



Newsletter

May 2023



Committee Members

Since the last AGM where we were in jeopardy of closing the Society, we have formed a new committee and things have gone from strength to strength.

Both Shows were very successful with the Spring event bringing a very healthy profit. On top of that we have 7 new members and have had a full programme of interesting speakers.

However, Malcolm stated that when he took over as Chairman in April 2022 it would only be temporary.

As it turned out temporary became somewhat more permanent at the AGM with the Show Secretary's role added as well but he is going to stand down at the AGM in September.

David Wray has volunteered to take over the Show Secretary role which is a very positive step, but we do still need a couple more people to step forward and take on roles to share the workload of the current committee.

It is not onerous and besides the existing committee are all there to help and whilst Malcolm is standing down, he will still be supporting everything the society does.

So please consider stepping forward as the society cannot function without the committee organising and putting in place all the things that make it such an active and friendly place to be.

Next Meeting

On Saturday 3rd June we welcome Maren Talbot who will give a talk titled "Pleiones and their Culture"

Maren has been involved in the culture of Pleiones for many years and in particular specialising in them when she was running Heritage Orchids and could be often seen at the London Orchid Show and other events.

Pleiones have become a very popular genus with a vast range of colours to suit all tastes.

Her talk is sure to add a great deal to our knowledge so look forward to seeing many of you at the June Meeting.

August Meeting

We will not be holding a meeting in August but as usual we try to arrange a coach trip or event of some kind and this year Malcolm has kindly agreed to invite the Society to his garden and Orchid Collection on Sunday August 6th.

Malcolm has an 18 foot climatically controlled glasshouse set in a third of an acre of garden in rural Oxfordshire.

You will need to make your own way and it is advised that where possible you should car share to reduce the carbon footprint and to reduce any potential parking problems.

Andrea will be putting together a buffet so a charge of £10 per head will be made to cover the cost.

You should arrive from 12.00 with food being available from 1.00.

The numbers will be limited to approximately 20 as there is only so much room for seating etc.

A list will be on the table at the meeting on Saturday 3rd June so get your names down – first come first served.



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

Orchids of Ecuador

Malcolm and Andrea travelled to Ecuador hoping to see many of the 4500 species that make Ecuador one of the countries with the highest orchid species count in the world. As a comparison, the UK has only 54 species. The areas they visited are not holiday resort destinations and therefore not many tourists were seen, just mountains and orchids.

Just before orchid hunting began they took a diversion to a famous Machu Picchu in Peru. The first thing that struck them when arriving in Cuzco, was the lack of oxygen which leads to altitude sickness and the array of shanty like buildings. Within the city of Cuzco they visited an Inca city which was built many years ago by locals, very sturdily therefore withstood many earthquakes. Machu Picchu was the only Inca city that the Spanish never found and it was only discovered in 1921 by Hiram Bingham an American Archaeologist. Since then the site has been largely restored, but the buildings have been left roofless.

Evidence of farming and plant breeding has been found showing that the Incas were very advanced and well ahead of the Europeans.

Whilst at Machu Picchu, they saw numerous Begonia plants and Llamas who perform a great job of mowing the grass. Whilst in this area, they visited the local botanical gardens in the hope of seeing some orchids. *Ida fimbriata* was seen growing in clumps next to the road, but the botanical gardens was a disappointment, as none of the vast array of orchids was in flower apart from a large specimen of *Prosthechea vespa*.

After traveling back into Ecuador with all of the border checkpoints and hotel issues behind them, they embarked with serious orchid hunting intentions. At the start they found trees covered in a spectacular deep pink flowers which turned out to be *Cattleya maxima*. Unfortunately, due to widespread cattle grazing much of the forest has been cut down, so much of orchid diversity has been lost. *Erycina pumila* was also found there, a very small plant with big flowers, which is not easy to grow in cultivation.

The overall terrain was made of deep valleys covered with undergrowth and trees on both sides with rivers at the bottom. The rainfall is very high, so herbaceous plants and orchids have ideal conditions for growing very quickly and in abundance. Inside the forest it is dark and very damp. Trees are covered in thick layers of moss and fungi. Amongst the orchids they've seen was *Epidendrum cochlidium* and various *Telipogons* which are notoriously difficult to grow.

Malcolm saw *Telipogon stinae*, *tesselatus*, *andicola* and *hutchinsonii* all growing at about 6 feet from the ground in easy reach of collectors. *Epidendrum lacustre* was seen growing in marshy land submerged in water which is quite unusual.

A number of pleurothalidinae orchids were found

with *Pleurothallis antonensis* being the most common. One of the orchids that Malcolm had never heard of previously was *Fernandezia subiflora*, which was growing on trees covered in moss, bathed in cloud with cattle grazing nearby.

The flowers on this diminutive species are luminescent orange red with a yellow lip and nearly as big as the whole plant. A very large example of *Pleurothallis acuminata* was found across the road along with *Epidendrum suavis*. One of the plants that did catch his eye was a Lilly of the Valley look alike named *Epidendrum minutiflorum* – not fragrant, but a beautiful species. Lots of small *Lepanthes* and *Stelis* species were seen dotted everywhere. He was very pleased to see a very attractive *Oncidium cristatum*, which much to his surprise, was growing on the ground.

Some of the plants seen are not normally recommended for growing in the UK mainly because of their size. *Sobralia rosea* and *virginialis* form very large clumps, grow up to 8 feet with flowers that last less than 2 days. Likewise, *Cyrtorchilum pastasae* has flower stems that can reach 14 feet in length – not easy to bring to a table display!!

On day 11 of the trip, Malcolm spotted the first *Masdevallia wich* was a *Masdevallia guttulata*. This is atypical in that it grows warmer than most of the ones we usually grow in UK. Only one other *Masdevallia* was seen then after – a *hirtzii*. This was a great disappointment as apparently, it was a wrong time of the year for *Masdevallia*.

A large *Vanilla pompona* was found in flower which although known for some time by the locals, had not been seen in flower before for a long time.

Just prior to traveling back to Ecuagenera's Nursery, the group spotted *Phragmipedium besseae* which was a highlight of the trip.

Once at the Nursery, they were able to purchase many plants from the millions on offer - all to be brought back to the UK when Ecuagenera next traveled to London.

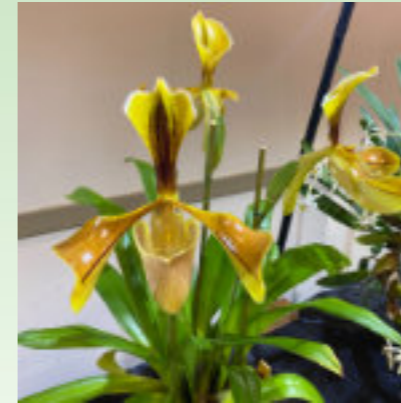
At the nursery they were tempted by: *Dracula marsupialis*, *Macroclinium manabinum*, *Myoxanthus monophylla*, *Phragmipedium besseae*, *kovachii*, *Fritz schomburg*, *Masdevallia Machu Picchu*, *caudata* and *veitchiana*. At the nursery they also tried the local delicacy of roasted Guinea Pigs which Malcolm was not too keen on.

However, on the way back the bus broke down – no need to call the AA when you are at 10,000 feet up in the Andes, so they just had to coax the bus back over the very bumpy terrain.

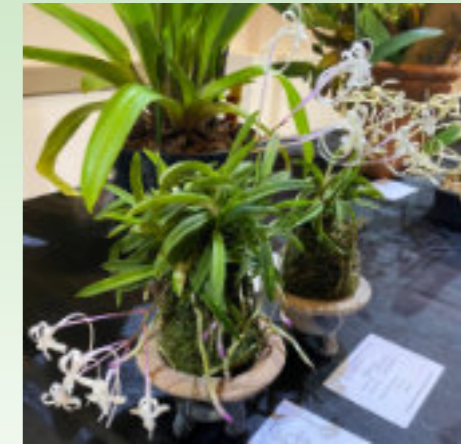
Finally, Malcolm recommended going to Ecuador, as people there are extremely friendly and he reassured anyone who's going that they would have a very good time.

Lina Smalinske

Table Plants



Species *Paphiopedilum villosum*
35pts Malcolm Moodie



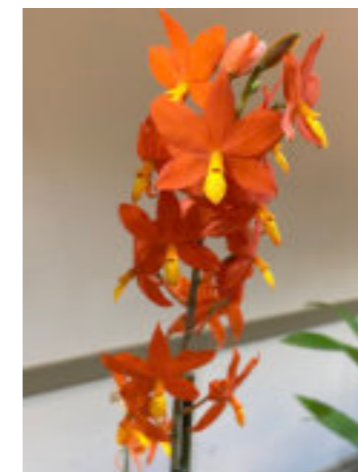
Species *Vanda/Neofinetia homeiden* 30pts
and 29pts Lina Smalinske



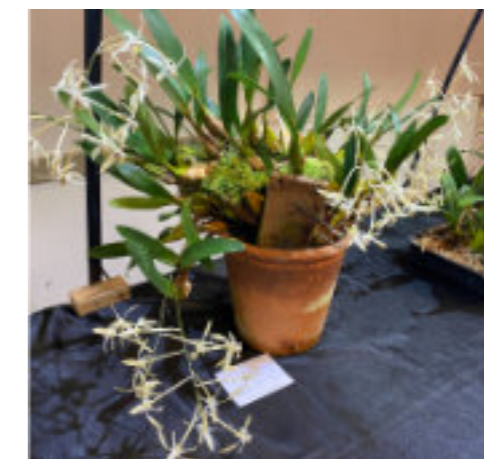
Species *Schoenorchis scolopendra*
27pts Lina Smalinske



Species *Ornithocephallis gladius*
28pts Lina Smalinske



Species *Encyclia vitelina* 30pts
Malcolm Moodie

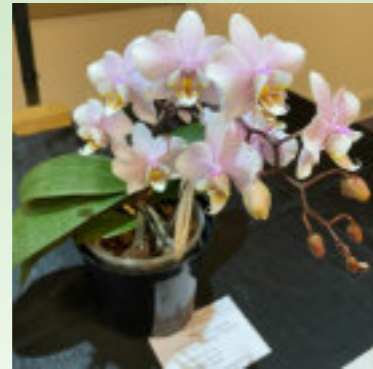


Species *Epigenium cymbidiodes* 32pts Pat Bussy

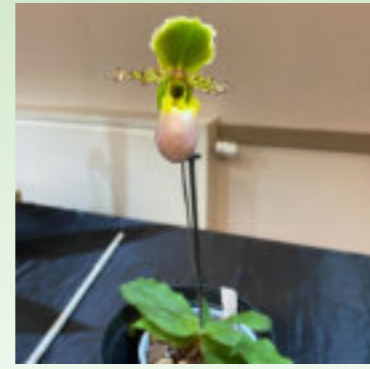
Table Plants



Species *Phragmipedium humboldtii* 36pts Malcolm Moodie



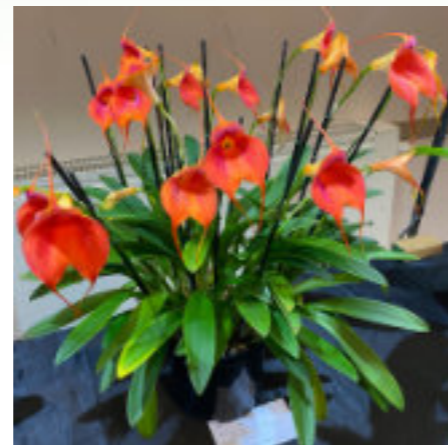
Windowsill *Phalaenopsis Pinlong Cherry* 29pts John Choong



Windowsill *Paphiopedilum Pinocchio* 24pts George Mayers



Hybrids: *Coelogyne William Micholitz "Burnham"* 31Pat Bussy



Hybrid *Masdevalia Angelheart x Goldengate x vietchiana* 36pts Malcolm Moodie

New Member

Welcome to Jill Gauder who has rejoined the society after a number of years of absence. It is great to see her back.

Malvern Tickets

For those who have ordered tickets for the Malvern International Orchid Show they will be available for collection at the June meeting – See George.

July Meeting

Don't forget there is no meeting in July. The next meeting at St. George & Theresa's is on Saturday 2nd September when we have our AGM and Plant Auction.

Janet's Orchid Walks



Adder's Tongue Fern



Early Purple Orchid



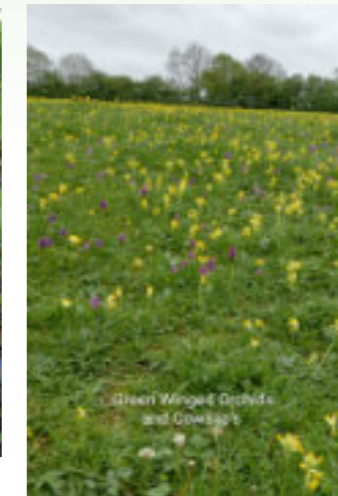
Green Winged Orchid



Twayblade



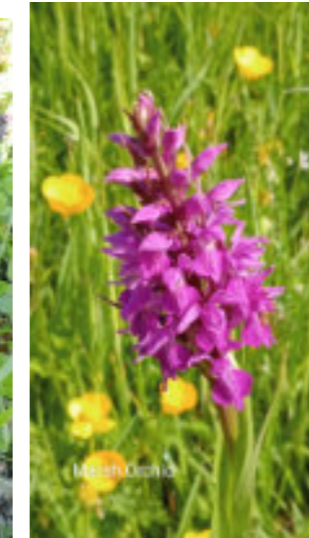
Early Purple Orchid



Green Winged and Cowslips



Herb Paris



Marsh Orchid



Green Winged Orchid

As usual at this time of year, we have been out looking for wild Orchids, Snitterfield was first with the Early Purples, where we found 20 flower spikes, then to Draycote Meadow's, where we were met with an amazing sight, the field full of, Green Winged Orchids, in many shades including white, and Cowslip's, this was followed by finding the White Helleborine *longifolia*, in flower earlier than usual, I also found twayblade and Marsh Orchids at Marsh Lane Nature Reserve, which is permit only, we also found other rare plants, like Herb Paris and Adders Tongue Fern. I have tried putting the names on the photos, I hope it is