



Newsletter



MARCH 2021

2022 Annual Show

Our Annual Orchid Show for 2022 has been booked at the Bentley Heath Hall on Saturday, 23rd April, 2022

Peter White, our new Chairman will be writing notifying visiting orchid societies of the date.

Peter will book the trade stands for the show.

Next meeting

For our May 1st Zoom meeting

Peter White will be talking about the

Eric Young Orchid Foundation



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



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

Peter writes . . .

I've had numerous emails regarding the availability of Orchid Grade Bark and Sphagnum Moss coming into the country due to Brexit.,

At present there are no problems bringing certain bark products into the UK from Europe, as long as we have the right paperwork

We are bringing bark into the UK from Europe but only in certain bag sizes, this is readily available now, as for the Orchiata Bark from New Zealand

There are delays this is due to worldwide demand, we hope this will be back to normal in the next few months, as for New Zealand Sphagnum Moss

There have been problems with supplies, but we are hoping this will be rectified by May.

We have a delivery due week commencing 22nd March of a Premium Grade Chilean Moss in different sizes to suit all.



No members meeting in April as this would have been our 2021 Show date. See you on Saturday May 1st on Zoom

Lockdown Pictures

**Monica
Johnson**

Hybrid Phal



Phal Pink Infusion



**Janet
James**

I only have these
in flower at the
moment,
Restrepia Le
Pulec, and
Cymbidium
Tangerine.

There should
have been
Oncidium Sweet
Sugar, but a
snail ate all the
flowers.



**2 BRAND NEW BAYLISS
AUTOVENTS**

£35 for the pair

Contact: Martin Mitchell

martin.bulbo70@gmail.com

Lockdown Pictures

Lina Smalinske



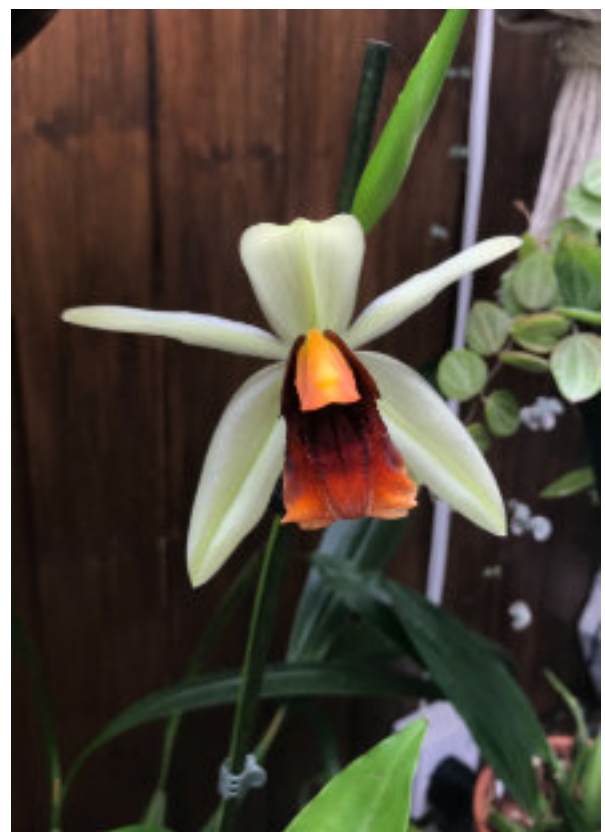
Phalaenopsis schilleriana x manii



Dendrobium kingianum



Sedirea Japonica "minmaru"

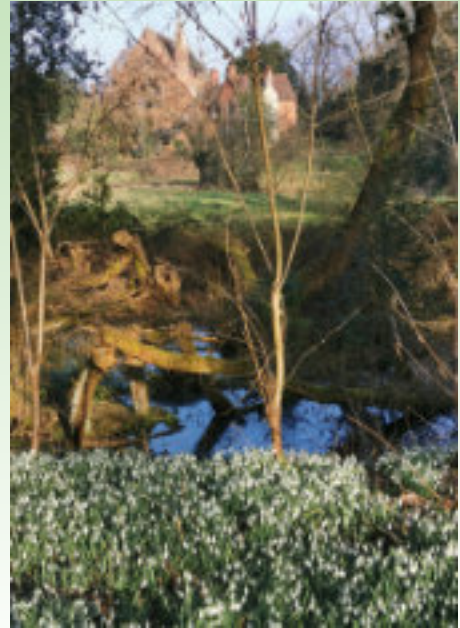


Coelogyne Bird in flight

Early March at Temple Balsall



Wild Daffodils



Towards St Mary's Church

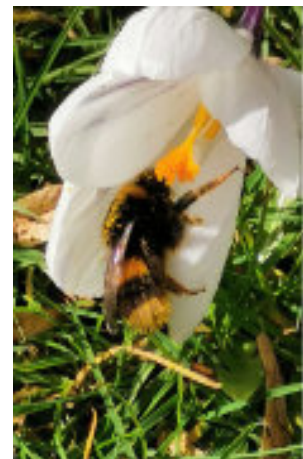
Margaret Dale



The Coppice



Double Snowdrops



FASCINATING FACTS ABOUT FUNGI

Ancient Anaerobic Fungi Find.
Europe's largest meteorite crater in Siljan, Sweden was home, at depths of 540 m, to ancient fungi. The fossilized remains were of fungi which had withstood an oxygen free environment 39 million years ago, more than 300 million years after the meteoritic impact. They seem to have been fuelling methane production by decomposing organic bitumous material.

Fake Flowers Created By Fungus.
In Guyana, South America, there is a fungus, *Fusarium xyrophilum*, which infects the beautiful yellow-eyed grasses *Xyris*. The fungus stops the plant making its flowers and creates false flowers similar in size, shape and colour and even with a fragrance. They attract pollinators, especially

bees which are then coated with fungal spores rather than pollen.

Another hoax is created on the leaves of Blueberries. *Monilinia* fungus turns the leaves into a type of flower reflecting ultraviolet light, giving off a scent and oozing sugar. Insects that normally pollinate the plant carry off the spores.

The Plastic Eater.
In 2017 a strain of *Aspergillus tubingensis* was discovered on a rubbish heap in Islamabad. It was found that it could use enzymes and its root-like mycelia to break down polyurethane as found in the inside of fridges and sofa stuffing.

The Bee Medicine.
Entomologists at Washington State University have found that feeding bee colonies with an extract from *Ganoderma resinaceum* greatly reduces the infection from virus carrying mites. It is known that bees often feed on fungal mycelia possibly benefitting from antiviral compounds.

Bee orchids in South Warwickshire

Some variant forms of our native, hardy Bee Orchid (*Ophrys apifera*); three sites where they may be found in South Warwickshire.

Our native Bee orchid is always a pleasure to find, when the days are approaching their longest in mid-Summer. In Britain there is no insect pollinator for this species, so self-pollination is the norm. This is in-effect 'in-breeding' and could explain the regular occurrence of the variants at certain sites. I will illustrate three forms which persist and three sites where they can be found locally.

Fig. 1 A typical form of *Ophrys apifera*

Fig. 2 *Ophrys apifera* var. *bicolor*, starting to 'go over'.

Fig. 3 *Ophrys apifera* var. *trollii*, already self-pollinated.

Fig. 4 *Ophrys apifera* var. *chlorantha*, with pollinium twisting towards the stigmatic surface.

A good site to search for Bee orchids during mid to late-June, is on the wide roadside banks and verges of the A429 road cutting, to the West of Ettington (**Site A**). Alongside the normal form (Fig. 1), the var. *bicolor* (Fig. 2), is sometimes found here, with enthusiasts travelling from all over England to search for it. I have seen var. *bicolor* growing on both banks in recent years. In addition, the banks are carpeted with hundreds of Pyramidal orchids (*Anacamptis pyramidalis*). The first few plants only arrived about thirty years ago. Caution is needed near to this fast road.

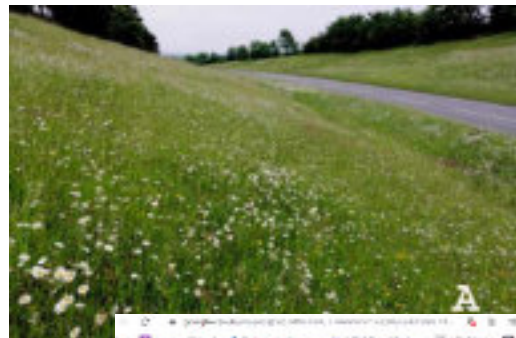
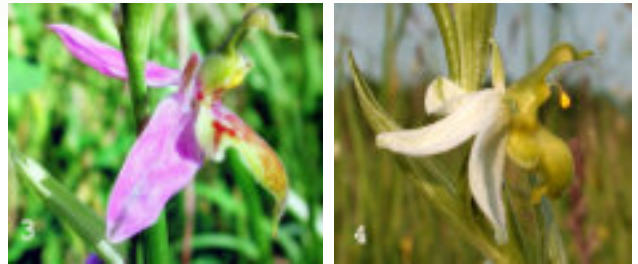
Last year, a member of our Society, abandoned attempts at photography, as every time she lay down to take close-ups of the orchids, cars would stop and ask if she needed help?

Just 7.5 miles further down the A429, South of Rowborough, is another roadside site. This site used to be affectionately known as the 'Little Chef' lay-by but the 'Eatery' has changed hands several times since then. The Google maps 'screenshot' (**Site B**), facing South, shows the layby, beyond which (white Asterisk) was the regular site of var. *trollii*, the 'Wasp' form of our Bee Orchid. Fig. 3 was taken there many years ago.

The site has been plagued with an overgrowth of Melilot (*Melilotus officinalis*) and Brian Laney used to lead annual work parties to try to reduce this, to give the orchids a chance.

A third site of interest to Bee orchid enthusiasts is Taskers' Meadow (**Site C**), adjacent to Stockton Cutting, a Warwickshire Wildlife Trust (WWT) SSSI reserve. In a good year, many hundreds of Bee orchids can be seen in flower. In addition, the best show of Greater Butterfly orchids in Warwickshire, plus four other species of hardy orchid. Nine years ago, I came across the var. *chlorantha* form there (Fig. 4). I felt shocked

when I visited the 'meadow' in May 2020 as the scrub has grown and there is danger that it will soon become a thicket, which will mean an end to many of the orchids there. I contacted WWT and received positive replies. The scrub should be managed via grazing; also work parties of volunteers, physically cutting back the growth. Of course, the COVID-19 pandemic has restricted volunteer activities. Hopefully these will be resumed soon and the orchids will flourish again?



Colin Clay