



Newsletter



OCTOBER 2020

Welcome to the October Newsletter and I hope this edition continues to find every member well and healthy despite the worsening crisis in Covid 19.

With the whole country plunged into the daily increase of reported cases and hospitalisations, the extension of further restrictions in movement, the Committee has sadly accepted that it will not be safe

to hold further physical meetings until at least 2021.

For the first time, we will not have our Christmas Show which is sad as it is such a tradition much enjoyed by the members who attended.

However, there will always be the next year just as we hope to have our Spring Show in April 2021!

Annual General Meeting with a difference

The AGM for 2020 took place on the 3rd October, a month later than previous years for obvious reason. It was an AGM with a small difference as although we were not able to meet physically, through the wonder of modern technology of Zoom video conferencing, 21 members were able to participate in an online interactive meeting, with 8 members who send their apologies.

The initial concern of not having a quorum of 15 members for the AGM was totally unnecessary as pictures of more and more members appear on the screen as the clock ticked down towards the 2 pm starting time. Many thanks to all the members present who made the AGM possible.

The Secretary reported the year as likened to a curate's egg, good in parts, with the not so good part being entirely outside the control of the Society, resulting in cancellations of several monthly meetings after March, our annual Spring Show in April and the annual coach trip to Harlow Carr in August. The consolation, if there is one, is that every societies and clubs up and down the country are in the same boat and all of us coped the best we know. On the positive side, we were able to hold six meetings with four speakers before the lockdown in March and our Christmas show was a great success with increasing attendance. Once again, Stan Taylor's pictures have been

successful in the Annual BOC Photographic Competition winning two of the three top prizes. The Secretary thanked all the members who supported the Society throughout a very difficult period, he also thanked members who played specific roles in helping the smooth running of the monthly meetings. Malcolm Moodie expressed his thanks to the Secretary for his work during his first year in the post.

The Treasurer reported a deficit of nearly £500 for the year, this really didn't come as a huge surprise as the cancellations of meetings, show etc. impacted on the level of additional income we traditionally rely on to help balance our annual finance. She also reported that 12 members (approx. 20%) had not renewed their membership during the year, it was felt that it is important to understand and establish the reason(s) why members had not renewed and the Secretary agreed to contact and to re-engage with the 12 members in the hope that some may be persuaded to return in the coming year. It was recognised and accepted that factors beyond the Society's control has made this a financially challenging year and the

year ahead should hopefully see some improvement, as some costs have been front loaded, and can be carried forward. Members present also recognised that the Society will need to continue to bank on the



support of all members in the coming years.

The Officers, members of the Committee, the President and Vice President all offered their services for another term and all were duly re-elected. The Committee nominated an additional post for a second Vice President, Malcolm Moodie accepted the nomination and was duly elected as our second VP.

The annual subscription for the coming year remained unchanged at £12 for single and £16 for joint

Continued page 2



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



Secretary: Tjin Ong
07711 568848

If you have any pictures or information you would like to put on our website please email: tjinong3103@gmail.com or copy and pictures for newsletter: ballm1@mac.com
Society email address: www.solihullorchidsociety.co.uk

membership and this will be reviewed over the next 12 months. It was pointed out that the level of subscription income was 20% lower when compared with the previous year due to 12 members who did not renew their membership.

A discussion followed regarding the level of future annual subscription and it was agreed that this will be examined during the coming year to ensure that the total subscription income should, at the minimum, cover the fixed costs of running the Society. This is particularly relevant given that we have been notified by the letting secretary of St George & St Teresa that as from 1st Jan 2021 the hire charge for the hall will be increased by £10 per meeting, adding £100 per annum to one of our fixed costs.

Looking to the year ahead, the Secretary impressed on everyone the difficulty of planning 12 months ahead in the current crisis, a lot will depend on how Covid 19 plays out in the next few months. In the short term, the uncertainty of further extension of restrictions to movement doesn't look promising for our future physical meetings and the wider orchid world activities. Assuming the best case scenario, we plan to hold our Annual Spring show on the 17th April 2021 at

the new venue of Bentley Heath Community Hall and our annual coach day trip in August, on a day yet to be decided. A list of speakers for the next year is being finalised and the best we can plan for is to have a physical meeting as soon as we are able to and more importantly, when it is safe for us to do so.

Whilst our Treasurer has agreed to serve for another term, Heike has given notice that she will be retiring from her role at the next AGM in 2021 and we need to find a member who will be willing to take her place and assume the role of our new Treasurer.

The Banksian medal is issued annual by the RHS to worthy horticulturalist, traditionally at Solihull it is awarded to the member who has won the most points at our annual show. The RHS has recognised that in 2020, few Societies were able to hold the usual shows and suggested that it would be a great idea to present the medal to someone in the Society who has gone the extra mile this year or any other reason, to someone deserves a little bit of recognition.

Taking on the suggestion made by the RHS, the Committee has decided the Banksian medal in 2020 should be awarded jointly to Janet James and Martin Mitchell in recognition of their

dedications over a large number of years in representing the Society by putting on displays at various reciprocating visiting Societies venues up and down the country.

Martin Ball suggested that the Committee should consider using the "easyfundraising" fundraising website as a way of helping the Society to raise much needed additional funding. Easyfundraising turns everyday online shopping into free donations for clubs, societies and charitable organisations. If the Society register with the website, every time one of our member shop on line at over 4000 retailers who participate in the scheme, the retailers will make a small donation to the Society by way of a "thank you".

There are currently over 1.8 million supporters and over £31 million has been raised for thousands of community groups, schools, sports clubs, small and large charities across the UK. The Committee agree to look into the suggestion.

Overall, the AGM was very productive and constructive with plenty of participation, discussions and debates from Members present. A big thank you again to all the members present and for making the AGM a success.

Subscriptions

The subscription for the coming year will be due in a couple of months, members will see from the AGM report that the Committee has decided to leave the membership fee for 2021 unchanged at £12 for single and £16 for two members from the same household.

With the current membership number down 20% from 2020, continuing membership subscription from existing members becomes more critical to the future survival of the Society.

The Society depends on subscription income to finance the fixed costs of running the Society, e.g. costs of hall hire, annual insurance, speaker's expenses etc. We are increasingly finding it difficult to meet these costs without dipping into our reserves.

If you are able to help and support the Society, please contact our Treasurer with your subscription.

Clearly, with the lack of physical meetings, it is not possible for members to pay by cash as most did in the past. There are other ways of paying the subscription, either

by cheque or direct bank transfer into the Society's bank account.

Please contact Heike Lilley on 02476 593625 or email her at heikelilley@outlook.com to obtain the details and information you need to make your payment.

Please note as in the past, if you wish to receive your newsletter by post please add another £5 to your subscription to cover the additional costs of postage and printing.

Your new membership card with the programme for the year ahead will be sent to you by the Treasurer when they are ready, hopefully by December.

Unlike previous years, your membership card will not be accompanied by the BOC Year Book for 2021. The BOC recently advised all Societies that the constraints of Covid 19 has made it extremely impractical to produce a hardcopy of the Year Book and has decided it will just have an online digital version of the Yearbook on the BOC website, planned to be available from 1st January 2021. The online 2021 Year Book will be updated as events unfold during the year.



Janet and Martin

Joint winners of the 2020 Banksian Medal

Members will hopefully remember Janet and Martin's email on the 28th July advising us all that sadly "After a lot of consideration Martin and I have decided the time has come to cease doing the displays".

As a late joiner of the Society (about 7-8 years ago), to my knowledge Janet and Martin have been flying the flag for the Society by undertaking table displays on behalf of the members for a great number of years. I became involved with helping them (or shall I say, learning from them) with the displays, mainly at four local reciprocating societies (the furthest away being at Nottinghamshire) over the last 18 months.

No matter where the venues were, they were always one of the first visiting societies to arrive, sometimes even before the starting time of 7.30 am, and often stayed behind at the end of the show to help clear up the venue.

Their style of displays on behalf of the Society has won many recognitions, including a Silver Gilt at the Annual Malvern International Orchid Show a few years ago, and they were well received wherever they went. We are all very sorry to hear that they have decided to retire from display work but I guess all good things must come to an end, and we can only hope that the team taking over from them can live up to expectations.

Peter White has also kindly provided a little tribute to Janet and Martin as follows:

Janet first became interested in orchids with a visit to Bill Greenaway's collection a former member of the Solihull & District Orchid Society, then in 1991 became a full member of the Society.

Janet's first big trip to an orchid event was in 1993 at the World Orchid Congress held in Glasgow where the society organized a coach trip.

It did not take long before her brother, Martin, joined the Society and they both started putting on displays for the society at shows in Birmingham, Wolverhampton, and Hinckley, they also gave up their weekends to build displays in local garden centres to try to increase the membership for the society.

In more recent time, travelled further afield to Peterborough and Malvern where they gained many awards for the Society for their efforts, Martin use his own van to collect the plants from members and return them after the show.

Still doing all the shows, Janet also took over the role of secretary for many years and managed to keep the society running smoothly.

For all her hard work she became a vice-president of the Society.

We all owe a lot to Martin and Janet for all their efforts over the past 30 years, and for that, they were jointly awarded the RHS Banksian Medal at our AGM in 2020.

Peter White

Seeking a new Treasurer

After over 10 years as our Treasurer, Heike Lilley has given notice that she will be stepping down at the next AGM in 2021.

We are thankful for her help and support over the years and will be sorry to lose her service.

Our search for a new Treasurer begins and the Society needs your

help in filling this very important post, without which, the Society cannot function. It is not an onerous role preparing a receipts and payments account and taking on the responsibilities normally associated with a Treasurer for a Society of our size. As someone who has spent all his working life

in Accountancy, any volunteer to this role can expect to have my full support and guidance if required.

So, please contact me at [tjinong3103@gmail](mailto:tjinong3103@gmail.com) if you could and would like to contribute to the future wellbeing of the Society by becoming our next Treasurer.

Our Pictures



**Janet
James**



**Keith
Bates**

Six hybrids



Great-granddaughter Evie Grace just checking for mealy bugs

Monica Johnson



Please attribute this Phal Jiaho Blueberry to Stan Taylor who grew it into spike. The colour is very near to life.

Following our recent request for articles for the newsletter, Margaret Dale sent in some lovely pictures of her Covid-beating holiday in the South of France

I was very lucky in being able to stay with friends at their holiday house in the South of France for a week at the beginning of September this year.

It was in a little Covid-free town of Azille near Carcassonne. It has a lovely garden with Oleanders and a large Judas tree.

The airports had a strange feeling of desertion which meant no queues, and there were 11 other passengers going out, and 20 on return in the 737s.

We were well spaced out!

We went to the picturesque hilltop town of Minerve, set above a tremendous, attractive gorge and visited the church and museum, which told the history of the massacre of the religious sect, the Cathars in the 12th Century.

We stayed away from the larger towns, walking round locally and enjoying the swimming pool when the temperature was in the 30s and the jacuzzi when it was cooler.

