



Solihull & District Orchid Society

Spring Show Success

Once again we all arrived at Arden School on Easter Saturday and this year the sun was shining – a little chilly but you can't have everything.

Hinckley, East Midlands, Birmingham and Central Orchid Society all put up wonderful displays with East Midlands walking off with the Janet James Trophy for the Best Display.

Next Meeting
The next meeting is on Saturday 6th May when we will be entertained by Steve Clements who will be talking on "European Terrestrial Orchids". Look forward to seeing you all

East Midlands also entered a number of plants in the main orchid classes which significantly bulked up the visual effect and resulted in a total of 62 entries which is a

large increase on last year. Two of the plants entered by East Midlands members received Cultural Commendation Certificates. A lovely *Cochlioda* sp. grown by Richard Evenden and *Phalaenopsis lueddemanniana* grown by Arthur Deakin.

Stan Taylor had an extremely successful day winning the Founders Shield – Best in Show for his wonderful *Dendrobium densiflorum* which also won the Vandaville Trophy for Best Species and a Cultural Certificate. He also won the Bedlam Trophy for Best Monopodial for *Ascocentrum christensonianum* and the *Dendrobium* Trophy. Well done Stan, who was also awarded another Cultural Certificate for his *Maxillaria variabilis*.



Stan's the man - Janet admires Stan's best in show *Dendrobium*

Malcolm Moodie also had a good day receiving the Society Cup for Most Points in the Show; the Society Challenge Cup for the Best Group Display; the Trevor Turton Cup for Best *Paphiopedilum* with his *Paph. St. Swithin* which also won a Cultural Certificate; the Challenge Cup for Best *Phragmipedium* and the Peter White Trophy for Best *Pleurothallidinae*. The winning plant – *Masdevallia Tuakau Candy* also received a Cultural Certificate as did Malcolm's *Paphiopedilum delenatii*.

Judy Ralph won the Gloria Cotton Cup for Best *Cymbidium* which has been picking up awards at all of the shows that Janet & Martin have built displays and Janet James won the Rene Osborne Memorial Trophy for Floral Art.

In addition, we also present the trophies for the monthly Table Displays and this year Monica Johnson won the Bedlam Trophy for Best Hybrid for *Den. Org-Arg Ali Boon* and Brian Cope won the Committee Trophy for his *Sarcochilus hartmanii*.

The Refreshments were much enjoyed by everybody as was the Tombola and the hourly raffles.

Well done and thanks to everybody that supported the show.

Wild orchids are flowering
- read Janet's daily Twitter feed



Stop Press – Urgent

Please don't forget that if you have ordered tickets for Malvern they need to be paid for at the next meeting – Saturday 6th May. The order will be placed the following week. All tickets will be available for collection at the June Meeting Saturday June 3rd.



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



Chairman: Malcolm Moodie
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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

Spring Show Winners

Pictures by Ken, Janet and Andrea



Richard Baxter - Orchids My Way

Report: Lina Smalinske

Richard started his talk with a question: who remembers where they were in March 1951? He remembers it perfectly well, being a 10 year old he received a birthday present from his granny - a cactus plant. That was when the passion for his growing plants was born. It soon became one of his many hobbies; he points out there were no computer games or TV to watch, so you had hobbies in those days.

Soon he acquired a large collection of cacti which he managed perfectly well for a long time fitting in work and his other hobbies on top.

The first thing that got Richard interested in his plants was the structure and the patterns of the flowers. Looking inside the flower opens a whole new perspective, he says he isn't bothered too much if a plant has spots or imperfections on the leaves; the flower is his main interest. And so what made him choose orchids?

As he was looking for a new challenge and he came across the fact that "every 10th flowering plant on the planet is an orchid" - that was enough for him to start growing and building a large orchid collection. Another good reason is that orchids do not give people hay fever - something his wife suffers from.

He pointed out a few times in his talk, that this is just a hobby and not an obsession.

For a long time he was growing his collection indoors as he lived in London and had no space for a greenhouse and only when he moved up north did he start growing in a greenhouse and had to learn a completely new way of growing.

He mainly grows intermediate to hot growing orchids although he does grow some from cooler climates and these are, in fact, his favourites.

He then showed many of the plants he grows in alphabetic order - some are listed below.

It should be noted that he strictly doesn't like using or acknowledging the taxonomic name changes and just goes by the ones which the plant was first named.

Angreacum sesquipedale has 12 spikes at the moment
BLC Conerstone Compass - impressive flowers he is always fascinated by.

Bulbophyllum roxburghii - small complex flowers.

Coelogyne flaccida and *xyrekes* loves them for their delicate flowers.

Cymbidium devonianum - has won the first prize once.

Cyrtorchilum macranthum - huge stem, tiny flowers.

Dendrobium fimbriatum var occulatum - unusual flower with frills.

Dendrochilum cobbianum - different structure of the flowers.

Dryadella simula - tiny flowers best grown mounted.

Prosthechia cochliata - lip of the flower is pointing upwards.

Lycaste bradeorum - has spikes to deter snakes.

Masdevallia peristeri - the lip of the flower wobbles when touched.

Maxillaria houteana - grows very well with big contrast

in the flowers.

Maxillaria schunkeana - black flowers.

Oncidium boothianum different structure of the flower very tall

Pleione Krakatoa - liked for the ridges in the flower lip.

Restrepia schizosepia - the flower has two reflective "eyes".

Sarcochilus - for the large quantity of flowers

Stanhopea nigroviolacea - totally different way of flowering

How does he grow them?

First thing he's learned in orchid growing that "one size doesn't fit all", he says you have to understand the plant first before buying it.

Potting orchids for Richard is more about anchoring the roots rather than potting a plant. The potting medium is chosen per requirements of the plant growing conditions all depending of how much moisture the plant needs.

He prefers pots out of terracotta, because orchid roots naturally can breath and are not restricted by any kind of plastic, so he believes you have to replicate natural conditions as much as possible to succeed, terracotta also keeps roots cool.

Temperature: depends on the region where the plants have come from. He has a set up of two greenhouses, one has a minimum temperature of 10C the other has min of 13C. Both greenhouses are wooden and made to order and are double polycarbonate insulated, and heated through the winter.

Air circulation is controlled with a non domestic "hotbox" fan that blows 24hrs a day, so the leaves are slightly moving.

The light is determined by where the plant comes from: if it's a low growing plant, means that it needs less sunlight during summer as the trees are covering sunlight, but will need more light during winter when the trees drop the leaves. He usually covers his greenhouses during summer with aluminum shading, which also reduces the heat gain due to it's reflective qualities.

Water is very important in orchid growing, he says he is using rain water and in extreme droughts he would use tap water too. He also mentions that there isn't a right answer to the question of how often to water, as there are too many successful growers with very different watering patterns.

He uses weak fertilisers and avoids urea, as only bacteria in the soil can break down urea. As orchids usually don't grow in soil the roots will eventually burn. Every fourth watering he tends to use liquid seaweed for the micronutrients and a rain mix fertilizer. He is always on a look out to testing and trying new fertilizers.

Pests are prevented by lifting and checking every plant every watering not forgetting to mention that he has around 800 plants. Sulphur is used to prevent infections in the roots and for very bad infections he uses Vitax 2in1.

He ended his talk by expressing his support towards the "Flying Eye Hospital" charity and that all the funds from his talks are directed towards supporting it.

Ken's April table pictures



Dendrobium jenkinsii - 29 pts - Stan Taylor



Masdevallia Tuakau Candy - 31 pts - Malcolm Moodie



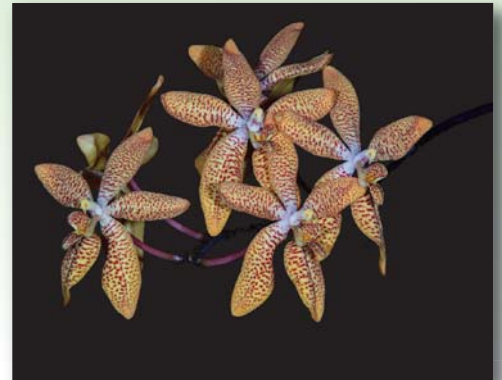
Paph. hirsutissimum - 32 pts - Malcolm Moodie



Maxillaria variabilis - 33 pts - Stan Taylor



Paph. delenatii - 31 pts - Malcolm Moodie



Renanthisopsis Mildred Jameson - 30 pts - Stan Taylor



Miltonidium Waikiki Sunset - 28 pts - Caroline Read



Dendrobium - 24 pts - Joan Smith



Miltonia - 27 pts - Graham Jones



Brian Slater - Pleionies



Oncidium Caches des Demoiselles - 28 pts - Malcolm Moodie