geographically, with two mountain ranges – the Carpathians and the Transylvanian Alps but with a landscape that is surprisingly similar to Northern Italy or even Wales. Caroline and her husband stayed in a beautiful guest house near Zărnești city in Brasov county, Transylvania.

The guide who was showing them around stated that the tour was meant to show off famous Transylvanian wolves and lynx although Caroline didn't expect to see any on the expedition. In fact, the common expectation in visits like this, is to have a good time, explore and meet people, but very rarely to see such animals bearing in mind that large groups of people are far too noisy so the wild animals keep well hidden. Even so, they did see lots of bears, who are well preserved and looked after by the Romanian government, this being a Soviet heritage leftover of a well managed woodland protection programme which is still in place. She also mentions that because of this the Transylvanian woods are one of the best kept and preserved countrysides in Europe – It is a shame that the UK could not have had the same forethought and given similar protection to its woodlands and wild animals.

Another reason for a vast diversity of orchids growing almost anywhere is that the locals still farm in a historic way, where no machinery, pesticides or crop enhancing chemicals are used. Shepherds take sheep into the mountains during summer giving the opportunity for orchids to flourish and flower and in winter, animals are brought back near farmers' homes in those same meadows to graze. These are perfect conditions for orchids to grow in abundance, with 41 different species of orchids in this area alone. Caroline with the group during her visit in June saw 15 species in various growing stages. With some being very similar to what you can find in Britain and some being unique to the Transylvania region.

Birds nest Orchid (*Neottia nidus-avis*) - non chlorophyll, fungus dependent, grows in woods, flowers come first with sweet scent, pollinated by flies.

In the fields they found: Elegant Orchid (*Anacamptis palustris* subsp. 'Elegans'),

Fragrant Orchid (*Gymnadenia conopsea*),

White Heath Spotted spec. Transylvanian form

(*Orchis maculata transsilvanica*) only found in this area.

Globe Orchid (*Traunsteinera globosa*),

Early Marsh and Early Purple Orchid (*Dactylorhiza incarnata*, *Orchis mascula*)

Bug Orchid (*Anacamptis coriophora*),

Military Orchid (*Orchis militaris*),

Common Twayblade (*Neottia ovata*),

Heart shaped Marsh Orchid

(*Dactylorhiza cordigera*),

Sword leaf, white and broad leaf Helleborines (*Cephalanthera longifolia*, *Cephalanthera damasonium*, *Epipactis helleborine*)

Some of those they have seen were going over and some not in flower yet.

Lesser butterfly (*Platanthera bifolia*) orchid raised a lot of discussion within the group - some people had a very deep knowledge of wild orchids and spent a lot of time analysing and sharing information. They have also seen lots of other beautiful area specific flowers that can't be found elsewhere like Cow Wheat, Transylvanian Aquilegias, Dusty Geraniums, Ladies Bedstraw, Violas and Meadow Clary. Besides those who were interested in orchids, there were others interested in birds, butterflies and moths. As a result they got to see and to know a beautiful variety of moths caught at night in a trap with their English guide also introducing them to a vast array of gorgeous butterflies.

And finally, Dracula. The story says that the Bran castle on the border of Transylvania and Wallachia was a customs point between the regions and it was a home of Vlad the Impaler - a prince of Wallachia. His father was Vlad Dracul ("Vlad the Dragon"), and he became a member of the "Order of the Dragon" (monarchical order for selected nobility) which may be where Bram Stoker got the inspiration for his story "Dracula", even though it's known that he never actually visited the place. The castle now is a well known world wide tourist attraction place.



February table show



Cattleya coccinea Hybrid - 27pts - Stan Taylor



Coelogyne Intermedia - 28pts - Pam Eden



LC Puppy Love - 25pts - Monica Johnson



Dendrobium Irene Smile - 28pts - Graham Jones



Rhyn gigantia Red Spot - 29pts - Pam Eden



Cattleya coccinea aurea - 28pts - Stan Taylor



Lepanthes algae - 27pts - Stan Taylor