



# Solihull & District Orchid Society



## May table points scorers



Hybrid Masd Triangularis x Gwendoline - STAN TAYLOR - 30pts

## Malvern Tickets

The tickets have now been ordered. They will be available for collection at the next meeting – Saturday 2nd June.



Cattleya skinnerii alba Lynn - 28pts - MONICA JOHNSON



Epidendrum stanfordianum - 29pts - MALCOLM MOODIE

## Wisley Trip

The seats are now being finalised for the Trip to Wisley on Sunday 5th August. 22 seats have now been paid for (30 seater coach) so if you want to be on the trip you need to ensure that you have paid your monies to Heike by the next meeting.



Paph dolentaii - 28pts - MALCOLM MOODIE



Paph villosum - 30pts - MALCOLM MOODIE



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: [LaeliaM@aol.com](mailto:LaeliaM@aol.com) or copy and pictures for newsletter: [ballm1@mac.com](mailto:ballm1@mac.com)  
Society email address: [solihulldistrictorchidsociety@gmail.com](mailto:solihulldistrictorchidsociety@gmail.com)

# Growing orchids in a terrarium Helen Milner

Helen took us back in time to London in 1830 where gas lights, heavy pollution from factories and acid rain were very common, so few plants grew or stayed healthy for long.

A doctor in Whitechapel, in the East End was the first to make the connection between clean air and plant growth when trying to hatch a moth in a tightly sealed jar. Fern spores in the jar germinated and grew healthily for a couple of years until the lid rusted and polluted air got in.



The doctor, Nathaniel Bagshaw Ward designed a container, later known as "The Wardian Case", which soon became a "must have" item for many upper and middle class people as plants could be successfully grown in the home. Unfortunately, for Dr. Ward his invention did not bring him wealth as these Wardian cases were very easily replicated.

The major step forward occurred when in 1833 two wardian cases, full of plants, were sent to Australia and 6 months later arrived safely with all plants intact and in good health. Then, these cases returned to England, this time with Australian plants inside and 8 months later they arrived back in England safe and in perfect condition.

Until then huge numbers of wild collected orchids or other tropical plants were loaded onto ships and would travel for months with no fresh air, water or light resulting in less than 1% survival.

Helen gave an example of an *Odontoglossum crispum* shipment of 2 tons where none of them survived the journey. Unfortunately, this orchid is now virtually extinct in the wild and very rarely seen in orchid collections.

Thereafter, wardian cases enabled more than 95% of plants to survive these long voyages which greatly reduced the need to collect vast numbers of plants from the wild and made these rare orchids more readily available. A vast number of orchid hybrids are descendants of the many plants brought in wardian cases during the orchid mania of the 19th century. Orchid mania was a wealthy persons' pastime, as Helen related some of the prices people were prepared to pay for plants and orchids. For example, using today's prices: in 1839 *Phalaenopsis amabilis* was sold for the equivalent of £1000; in 1870 *Cypripedium* (now *Paphiopedilum*) *spicerianum* was sold for £105,000 and *Odontoglossum crispum* for around £1,000,000.

The more species that were imported the cheaper the plants became, orchid mania soon died out.

Interestingly, the banana at Chatsworth was brought

into the UK in a wardian case and later became the only banana variety in the world that didn't have a rust disease. This Chatsworth variety was re-introduced back to banana growing countries and now all the bananas we eat come from this wardian case introduction. Some other important plants moved around the world in wardian cases are tea from China and rubber from Brazil.

Helen mainly grows *Restrepia* and *Lepanthes* in her wardian cases and terrariums and shared many smart ideas regarding small terrariums that can be made out of everyday objects, such as cut off plastic water bottles. Humidity is the key to growing tropical plants with terrariums providing 80 to 100 %, meaning many orchid species and hybrids can thrive if they are grown this way.

When growing in larger terrariums lighting becomes an issue so LED light strips providing blue or red spectrum lighting (depending on growing needs) are recommended. Epiweb is often used to line the back/sides and secure the plants in the terrariums. Various meters are recommended to monitor conditions ie. Dissolved Salts, pH, temperature and humidity but remember not to fertilise too often, as roots are not being flushed through regularly so salt build up can soon become serious problem.

It just goes to show that we can all grow orchids successfully in our own homes using various sizes of wardian case or a terrarium.

A fascinating talk.

*Lina Smalinske*

## Next Meeting

On Saturday 2nd June we welcome John Spires who will be talking on "Neofinetia falcata and its history".

This species has been renamed as *Vanda falcata* but most people are much more familiar with the old name so Neofinetia it shall be. Neofinetia falcata has an almost religious following in Japan with Orchid Societies dedicated to this species only.

John has himself become fascinated by this species and will open a whole new meaning to this beautiful plant with its myriad variations. A talk to very much look forward to.

### FOR SALE

**3 Terrariums 2 18"x 18"x18"**

**- £35 each**

**and 1 12"x12"x18"**

**- £30 ono**

**Contact Janet James for further details**

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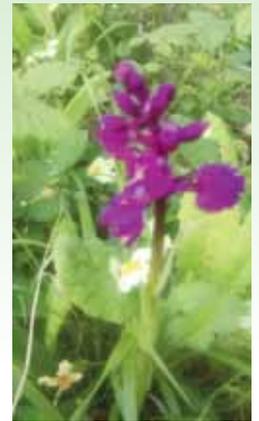




Pleones Stroboli Fireball, Nyiarongo, and Snowy Monkey - Martin Lindop



Pleoina Jorula and Kilauea Curlew - Janet James



Early Purple Orchids at Snitterfield - Janet James

# Hinckley show awards

## Rosettes

### Best Species

**Stan Taylor** - *Maxillaria variabilis*

### Best Hybrid

**Malcolm Moodie** - *Cymbidium Latigo*

### Judges Choice

**Malcolm Moodie** - *Paphiopedium villosum*

## Three awards of Merit (cards)

**Stan Taylor** - *Babtostonia echinatea*

**Janet James** - *Dendrobium kingianum Stardust*

**Monica Johnson** - *Luidisia discolour*

Pictures: Janet and Martin James



# Central Orchid Show Pictures - Janet James



*Paphiopedium villosum* - Society Award - Malcolm Moodie



Society Display



*Cymbidium Ruby Lips* - Society Award - Peter White