



Newsletter



MARCH 2020

We hope that this issue of the Newsletter finds all members well, staying healthy and successful in keeping the Coronavirus, Covid-19 at bay. As the pandemic continues to worsen, the main items to report in this issue are that 1) the Committee has decided to cancel the upcoming Spring Show in April [more of this later] and 2) the Malvern International Orchid Show scheduled for June has also been cancelled. We also cover our planned annual coach trip to Harlow Carr NHS Garden in August which we hope can still go ahead but the decision may not be ours to make. We will keep the coach trip under review and members will be informed of any changes as the situation develops. Keep well, stay healthy and keep washing your hands for at least 20 seconds while singing Happy Birthday, twice!!

March meeting

We had a wonderful meeting in March with 35 members, all looking well and healthy in attendance. The atmosphere was most convivial and warm, there were lots of chats and exchanging of views and ideas. There was also a wonderful display of plants on the show table and for the 3rd month running since the introduction in January, we see another increase in the number of plants grown on windowsills, 8 in total! We were all then treated to a rare opportunity to watch a BBC video, "The fatal Flower" presented by our guest, Malcolm Perry and we were all awestruck with the filming skills, see Lina's report on this later!

Spring show – Now cancelled

Our annual Spring Show is scheduled for Saturday 11th April at the Arden School. This would have been our last show at the school; you will remember in the November issue of the Newsletter, members were informed that the school has decided to double the costs of hiring the hall making future use of the school financially unviable. We have however found an alternative venue for the 2021 show going forward and details of the new venue will be shared with members later in the year.

At the March meeting, the committee advised members that it was working and planning on the basis that the show would go ahead despite the initial Coronavirus outbreak. That was a calculated decision based on around 160 confirmed cases in the UK at the time.

As we all know, the spread of the Coronavirus has grown exponentially and has been declared a pandemic globally. The government's forecast is that in the UK, the outbreak will peak sometime in April/May. A number of Orchid Societies up and down the country have already made decisions to cancel their shows and monthly

meetings.

We have a social responsibility and duty of care towards our members and people we come into contact with. The age profile of our members indicates that majority of us fall under the vulnerable group and therefore more susceptible to the virus. Given the severity of the outbreak and taking into account the latest government advice and guidelines, the committee felt that it would be imprudent to allow the show to go ahead, running the risk of helping to spreading the virus.

We have also had news that several of our visiting societies, Hinckley and Central OS have decided to cancel their shows in April. We are very disappointed to have to cancel, but it is better to be safe than sorry and we hope all the members will agree that it is the right decision.

What about future meetings I hear you ask? The answer is that the committee has not made a decision to cancel future meetings as some other societies have done. We will keep the development under review and keep members informed of any changes via email or the agreed mode of communication.



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



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If you have any pictures or information you would like to put on our website please email: tjin1@sky.com or copy and pictures for newsletter: ballm1@mac.com
Society email address: www.solihullorchidsociety.co.uk

BOC Photographic Competition- Stan's the man

The results of the BOC photographic competition were announced at the BOC meeting on the 8th March and I am pleased to announce that for the 6th year in a row, we are in the medals. We are on the podium not just once, but twice! Stan Taylor's *Bulbophyllum bicolor* was awarded second prize and his *Oncidium eliae* was awarded 3rd prize.



Well done Stan for continuing to fly the flag for the Society. Two cheques totalling £50 will be waiting at the next meeting. Commiseration to Ken and Lina who made it to the final 5 photos chosen by the members. Try again next year!



A BBC video "The fatal flower" – Presented by Malcolm Perry

This was a rare opportunity to watch this fantastic BBC production on orchid pollination that Malcolm happened to be part of creating this film.

This film was never aired to public, due to unknown reasons to Malcolm, however he later found out that this production has been sold on to USA producers. Due to Malcolm's perseverance of more than 7 years going through BBC's bureaucratic circles, we now had the opportunity to watch this fantastic production that was first completed in 1998 and was only available on VHS.

In 2005 Malcolm finally obtained a DVD version of this film however under strict contract of private viewing only. More recently, Malcolm has decided to share this film around the country between orchid societies.

The film starts noting about human fascination about orchid magic flowers though many years in history. Then it moves on straight into pollination process, explaining different flower shapes with different animals and insects involved in this process.

The amazing close-up detailed shoots done by producer Tim Shepherd are timeless and never seen done in such detail

showing every step of insect struggling to pollinate the orchid without its consent. It walks the viewer through in close-up images every possible type of pollinator, from smallest wasps to butterflies and humming birds.

Explaining in detail, how differently the orchids are adapted to "please" every type pollinator by deceiving it visually, just to achieve pollination at any cost.

The orchid has used every technique possible to attract the pollinator: setting up traps, using mimicry, producing small amounts of nectar and even resembling fragrances and oils that are not common to other flowers: like rotting flesh.

The film has covered orchids growing in many parts of the world and it delivered many visually pleasing images. It has also touched the subject on seed germination process in orchids, visually and in detail comparing how different it is to a regular seed germination.

It showed some old footage how orchid seed germination was done at the beginning of 20th century, when orchid collectors would just scatter seeds on the root surface of the mother plant. The film has also showed some natural growing environments of tropical orchids and emphasised

their harsh growing environments.

The inevitable topic of orchid pouching by humans from their natural environment and their endangered status was also elaborated on during the film.

Due to science advancement and cloning techniques in recent years, the endangered species are now being planted back into the depleted wild orchid populations.

On the other side, the 150 year of orchid hybridisation by humans, was praised and compared hybridisers to sculptors of the natural world. More recent mass production and farmed orchid plants were mentioned too, that allowed orchids to become affordable for everyone as a commodity.

Malcolm at the end of the film has emphasised, that it took 2 years to produce the film and many frames have been produced using manual cameras using time lapse techniques.

I must admit, this film was done in such way, that it did not feel it has been affected by recent technology development and it looked as current as any other film we can now see on BBC. It's a shame it never reached the masses.

Lina Smalinske

In my

Greenhouse



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2



3



4



5



6



7



8

Pictures: Ken Johnson

- 1. Renanthispopsis Mildred Jameson - 33pts - Stan Taylor
- 2. Renanthera Amayani - 32pts - Stan Taylor
- 3. Maxilaria picta - 32pts - Pat Bussy

- 4. Oncidium elisae - 30pts - Stan Taylor
- 5. Paph Hybrid - 28pts - Graham Jones
- 6. Paph Fumis Delight - 35pts - Malcolm Moodie
- 7. Masdevallia Hybrid - 33pts - Pat Bussy
- 8. Bulbo falcatum - 31 pts - Lina Smalinske

In my

Windowsill



9



10



11

- 9. Phal Hybrid 30pts Bill Carmen
- 10. Oncidium Pupukea Sunset - 29pts - John Choong
- 11. Dendrobium Sp - 29pts - Janet James

Annual trip to Harlow Carr RHS Garden

There has been a tremendous level of support so far for this year's annual trip to the Harlow Carr RHS Garden (one of the five RHS gardens in the UK) on Sunday the 2nd August.

To date, 21 members have registered their interests to go on the day trip, which going by previous year's outings, will proved to be a most enjoyable day for all. The cost of the trip is £25 and this includes coach pick up at a free carpark in Knowle, entrance to the RHS garden and also a chance to attend the last of a two days event organised by Harrogate Orchid Society – Orchids for everyone at the Bramall Learning Centre, including a chance to buy orchids.

Harlow Carr is within spitting distance (two miles) from beautiful North Yorkshire Spa town of Harrogate. You may decide to combine the visit to the RHS Garden with a little retail therapy and perhaps sample the delights of an afternoon tea at Betty's. After an enjoyable day, the coach will aim to bring us back to the pickup point around 1800.

We are hoping to be able to fill a coach with a seating capacity of 30 passengers and in the past, we have opened the day trip to members of Hinckley, Central and Birmingham and Midland Orchid Societies in order to maximise the seating capacity. Our own members have priority on the seat booking and at the time of writing, there are still nine seats available.

If you would like to join us but haven't had the chance to register your interest, please call David Wray on 07853 379976. Any available seats remaining after the May meeting will be offered to members of the other three Societies.



Laneside Hardy Orchid Nursery

I have been in touch with Jeff Hutchings of Laneside Hardy Orchid, one of the traders who had agreed to take part in our now cancelled Spring Show. Jeff tells me that as a result of shows being cancelled in April by a number of societies, he now has a stock of surplus hardy orchids which he says are "beginning to grow so need to be send out in the next fortnight". He has put together special offers on Calanthe, Cypripedium and Bletillas, details can be found on his website www.lanesidehardyorchids.com If members were looking forward to the show and buying from Jeff, this is an opportunity to get what you want at special offer prices. It would be good if we can help support orchid traders who find themselves in hard times through no fault of their own and their survival will be crucial for the UK orchid fraternity in the future so that we can all continue to buy what we are passionate about.

Subscriptions

Many thanks to the majority of the members who have shown their support to the Society by renewing the 2020 subscriptions (£12 Individual or £16 Couple).

There are now just a handful of members who have not managed to renew their membership either because they haven't been able to make it to the meetings so far or have decided not to re-join the Society. We would be extremely sorry to lose any members, whether you are a long standing or newly joined member.

I believe the Society provides good value and hold wonderful and interesting monthly meetings in very convivial atmospheres for all members. It would be wonderful if we can retain all our existing members and hopefully attract a few new members during the year.

If you haven't managed to renew your current subscription and intend to renew your membership, please send a cheque to our Treasurer Heike Lilley at 33 Batsford Road, Coundon, Coventry, CV6 1AQ. Heike can also be contacted at heikelilley@outlook.com

Message from the British Orchid Council

Coincidentally, I also received an email from the BOC asking Societies and orchid enthusiasts to support the British Orchid Trade in the difficult month ahead. "Our UK traders are heading for a very difficult time in the coming months and any support that people can give will make a difference". It has put together a PDF document, "UK Trade needs you" and this is enclosed with the Newsletter. Please help if you can.

FROM THE BOC

UK ORCHID ENTHUSIASTS

Dear All,

The coronavirus situation is getting steadily worse and sadly there is little we can do but to take sensible advice and be as careful as possible. We are at the stage where orchid shows are being cancelled all over the country and it may be the Autumn before we see any orchid events.

This is going to be extremely hard for trade and there is a worry that by the time we get to the end of the crisis there will be few, if any, British orchid traders still in business. This is something where orchid enthusiasts around the UK could hopefully make a difference. Some of our traders have online shops where you can buy orchids and all the others can be contacted by phone or email to find out what they can offer via mail order.



**UK TRADE
NEEDS**

YOU

If you think how much you will **not** be spending in the coming months on fuel, meals out, hotels, and of course all the orchids that you might buy at shows, you will save a lot of money. How about supporting British trade by shopping online/mail order; you can find them all in the BOC Yearbook or on the BOC website. As each day comes along when you would have been at an orchid show buying plants think about your favourite traders and get in touch and do a bit of shopping. It will also cheer you up to get some orchids to brighten the miserable months ahead. You will find it much more rewarding than buying millions of toilet rolls.

Why wait for an orchid show, you can start panic buying and hoarding orchids right now and nobody will criticise you!

You could even be a bit proactive and add £10 or £20 to your bill in an effort to make sure that your hobby survives. When I think how rich I will be getting if Jean is not buying orchids at shows, it will be worth making the effort.

Chris Barker (Vice-President) & Helen Millner (BOC Chairman)