



Newsletter



JANUARY 2021

Great attendance

34 members attended the Zoom meeting on the 9th January when our speaker for the month was Trey Sanders. It was tremendous to have so many members, almost as many as when we have a physical gathering, supporting what is now, under the restrictions accepted as one of the few viable ways of conducting meetings.

My thanks go to all who supported the Society by attending the meeting. The committee has worked hard to ensure that future meetings with speakers will continue and we all hope that the next Zoom meeting in February will attract even greater participation.

Trey gave us a very interesting talk on the genus *Dendrochilum* (see Lina's report on the presentation later), not a plant we often see on our monthly show table.

For those members who were not able to make the meeting, Trey has a website dedicated to *Dendrochilum*, www.dendrochilum.com and it contains a lot of the materials covered in his presentation. Have a look at the website and learn more about a genus that not too many of us are familiar with or grow.

You will all see from the current programme that we have scheduled two further Zoom meetings with speakers for February and March.

When we planned the programme back in November 2020, we had hope that we may be able to re-start a physical meeting by May 2021. However the continuing severity of the pandemic, with worrying and increasing level of new daily infections, worsening mortality, demands for resources within the hospitals and in the community with vaccinations etc. is likely to frustrate our original programme.

We are going through the darkest hour of our time but we will all get through this with the help of the vaccines and exercising sensible actions. In the meantime, we want to re-assure members that we will ensure the society's future meetings can go ahead by keeping a wary eye on developments and make the necessary adjustments to our programme from May onwards and arrange further Zoom meetings with speakers if required



Treasurer

So far, we still have not received any response from anyone who is willing to help and become our new Treasurer from the next AGM. All of us has to play our part to ensure the Society can go on beyond the next 8 months. The future of the Society is in your hands.

Next meeting

Our next meeting will again be by Zoom on the 6th February 2021 when our speaker, Malcolm Moodie will give us a talk on "Feeding orchids - Feast or Famine".

This is a brand new presentation that Malcolm has prepared and adapted and we are lucky to be one of the first societies to hear and see it. Please come and support the event that should not to be missed.



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

Spring Show 2021 - cancelled

It will come as no surprise to all members that the Committee has decided to cancel our 2021 annual Spring show which is scheduled for Saturday 17th April at the new venue of Bentley Heath Community Centre.

Even with the promise of mass vaccination for the higher age profile and vulnerable groups within the next few months, there is no real significant signs and confidence that the pandemic will be under control, except for the Government's optimism that the situation will

improve by Spring.

Under the circumstances, the Committee felt that it would be irresponsible to organise the 2021 Spring show. Moreover, we have already received confirmation that Hinckley OS, one of the reciprocating visiting societies, has cancelled its show planned for the 27th March and we understand that Central OS and East Midlands OS are also planning to cancel their shows in April and May respectively. It would clearly make no sense whatsoever, even if we wish to, to hold a show

without three of the four visiting societies!

It is clearly very sad news and a great disappointment to many of us that we have had to cancel our annual shows two consecutive years running but safety has to come first.

Let us look forward to 2022 and hope that we can have a good show then. Arrangements are in place to find a suitable date for the April 2022 show. Mmm..., seems a long way away, but it will be with us before we know it.

BOC annual photo competition – progress

The BOC has received 118 entries for the annual photo competition and thank you to those members



who have submitted their entries to make this

competition a success.

For the first time, the BOC judges and trainees are involved and invited to select their favourites, from which the 1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes will be chosen. The results are expected to be available by the end of January.



Membership renewal

Just over half of the members have renewed their membership and many thanks to those members who have done so. If it has slipped your mind to renew or if you are still undecided as to if you wish to continue to support your society, we can't survive without your financial as well as physical assistance.

To keep the Society going, costs continue to be incurred, insurance, periodical magazine subscriptions, speakers' fees etc. and we only have membership subscription income to cover these costs without having to dig into balances.

Membership 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**

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

**Sort Code: 53 61 41
Account number: 03612414
Account: Solihull & District Orchid Society**

Please contact Heike 024 7659 3625 or email her at heikelilley@outlook.com if you have further queries.

Genus *Dendrochilum* – Trey Sanders

Trey lived in Australia until his late 20s and has moved to United Kingdom since. His particular interest is the genus of *Dendrochilum* and *Dracula*. He has set up an information website in 2007 www.dendrochilum.com, because of the very limited and often incorrect information available on the internet. This was made possible with help from many botanical institutions and knowledgeable individuals around the world.

Trey has grown orchids in a personal collection since he was a child, and now he sells orchids professionally across Europe through his business “Orchid Botanics”, which helps fund his many orchid interests like traveling the world identifying and describing them.

According to Trey, travelling and seeing orchids in their native surroundings has revolutionised the way he grows his plants - this way he gets the first hand insights of individual plant requirements that he can then replicate in his greenhouses.

Dendrochilum belongs to the Coelogyninae subtribe with *Pholidota*, *Pleione*, *Coelogyne* and many more rarely seen species in cultivation. Originally, Karl Bloom in the 1820 described only 6 *Dendrochilum* species, later many more were added by other explorers.

However, all *Dendrochilums* are distributed in a small region called “The Malesian Region” around Philippines, New Guinea, Java, Sumatra and Borneo. There’s only 339 species in total, with no hybrids known in existence. Majority of the species have only recently been described and a very small amount is available in cultivation.

Generally, this is a genus that likes high humidity at all times and high altitude. Most of

the species are found in the mountainous regions at 1700-1800m elevations where temperatures in a day time reach 27C and 15C during the night.

Identification of different species on *Dendrochilums* is done by comparison of column and the labellum, because these plants usually have very small flowers and most of the time leaves are very similar, that is the only indication to differentiate between species. Trey really hopes that nobody will attempt to make any hybrids as it would complicate the identification even more.

In cultivation Trey uses trays with rain water under his plants to keep the humidity up and he also uses very little fertiliser. He has fans on at all times and he uses fine bark and live sphagnum moss for potting. Humidity in his greenhouses is kept at 78-80%.

Trey also mention that *Dendrochilums* don’t like to be re-potted at all, same as dry periods, these plants will have yellow or browning leave ends or the flower buds will abort. By visiting these plants in situ, Trey has noticed that many plants grow mounted in moss higher on the trees, receiving more light.

On his return, he has planted many of his plants in hanging baskets in pure moss and placed them up to the roof of his greenhouse following with many plants flowering profusely.

Slugs and red spider mite are the main pests for

Dendrochilums and Trey also encounters them often in his greenhouses.

Trey took us on his phone for a tour of his greenhouses and showed us many of his flowering plants. He has plans to go back to Borneo and Sumatra to identify new undescribed species of *Dendrochilum* and produce more field guides once the Covid restrictions are lifted.

By Lina Smalinske



Lockdown Pictures

Thank you to everyone for their Christmas and New Year messages, I had these in flower for Christmas, Pleione Wharfdale, Pine Warbler, and Bonatea speciosa.

JANET JAMES



An update on Easyfundraising

I am happy to report that we have increased the donations to the Society to £18.77 (£15.73 at 15th December) since registering with the site on the 19th October. Once again, well done and thank you to all the supporters who have made this possible.

I have set a target of raising £100 by the time we get to the first anniversary of registering with Easyfundraising. It is an achievable target and we are well our way but we can only meet that target if our supporters continue to shop online and more members register to support the Society by visiting

www.easyfundraising.org.uk and start doing their online shopping via that website. With your help, we can achieve the £100 target.

NEW FINDS IN 2020

156 new plants and fungi have been named by scientists at the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew and their collaborators in 2020.

Orchids make up a third of the new species. One, *Gastrodia agnicellus*, has been called 'the ugliest in the world'. It was found by Johan Hermans in a National Park in Madagascar. It has 11mm flowers which are brown, fleshy and grotesque and probably pollinated by flies. The plant has no leaves or photosynthetic material. It gets its nutrition from fungi and grows in deep shade on the forest floor. The name *agnicellus* is from the Latin, little lamb, as it has a woolly tuberous root. It is a threatened species.

19 of the new orchid species are tree dwelling

and from New Guinea. They include one *Dendrobium* and 16 *Bulbophyllum*. One has spectacular golden orange flowers and some have hair-like tufts on their flowers.

Six new species of Webcap toadstools have been named in the UK this year. All are from the genus *Cortinarius* which play an important part in supporting the growth of trees and a key role in the carbon re-cycling of woodlands. Three species were found in Scotland, Caithness and the Black Wood of Rannoch and three in England at Brighton, Barrow-in-Furness and the boundary of Heathrow Airport.

It is a race against time to find, identify, name and conserve plants and fungi before they disappear and their potential for humanity is lost.

MARGARET DALE