



# Newsletter

## November 2023



# Christmas Meeting next up!

**Our next meeting will be the hotly anticipated Christmas Party and Show on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2023.**

Please note the earlier start time of this meeting with the hall opening from 1pm as we do not have a committee meeting prior to the party.

The schedule and entry form for the show is attached to this newsletter. If you can, please email or text entries to David Wray in advance ([wraydavid565@gmail.com](mailto:wraydavid565@gmail.com) or 07853 337976) but if not, bring along entries on the day. We would encourage everyone to give it a go.

Entries need to be in place by 1.45pm to enable judging. We would encourage all members of the society to bring along their orchids for the show. There will be prizes for Best Species, Best Hybrid, Best Novice, Best in Show and Most Points in Show. We will also be presenting the Trish Carney Memorial Trophy for our unsung hero of the year.

Please do bring along some treats for our Christmas buffet table.

Last year thanks to everyone's generosity we were all able to enjoy a wonderful feast and we hope to be able to do that again this year.

We will be drawing for the Christmas hamper(s) which are kindly put together by Janet James from all the donations from our members. If you would still like to contribute, please bring along food or drink items for inclusion to the December meeting.

Any member who donates an item for the hamper receives a raffle ticket for the prize draw.

There will also of course be our normal raffle.

## Cymbidium for Auction

We were very lucky to have been donated two very large Cymbidiums that unfortunately need to find new homes due to a bereavement.

Fortunately, the family did not want them thrown away and are keen for an Orchid Grower to carry on the task of growing and flowering these wonderful specimens.

One of them has already found a new home and hopefully, will produce a similar abundance of flower as can be seen in the attached picture.

As our Xmas Show and Members Buffet are just around the corner we thought it would be a good



idea for this Cymbidium to be auctioned on that Saturday.

So if you are interested please send me your bids in advance (Minimum Bid £10). You never know you may be going home with an extraordinary specimen.

Please send bids to Malcolm at [LaeliaM@aol.com](mailto:LaeliaM@aol.com)

Look forward to receiving your bids and an exciting auction along with all the other excitement in a week or so's time.

See you on the 2nd December. [Malcolm Moodie](#)



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



If you have any pictures or information you would like to put on our website please email: [lina\\_sala@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:lina_sala@yahoo.co.uk) or copy and pictures for newsletter: [ballm1@mac.com](mailto:ballm1@mac.com)  
Society email address: [www.solihullorchidsociety.co.uk](http://www.solihullorchidsociety.co.uk)

# A journey through the Americas

Phillip Seaton

At our November meeting, the club was treated to an excellent talk by Philip Seaton. Philip took us on a journey through the Americas, illustrating conservation challenges that affect the many thousands of Orchids that call this part of the world home.

We began in Florida, with the Florida Ghost Orchid. Interestingly, this is a leafless orchid that relies on its roots for all photosynthesis. It is at risk of decline through sea levels rising and poaching. The plant population has been studied to identify where seedlings are, what fragrance and nectar the orchid produces and what it is pollinated by. It was found to be pollinated by a species of moth, confirmed by a spectacular photograph with the pollinia attached to the head of the moth. With all the information gathered, it has now been possible to propagate large numbers of this orchid by growing it on sacking of all things.

After Florida, we headed to Mexico, an area rich in orchids due to its mountainous habitat. We first looked at *Prosthecia karwinski*, a plant that grows commonly on Oaks in the area. It is commonly found at local flower markets and also used in traditional medicine, areas that show its value to the local community.

We also heard how *Laelia anceps* is a quite a variable plant that is probably more properly classified as multiple species, such as 2 variants of *Laelia dawsonii*. One of these is only in existence due to local cultivation as it is extinct in the wild. Philip is lucky enough to have one of these rare variants in his collection.

There was a brief stop in this virtual tour at Guatemala. Here, as in many countries in South America, deforestation due to the logging industry is a large issue. This country has a wide variety of Pleurothallids, which local volunteers have been saving from fallen trees to try and preserve them.

In Costa Rica, Philip demonstrated how orchids are often found growing alongside bromeliads and lichens. These large bromeliads collect lots of water within their leaves. The effect of this on a large scale raises the localised humidity in the canopy quite considerably, a technique that Philip has used with success in his own greenhouse. I might have to stick to gravel trays so I don't get in to trouble for having even more plants!

Philip also showed us an impressive picture of a *Sobralia* growing up in the canopy. This shows that terrestrial orchids can catch us out sometimes.

After seeing some *Cattleya mossiae* in Venezuela, we continued down the Andes to the highly biodiverse Colombia. Historically huge quantities of *Odontoglossum crispum* was exported from here to Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Albert Millican, the orchid hunter leading these expeditions, had the attitude that everything would grow back in the tropics. However, he proved to be wrong on this and hopefully attitudes have shifted somewhat since then, although perhaps not as much as they should.

We looked at the region of Antioquia, which is contains over a thousand orchid species.

Reserves in this area are trying to link up and protect this precious habitat, the home several *Lepanthes* species. This work highlights the importance of conserving trees if you wish to conserve orchids, as there is evidence that *Lepanthes tibouchinicola*, for example, may only grow on a specific tree species.

Magnolias are also very diverse in this region, which means these trees are important to preserve. Engagement with communities through murals and other methods is essential in getting local assistance. A good example of this is further south, where local people are planting orchids directly on the remaining trees and a local art competition has helped promote the cause further.

Nearby in La Palma is *Telipogon diabolicus*, which is only known from a handful of plants that are now all too near to a road. This makes the risk of poaching high.

On to Ecuador next, where orchids are still abundant due to the high elevations making the temperature more forgiving of an equatorial region. Malcolm's talk earlier in the year, of course, provided us with much detail of this area. This country has many contrasting habitats, including the Rio Napo, which is home to *Phragmipedium pearcii*, and the highly endangered tropical dry forest, containing *Cattleya maxima*. Philip used these two examples to illustrate how it is beneficial to grow dryer orchids higher in a greenhouse and wetter orchids lower down, to make best use of the typically different humidities at these different sites.

Our penultimate stop was the Atlantic rainforests of Brazil, that remain at a fraction of their former size. These are much more biodiverse than the larger Amazon as their smaller size causes more variety in growing conditions. These forests contain so called hanging gardens of bromeliads. Many orchids in this region are pollinated by Euglossine bees. Some male bees use *Stanhopeas* to perfume themselves to make themselves extra attractive to the ladies. If I'd only known that some years ago, perhaps I would have just rubbed myself in a *Stanhopea* and saved a lot of time and effort in courting Grace!

On a more serious note, there is a lot of evidence in this region of orchids being poached from reserves as well as the unprotected forest. Many of these plants are destined to buyers in Europe. It really brings to attention how careful we all must be when buying plants as consumers and collectors. If we are interested in conserving orchids, we must begin by ensuring we are not contributing to their illegal removal from the wild.

Our final destination was Chile. Here we saw people saving *Bipinnula fimbriata* from being built on by removing them to a safe location - another challenge facing these stunning plants.

Philip finished by showing how the scheme run by Salva Montes where you can adopt a magnolia is an effective way that we can support conservation efforts.

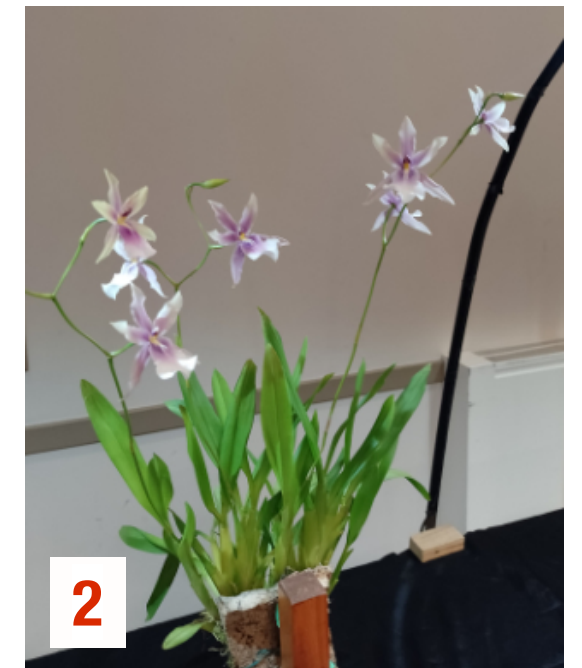
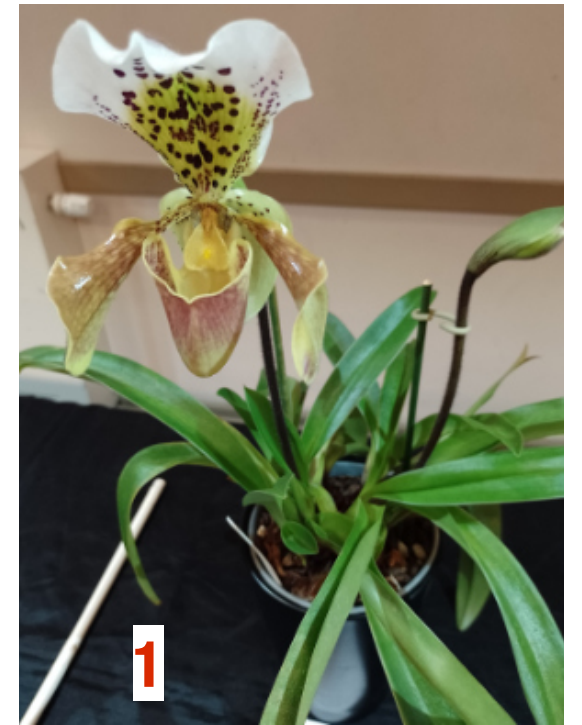
The Society extends its thanks to Philip for an informative and well-presented talk

George Mayes

## Call for budding writers

We are looking for club members who would like to volunteer to write up the orchid talk from each meeting for our monthly newsletter. Our speaker programme includes 6 talks per year which are then written up for the newsletter.

This role could be split between multiple members of the club, for example, with three members writing up two talks each throughout the year. If you would be interested in helping out with this, please email our chairwoman Grace Mayes here: [gew30@outlook.com](mailto:gew30@outlook.com)



## November Table

1. Hybrid -  
*Paphiopedilum*  
American Hybrid  
Graham Jones

2. Species -  
*Miltonia regellii*  
Keith Bates

3. Windowsill -  
*Oncidium* Hybrid  
Liz Kirk

