



Newsletter

DECEMBER 2020



Have a safe Christmas

The Committee would like to thank all members for their support during a difficult year and wish everyone a merry Christmas and a happy New Year

We have just over a week to go before the big day that most people have been looking forward to all year. We are all to be congratulated for being vigilant since March to have made it totally unscathed through a very challenging and topsy turvy year. It is only because we have been extra careful and followed guidelines that we have remained healthy and able to enjoy this festive season.

As we celebrate with friends and family over the Christmas. We must not let our guards down and get into the false sense of security that the vaccination that has already been rolled out will be the saviour and solution that will put an end to the pandemic. It will take a little while for everyone to be vaccinated and for the vaccine to do its job.

Until then, we all still need to exercise caution, common sense and follow government guidelines to ensure that we all get through 2021 safely, when at some stage, we all hope to be able to meet again.

The December Zoom meeting was a real success, 24 members (the most we've had) attended

the meeting and we had our first ever Zoom speaker, Mark Turner from Elite Orchids. Mark gave us a very interesting talk about his passions for Paphiopedilum and Phragmipedium and spent some time taking us for a live tour of his 3 greenhouses, see Lina's report later. Feedback from members were unanimously positive and the views and comments were reflected and captured by the following email from Colin Clay who has kindly given permission for us to share his thoughts on the meeting. It was clear from members present that until a physical meeting can be safely arranged, online Zoom meeting with a speaker is the only viable way forward if we are to keep the Society meetings going and keeping members engaged during the pandemic.

Members who missed the December meeting will have further opportunity in the New Year as we have arranged Zoom meetings with speakers from January to March 2021.

So, if you are still hesitant about using new technology and joining our Zoom meeting, be brave in 2021, take the plunge and join us to welcome our next 3 Zoom speakers. You may become as enthusiastic as those who were present at the last meeting!

Today's Zoom Meeting with Mark Turner

Inbox: Colin Clay
Sat, 5 Dec, 19:13 (8 days ago)
to info, me, ballm1

*Good evening
Gentlemen,*

I would just like to say what a wonderful Meeting we had today with Mark of 'Elite Orchids'.

The 'distance' between Mark and the audience did not seem large and I don't think the talk could have been bettered by a traditional Meeting in the Hall.

Many thanks to Mark for sharing his world with us, including the successes and all of the possible ways to kill an orchid that he has tried (so far).

Many useful tips for good growing were freely offered and well communicated. I look forward to viewing the Elite Orchids website.

Thanks go to Martin also who guided us so well through the technology, in the comfort of our own homes.

Thanks to All.

*Regards Colin Clay
(Member of S & DOS)*



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



Secretary: Tjin Ong
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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 renewal - YOUR SOCIETY NEEDS YOU!

Many thanks to those members who have already paid their membership subscription for 2021, although I am slightly disappointed that only 19 of you have renewed so far. If ever the Society needs your help and support during a difficult time, it is now.

Subscriptions keeps the Society going and it cannot survive without your financial support, as well as physical support.

A reminder that the subscription remained at £12 for single and £16 for double members from the same household. You can pay by cheque to our Treasurer Heike at:

33 Batsford Road,
Coundon,
Coventry,
CV 6 1AQ

Should you prefer to pay by bank transfer, the Society's banking details are:

Sort Code: 53 61 41

Account number: 03612414

Account name:

Solihull & District Orchid Society

Please contact Heike 02476

593625 or email her at

heikelilley@outlook.com if you have further queries.

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 membership card with

details of the programme for the 2021 season are ready and have been despatched to those members who have already renewed their membership.

We have an exciting programme for next year, starting with 3 Zoom speakers between January and March.

The programme of talks with interesting speakers will take us on a journey to Singapore and Costa Rica in June and July and we will also learn about genera such as *Dendrochilium*, *Bulbophyllums*, *Odontoglossums* etc. Not to be missed.

A huge thank you to Monica, our programme secretary for putting on an interesting and wonderful diary of events.

Treasurer

At the risk of sounding like a broken record, we are still looking to find a successor for the post of a Treasurer at the next AGM.

All of you will know and appreciate the importance of the Treasurer's role in managing the finance of the Society and ensure its probity.

The role, whilst important is not onerous, records, procedures and the banking arrangements are already in place and all we need is for a member come forward and to volunteer and start working with Heike during the transitional period.

The offer I made earlier about help, support and guidance will continue to be available.

Going forward, the Society cannot function without a Treasurer and it will be a real shame if we were to lose the Society.

It will become a reality if no one comes forward to help. None of us wants that, we all worked too hard in the past to let it happen. So come forward and help by contacting me.

BOC annual photo competition

The BOC has decided it will continue to hold its annual Photo competition for 2021 albeit in a slightly different format from previous years. Instead of a Society entering its 5 best pictures, for 2021, each member of societies which are affiliated to the BOC are allow to submit 2 photos which should be send to photo2020@british-orchid-council.info together with the name of the Society, member's name and the name of the plant. The closing date for the competition is midnight. 31st December 2020.

Further details can be found in the latest BOC Bulletin which has been forwarded by Martin Ball.

We have an unenviable track record within the BOC of winning at least one of the top 3 prizes for the past 6 years and wouldn't it good to have another placing in 2021.



BOC Congress 2021 and the Malvern International Orchid show

The BOC Executive recently announced the cancellation of the Congress due to held in July 2021 at Southport. The unpredictable situation with Covid, the uncertainty around the availability of the venue due to re-development and financial considerations contributed to the decision.

The announcement also refer to the cancelation of the June 2021 Malvern International Orchid show.

This is indeed sad news as it means that there will be no major orchid shows for 2021 but I guess it is better to be safe rather than sorry. If we are all careful and survive this crisis and there is always 2022 to look forward to.

Paphiopedilums, Phragmipediums and more

Mark Turner from Elite Orchids

by Lina Smalinske

Mark started his orchid business Elite Orchids in 2017, he mainly specialises in Paphiopedilums and Phragmipediums, but he also grows other orchids too. He also has a "day job" as a special effects technician for TV shows and films. However, Mark stated at the start of the talk, his love for growing orchids started since he was 15 years old. He remembers his first orchid being a Cymbidium bought from M&S.

Later on, he started his business with a single greenhouse, growing everything he was interested at the time and buying supply from Ebay.

He spotted a lack of reliable retailer online, therefore he decided to focus on Paphiopedilums and Phragmipediums and pursue further genera. He gave a tribute to Paul Philips and Malcolm Moodie, who gave a wealth of knowledge and support at the beginning when establishing the business. Three years later, Mark has 3 greenhouses dedicated one for each genus and a third greenhouse for mixed plants.

He explained the details of building his greenhouses, everything is done to keep them as efficient as possible. Roofs are insulated with a 25mm poly-carbonate sheets sitting on top of glass sheets, and the bottom halves of the greenhouses are from bricks and 75mm of wall insulation. Thus only needing him to keep a 3kw heater to keep the greenhouses warm enough for plants. He uses an "air to air" heat pump to provide his heating, which is sucking cold air from outside and blows warm into the greenhouse, also a reverse process in the summer months. He has 50% aluminium shading on the roofs that sits at 4 inches distance from the roof allowing heat to travel in between. He mentioned that is very important to keep sufficient air movement at all times of the year, to prevent rot on the plants, therefore he's installed air holes at the base of his greenhouse foundations, he is also run two fans in each permanently.

He has installed UV lights to prevent flying pests, he keeps them on at night for 6hrs therefore anything that flies is caught. He also has sulphur hot boxes to keep mites down, this unit runs for 1hr a day at midnight. Mark has installed LED lights in all his greenhouses to keep the costs down. To keep the humidity to the right level, he installed underground sprayers that are run on timers 3 times a day for 5min.

When it comes to feeding, that's where the uniform approach differs, every greenhouse has different set up. The Phragmipedium greenhouse is fed at around 250µS (microsiemens) and 6.2PH this is done on every second watering. The Paphiopedilum greenhouse feeding regime is 500µS and this is done on every watering. Mark collects rain water of his greenhouse roofs and UV treats it to get rid of any nasty things living in it. He also encourages toads into his greenhouses and any beneficial creatures to

keep his pests under control. He also uses "Swirski Ulti-Mite" packs around his greenhouses.

To be able to do his "day job" and run all these greenhouses successfully, he uses "Netatmo" smart home monitoring control software, where he can adjust and control his greenhouse climate over a touch of a button on his phone, no matter where he is in the UK. Every greenhouse has what Mark calls "health stations", which is a very helpful and a basic solution: a tray with two jars – alcohol with scissors and a cinnamon jar with a brush. Mark's Phragmipedium greenhouse is kept at 85-90% humidity and 18C at night and 22C day temperature. His Paphiopedilum greenhouse is 15C night and 23C day.

Mark walked us through his greenhouses with his phone in the hand, he showed us not just his fantastic plants but his other cold greenhouse full of citrus and banana trees. He advised to introduce good bacteria into the soil through adding it into the water. There is a strong relationship between good bacteria and plant vigour. It helps the plant to break down all nutrients that we keep adding when feeding therefore preventing the harmful salt and chemical build up in the pots. This product is available through this website at Elite orchids.

It was an exceptional opportunity, brought on by exceptional circumstances, to visit these wonderful greenhouse setups and see his many beautiful plants in flower, from the comfort of our homes.



An update on Easyfundraising

I am extremely pleased to report that we have so far raised £15.73 (£5.90 at 15th November) since registering with the site on the 19th October.

As we have exceeded £15, we can look forward to receiving our first cheque for the donations.

Well done to all the supporters who have made this possible.

However, we still have only 14 supporters, and that means that there are still over 30 members who can potentially become our supporters and help us raise funds when they shop online.

Members must surely be encouraged by what has been achieved without any effort other than shop online by our existing supporters. I know I am well impressed by your support for the Society.

If we are to raise further much needed funds, we need members who haven't register to do so and those who have registered but not yet made any purchase online to start doing so.

You will be helping the Society raise additional funds whenever you shop online.

Next meeting

Our next meeting will be by Zoom on the 9th January 2021 when our speaker, Trey Sanders will give us a talk on the genus *Dendrochilum*

Lockdown Pictures



**Tjin
Ong**

**Cymbidiums Hybrid
Paphiopedilum Hybrid**



Chris Gibbs

Pln Wharfedale "Pine Warbler"



Lina Smalinske



Laelia anceps



Ludisia discolor



Eria thao

Lockdown Pictures



Renanthis Mildred Jamespn Bonsall HCC AOS



Cattleya Portia



Phal Hybrid

**Monica
Johnson**



Phal Hybrid



Doritis pulcherima
coerulea



L C Puppy Love



L C Amelia



DL C Love
Knot



December 2020
plants in bloom



Phal hybrid

Lockdown Pictures



**Malcolm
Moodie**

**Phrag.
Jason
Fischer**



Paph. fairrieanum



Paph. haynaldianum album



Hamelwellsara June Indigo Sue AM AOS



Paph. concolor