

The Hardy Orchid Society *Newsletter*



No. 16 April 2000

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Enclosed with this Newsletter: Application Form for the Spring Meeting

Cover illustration: *Orchis morio* by Sarah Marks

Bargains for Members

Two special offers that you cannot afford to miss—or how to make the AGM profitable as well as pleasurable!

And the first is.....

A one off opportunity to purchase back numbers of the HOS Newsletter at a special reduced rate. Due to increasing pressure on the floor space in the Newsletter Editor's front room, copies of Issue 8 onwards will be available at the AGM at a never to be repeated price of £1.00 each instead of the usual £2.50.

So take advantage of this offer, be kind to friends not able to get to the meeting and buy on their behalf and check the contents list on the website to spot those articles you need.

(Issues 1-7 are still available but are rare and precious so are still full price).

And the second is.....

The Genus Pleione by Phillip Cribb and Ian Butterfield.

A reminder of the Members Book Offer advertised in the last issue. The Hardy Orchid Society has decided to offer members new editions of books which may be of particular interest, at reduced prices.

Written by Phillip Cribb, Curator of the Orchid Herbarium at Kew, and Ian Butterfield, a nurseryman awarded gold medals at the Chelsea Flower Show for his work in breeding, raising and displaying Pleiones, this is the first fully comprehensive account of their biology, classification and cultivation. A comprehensive listing of hybrids registered to date is provided, together with a cultivation calendar which experienced growers and novices will find invaluable. Highly authoritative, richly illustrated with 72 colour pictures and line drawings, 18 full-page colour plates and 18 maps, **The Genus Pleione** is a book professional botanists, orchid growers and alpine gardeners should not be without.

165pp 254 x 184mm Hard cover and dust jacket. ISBN 983 812 022 7

RRP £33.00

Special price to HOS members – £27.00 if collected at a Society meeting, or add £3.00 for postage and packing within the UK.

Please write enclosing your cheque made payable to the Hardy Orchid Society, if collecting please advise where you will collect from, to :-

Mr N. Heywood, New Gate Farm, Scotchey Lane, Stour Provost, Gillingham, Dorset, SP8 5LT

Why not collect one at the AGM?

Spring Meeting, 2000 **Colin Clay, Meetings Secretary**

The next meeting will be on Sunday 7th May 2000 at Pershore & Hindlip College, near Pershore and incorporates the eighth Annual General Meeting (AGM) and the Spring Show.

Nominations are invited for officers and committee posts. The following positions will become vacant at this meeting – Vice-Chairman, Membership Secretary, Show Secretary and Treasurer plus an ‘ordinary’ committee member to pursue Publicity. All nominations for the committee should be received by the Hon. Secretary 14 days prior to the AGM (if possible), with the names of a proposer, a seconder and the consent of the nominee. Nominations have already been received for some of these posts but **do** apply if you are interested. In the event of no nominations for an office being received, nominations shall be accepted from the floor.

Please bring your competitive entries for the Plant Show (see next article in this Newsletter for Plant Show schedule), also there should be room to display any other orchid-related material you would like to exhibit (Please forewarn us of large amounts or posters etc.).

Plant Sales tables will follow the usual arrangements - £10 for a whole table or use of space on the Society table (for any member) for a few plants on the basis of 10% of proceeds to the Society. Plants must be clearly labelled with species name, seller's name and price.

A sketch map plus Application Form is enclosed with this Newsletter. Use of the application form is **essential** to give us information on attendance and for catering requirements – lunch, drinks etc. Those not paying for lunch will need to pay a small amount in advance to cover the cost of coffee, tea and biscuits etc. Guests may accompany members but must pay an **additional charge** of £3 – please include them on your application form.

Members are asked to bring their Membership cards with them.

Programme

09.00 Meeting opens: Coffee / Tea, informal chat. Plant Sales Tables open. Staging of entries for the Plant Show and non-competitive materials before 10.00.

10.30 Chairman's introduction followed by the Annual General Meeting

11.30 Orchids of Southern England and their Conservation – Martin Jenkinson

13.00 Lunch

14.00 The Species Recovery Programme from Seed to Plants in the Wild – Margaret Ramsey, RBG Kew

15.00 ... followed by a general 'Open' discussion on Conservation ...

16.00 Tea and informal chat

17.00 Meeting closes.

HOS Millennium Plant Show

Tony Hughes, Show Secretary

Our Annual Plant Show will be held as usual during the Spring Meeting at Pershore. The Rules and Classes are unchanged, but are printed below in case you have lost them. It is all very simple - if you have some hardy orchids that are flowering nicely, we will find a class to fit them in. Don't worry about pot sizes or advance entry - just bring your plants along on the day. We will clear the hall for judging at 10 a.m., so please allow plenty of time before then to stage your entries. Plants should be left on the show bench until the end of the meeting, so that everyone has plenty of time to appreciate them. We are hoping to photograph the winning plants this year for display on the HOS website - winners will achieve world-wide fame!

There should be plenty of room for our usual non-competitive Exhibition so, if you have anything orchid-related that might inspire, amuse, educate or entertain us, please bring it along.

The Hardy Orchid Society - Show Rules

1. ELIGIBILITY All classes are open to all members of the Hardy Orchid Society.
2. ENTRY FEES No entry fees will be payable.
3. SHOW DETAILS Members will be informed in a Newsletter preceding the Show of the closing date for entries, the time by which exhibits must be staged, and the earliest time at which exhibits may be removed.

4. OWNERSHIP OF EXHIBITS All exhibits must have been owned by the exhibitor for at least six months.
5. NUMBER OF PLANTS PER POT Unless otherwise stated, each pan may contain more than one plant, provided all plants are of the same variety. However, when more than one flower spike is present, 'uniformity' will be one of the judging criteria.
6. LABELLING All plants should be correctly and clearly named. However, incorrect or unclear labelling will be considered only in a close competition.
7. JUDGING The judge is empowered to withhold awards where entries are not of adequate standard.
8. PROTESTS Any protest must be made to a member of the Committee within one hour of the opening of the hall after judging. The decision of the Committee will be final.
9. LIABILITY While the Hardy Orchid Society will endeavour to take good care of all exhibits, it will not be liable for compensation for any damage or loss, however caused.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

1. Three pots native British orchids, distinct varieties.
2. Three pots native European (non-British) orchids, distinct varieties.
3. Three pots non-European orchids, distinct varieties.
4. One pot native British orchid.
5. One pot native European (non-British) orchid.
6. One pot non-European orchid.
7. One pot *Dactylorhiza*.
8. One pot *Orchis*.
9. One pot *Ophrys*.
10. One pot *Serapias*.
11. One pot *Cypripedium*.
12. One pot, any other genus.

What is *Hardy*? **Richard Manuel**

We may be called the Hardy Orchid society, yet there is no generally accepted definition of exactly what is a hardy orchid. It appears that most people bend the definition to suit whatever terrestrial orchids they want to grow!

As we all know, the main focus of the HOS is European orchids, although those of us who try to grow them usually have at least a few from the USA, Japan, Oz, South Africa and other exotic places. Within the European fold many plants – mainly those of Mediterranean origin – are often accused of not being fully ‘hardy’. So what does this really mean? Would it be fair simply to say that ‘hardy’ means able to withstand any frost and cold that are likely to occur in this country? Maybe, but the reality is not so simple. In fact I would go so far as to say that a definition of ‘hardy’ depends as much on the way they are treated by their owners as the physiological nature of the plants themselves.

Our plants can be divided loosely into summer or winter growing. The first group produce leaves and flowers during the spring and summer, and go to sleep in the winter. This is often termed ‘winter-dormant’, though few of them are actually totally inactive in the winter: *Dactylorhizas* and their relatives make continual, though slow, root growth, and in most others (e.g. *Cypripediums*, *Calanthes*) the new growth buds develop gradually through the late winter. But all this goes on underground, unseen and thus largely out of mind, as well as safe from the winter weather. Thus these plants are usually considered hardy by any criteria and I will not mention them any further – almost.

On the other hand, the “winter-green” plants, which include most Mediterranean orchids, produce leaves during the autumn which remain as a rosette during the winter and develop further and go on to flower in the spring. The leaves, flower stems and roots then die back as the ground dries out in late spring and the only part of the plant that survives during the hot dry summer is the dormant subterranean tuber. Thus it is probably true to say that the only European orchids to undergo a true dormancy are these “Mediterranean type” tuberous species which are dormant in the summer. These winter growing plants are not alone in their unusual habit: many other Mediterranean plants have a similar growth pattern – many bulbs, cyclamen and a number of things that get lumped under “alpines”. For some strange reason, this habit scares people into thinking that they are not hardy – silly really – they must all be pretty tough to grow during even a Mediterranean winter (and 8000+ years ago, when northern Europe was under ice, they must have had “British” type winters in the Med!). Admittedly, their flowers can suffer if exposed to frost but the plants themselves are quite hardy provided a few simple, sensible precautions are taken. I can honestly state that though I have killed plants by care-

lessness, silly mistakes and neglect, I have never had a Mediterranean orchid in my care killed by cold!

So now is the time to stick my neck out and state that, in my experience (and that of a few trusted friends) these Mediterranean orchids can survive nearly everything a normal British winter (I don't mean a mini ice-age!) can throw at them, provided they are under glass, the soil is moist rather than soggy/wet and that the leaves are dry. Just because they come from a warmer climate does not mean they can't take frost. (They do get frosts in the Med! Last winter -10C was recorded one night in Crete, for instance). Provided that we prepare in advance for whatever the weather is going to do during the next couple of weeks there should be few problems. Thus the main concern of the grower must be to keep an eye on that much-maligned institution the weather forecast. Contrary to popular opinion, these are pretty accurate over a week or so of days and certainly give plenty of warning when cold weather is coming. When it arrives be ready, cold alone is not the real problem. But drips of condensation from the roof onto leaves and into pots, combined with very cold conditions, are a real danger, providing a starting point for various rots and diseases. Along with this there is the temptation to keep the greenhouse closed up against what we perceive as unacceptable cold, producing a cold humid stuffy atmosphere, which can be deadly. It is absolutely essential to give as much ventilation as possible during the day, even when temperatures are only just above freezing. The plants will be much happier – and safer – at say 2-4C with good air movement around them, than at 10-12C in a sealed greenhouse with none. So as a general rule, close the greenhouse at night if hard frosts are forecast, but open it during the day, and if you have a fan, now is the best time to use it.

The compost in the pot should not be too wet at this time, just moist is fine. During very cold times the plants virtually stop growing, so need little water, and because of the lack of growth their resistance to fungal infections, etc. is probably reduced, so don't go watering them just before a huge high pressure system settles over the country. Incidentally, if you water from above, try to do so on a breezy day, so that the leaves can dry out along with any water lingering in the rosette (the latter can be blown out using a drinking straw, crude but effective). If the plants have been well "hardened" by good ventilation prior to really cold weather, they will be much better able to cope with it. Should the leaves happen to get frosted they may do peculiar things: acquiring translucent spots, blackening, wilting a bit or a lot. The best treatment if this happens is to leave them alone, certainly don't touch or poke them, but perhaps move them to the best position for drying out. Often they recover miraculously – and if they don't the plant will be all right, just not so pretty as before.

Having said all this, my personal preference is to keep the greenhouse just frost free at night. This keeps the plants growing and reduces the drip problem. With

several thousand plants to look after, it also helps me sleep at night! After all, the amount of fuel this uses, on a yearly basis, is very small and well worth the peace of mind. And my flowers are not at risk from frost damage – important if they are used for their natural function of making seed.

One other problem which can arise, is strangely, having plants too dry and killing them by dehydration. This is unlikely to arise with “Med” species as they can be seen to be in growth and thriving, or not. But things like seedlings of *Dactylorhiza* and *Cypripedium* are easily forgotten about in cold weather – “they can look after themselves” –well, they can’t. It is up to the grower of any plants in pots to see that they have sufficient – not too much or too little – water. A long cold spell can suck moisture from them at an alarming rate. So be warned: I have found this out the hard way!

To sum up: keep an eye on the weather patterns as well as the plants, and plan your watering and other management strategies accordingly; don’t believe the doubters who tell you the plants will not survive the winter; and ventilate, ventilate, ventilate.

Disa Uniflora Cultivation **Peter Corkhill**

I first bought a small plant of this species at a HOS event some years ago and it surprised me by flowering in its first summer. Since then I have not known how to treat it and its health has declined gradually so it was with interest that I attended a lecture on *Disa* cultivation at the London RHS Orchid Show given by K H K Woodrich, author of “Growing South African Indigenous Orchids”. This turned out to be a brilliant lecture and I thought it would be a good idea to share the notes I made with other members.

The first thing I learned was that *Disa* is pronounced “dye-za” and not “dee-sir” and then we got down to the useful information.

The plants remain green all year but require a light resting period after flowering ie in July to September in the UK, and in South Africa there are two cultivation methods in use:-

1. The Hydroponic method:- make a flow bench using wood lined with polythene. Water depth on the bench is 2 to 3 cm and pots stand on plastic mesh so water circulates beneath them and drains into a small reservoir - then pump the water round continuously with a small aquarist’s pump, add fertilizer to

200 micro-Siemens and change water every 2/3 months. Maintain these conditions all year.

2. Dry method - Pot in plastic and stand on benches, water 2/3 times a week. Compost comprises a mix of sphagnum moss 1/3 and pumice or seramis or coarse silica sand (Cornish grit) 2/3.

The water quality in nature is quite acid down to PH 4.5 or 4.6 and very low in nutrients due to the sandstone rocks. In cultivation your rain water can be acidified with a little dilute sulphuric acid. Most important is that any fertilizer given must be very weak and the total dissolved solids should not exceed 200 micro-Siemens. In nature plants are sometimes submerged for up to 2 months but the water is very active and oxygen rich. Keeping pots in standing water can lead to problems especially when the old root system starts to decay after flowering.

Seed-pods develop quickly and in South Africa propagation is from green pods ripened for only 20/30 days. Seeds can even be ripened on cut flowers kept in water (with the correct PH and strength of fertiliser) if it is changed regularly. In nature seeds germinate and develop quickly so the small plantlets are anchored into the substrate and not washed out to sea in floods. Seeds are flaked either onto sphagnum moss or into sterile conditions using quarter strength modified Murashige & Skoog medium (I have full details of this mixture if anyone needs them). Germinate in light and replant at 7 to 10 seedlings per flask and grow on until large leaves fill the jar.

When weaning trim leaves and some roots to half their length as this reduces water loss by evaporation/transpiration and when new leaves grow they are adapted to the new reduced humidity. Roots formed on agar will not elongate in compost so trimming encourages new root formation. Seedlings require more shade than adult plants when weaning.

Let the new growth develop well on seedlings and wait until this is starting to die back before potting on (early winter). In spring plants start into rapid growth building up to flowering. In South Africa seedlings are potted



Disa sp.
(Photo by Tony Hughes)

into compost which has been sterilised and no attempt is made to introduce or consider symbiotic fungal partners.

In nature the plants are kept moist all year on Table Mountain by growing in close proximity to water in natural gorges and artificial aquifers where they have colonised. Plants typically occupy small soil pockets within a foot or two of flowing water or on rock faces which are naturally irrigated. Further moisture in the natural habitat is provided by the summer “table cloth” of cloud which Table Mountain attracts on a daily basis.

Temperature range in the wild is from 6/7C in winter to 25C in summer though there are short bursts down to 2/3C and exceptionally up to 40C. Typically the day time/night time range is 9C throughout the year.

Requires good air movement in cultivation to prevent rots. In South Africa shade houses are used with open ventilation all round and this is supplemented by fans to increase air movement. Polycarbonate roofs prevent direct rain from lodging in the crowns and from rots.

Notes on deciduous *Disa* species:-

In the main these come from an area with dry summers and wet winters and should respond to Mediterranean orchid cultivation methods.

During the summer dormant period, tubers are removed from their pots and kept in paper bags to ensure they dry totally rather than rot - you can also see when the new shoot starts into grown and hence when to pot. At potting take care not to damage the single growth eye as this is not replaced.

Pot when growth starts using a mixture of composted pine bark and coarse lime free sand. A similar mix to the *Paphiopedilum* seedling mixture available from Ratcliffes’ Orchids would do. Top with coarse grit to prevent the surface drying out. Make sure your plastic pot has plenty of drainage holes then use a piece of shade net to prevent the fine compost running out. Shade net also prevents insects, etc. gaining access.

Keep compost moist at all times when in growth. Do not allow to dry out or this will cause the root tips to die back. Roots are brittle, so don’t disturb when in growth.

Plants are winter green, flowering in spring after which the foliage and old tuber shrivel in preparation for the 2/3 months dry resting phase.

Show Success with Hardy Orchids

Mike Powell

Fellow HOS members may be interested to know of my success with hardy orchids at a “mainstream” orchid show. On Saturday 26th February I included a group of hardy terrestrials among my entries at Bournemouth Orchid Society’s Spring Show. I entered *Spiranthes cernua*, *Pterostylis curta* and *Ophrys tenthredinifera* to make a group of three mixed species. The *Spiranthes* had four spikes of which three were fully open; the *Pterostylis* had twenty one spikes with fourteen hoods open in an eleven-inch pan, and the *Ophrys*, originally intended to be a pot of three, had two plants up, one sulking and only one in flower. Fortunately the plants were big enough to more or less fill the pot, if a little lopsidedly, and the flowering plant looked pretty good with a sturdy six-inch spike of four flowers, two of which were fully open and perfectly placed one above the other. All the leaves on both plants were as clean as a whistle. To be honest, I only entered the *Ophrys* because two other orchids had failed to flower in time for the show and I needed it to make up the numbers.

Although I was happy with the exhibits I was surprised by the interest they generated even during the staging. Displays of hardy terrestrial orchids are not especially common in mainstream orchid societies. The *Ophrys* and *Pterostylis* were especially admired (and coveted). However, when the judging was over I was amazed to see that my little group of three had won a First in their section and a Cup for best Group of Three Species, and the *Pterostylis* had been awarded a Cup for Best Individual Species in Show, and an award for Cultural Excellence. This made my day, and far exceeded what I had ever expected or hoped to win. Another HOS member who saw the display suggested I might like to tell other members about it. Hence this article.

Apart from my own satisfaction, some useful spin-offs have come out of this tale. First, it shows other growers that it is possible to obtain and to grow these hardy orchids successfully. Most growers know they exist but do not know how to acquire them, or lack confidence in growing them. There is a feeling that they are generally hard to grow and difficult (and expensive) to obtain. Success like this spreads the word that it can be done without undue difficulty, and to Show standard. At least one grower, with far more skill and experience than me, said that after seeing the exhibit he felt confident to have another try. I hope my exhibit and success may encourage people to buy hardy orchids from reputable sources and have a go themselves. Second, it has generated interest in the HOS. I have been asked to write some articles for the BOS newsletter on how to grow terrestrials and shall be “plugging” the HOS in them. Which, thirdly, may motivate some people to take more interest in hardy orchids in the wild, to go on field trips and to get in-

Finally, some brief cultural details may be of interest. All the hardy exhibits were grown in Seramis based composts with added bark and limestone chip, and all were to varying degrees grown outside in cold frames with no heat at all. The *Ophrys* has grown and flowered entirely outside. The *Pterostylis* and *Spiranthes* stayed outside till the flowers appeared and then came into a cool shady greenhouse with the *Calanthes* to give the flowers a little gentle forcing, and some protection from frost and wind damage. This year I decided to grow all my hardy orchids “cold and bright” and they seem to have benefited from this treatment in improved vigour, and quantity and quality of flower. They would certainly appear to be a lot hardier than hitherto suspected!

Visit To New England, 24 May - 4 June, 1999

Sarah Marks

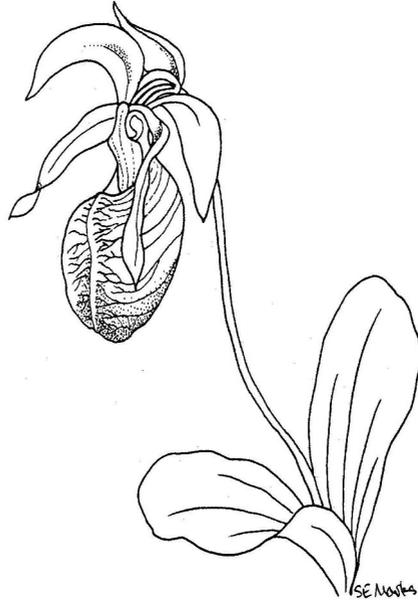
Our trip to the east coast of America last year comprised two days in Virginia, visiting family, a week in Connecticut and two days in New York State visiting friends. We managed to fit in some successful orchid hunting, especially in Virginia, as we timed our trip to coincide with the flowering of *Cypripedium*.

Our first day in Virginia involved a drive south from Charlottesville down the Blue Ridge Parkway. We stopped at the Rockfish Gap Tourist Information Centre and found some botanical information indicating the presence of pink and yellow slipper orchids in the area. One of our stops was to look at some *Tradescantia* I had spotted on the verge at the roadside. Trev commented on how ideal the conditions were at the top of the bank for *Cypripedium acaule* and without drawing breath between, mentioned that he could see one. We were quite chuffed as it was before midday on our first day and found two more perfect specimens close by as we scrambled up the bank. No more orchids appeared during our rather spectacular walk up the side of Crab Tree Falls, but we found a rather charming *Aristolochia* with yellow and brown flowers shaped like strange wind musical instruments that would make an interesting alternative to Clematis in the garden. (If anyone knows of an outlet for this, please let me know!)

The Shenandoah Skyline Drive was our chosen road for day two taking us north along the Appalachians covered by beautiful untouched mature woodlands. We enjoyed the sense of solitude compared to our crowded little island back home - the population density in that part of the States is a tenth of that here in England. We found a very helpful ranger in a visitor centre who directed us to a site of *Cypripedium pubescens* on a local trail. We found a group of three, slightly past their best, flower spikes beneath a fallen tree. The flowers were larger than we expected and the petals had a dozen twists in the falls. On the other side of the tree was a clump of *Trillium grandiflorum* and on looking round for more, spied one perfect

flower spike of *Cypripedium pubescens* luminescent in the dark shelter of the fallen tree foliage. We really thought our luck was in when we continued on the recommended trail and found three perfect spikes of *Cypripedium parviflorum* inches from the side of the path. On our return journey near a rather fine dark form of *C. acaule* we identified some leaves of a rattlesnake orchis (*Goodyera*) not due to flower until the end of the summer, although remains of the previous year's spikes were still evident.

Our only sighting of orchids during our stay in Connecticut was a sad and dried up *C. acaule*, but it was so hot - well into the 90s during the day. We were often fooled by the leaves of the False Helleborine standing nearly a metre tall in large clumps, looking suspiciously like leaves of a slipper orchid. The woods were far too dense to wander too far from the trails. We tried it once but had visions of emerging in a different State three weeks later! Nevertheless, we enjoyed walking in the woods and experiencing the wildlife; chipmunks squeaked disapprovingly at us before disappearing into log piles and the extraordinary bird songs, one of the most eerie of which was possibly the Mourning Warbler whose haunting call added to the rich versatility of these majestic woodlands. It was quite an experience to feel a part of this ecosystem - all senses stimulated - sounds, smells and sights were far removed from our normal expectations. We had sightings of the Northern Cardinal and Scarlet Tanager; birds which are so exotically red, it's unbelievable that they can survive in the wild!



Cypripedium acaule
(Drawing by Sarah Marks)

We moved on to New York State and on our final day visited The Garden in the Woods, just outside Boston, owned by the Wild Flower Society. This area was purchased because of the *Cypripedium acaule* population. We were not disap-

by the many beautiful sightings of *C. acaule* in dappled shade and, as with all orchids, enjoyed the diversity of colour making each plant and flower an individual. There was a *C. reginae* seedling in a newly planted area which looked a long way from flowering size and *C. kentuckiensis* in flower was for sale at \$100 in the garden centre. When we found a boggy area and saw that the *Pogonia* were only just coming into flower, we realised that we were a little too early to see them flowering in the wild, even if we had found the right conditions for them. We had not found any boggy areas during our walks, only dry woodlands or swamps, but we were content with the slipper orchids we had found, which had been the main orchid objective of our visit to the States.

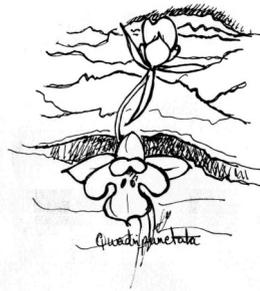
Orchid Magic

Sylvia Temple

Orchids and landscape

⊗ Common Spotted Orchids with an infinite variety of purple patterns on pale flowers;
⊗ chirpy Pyramidals in all shades of mauve and purple;
⊗ Marsh Helleborines glimmering mysteriously in the dusk – after a few trips around British nature reserves with Bill I began to get interested in orchids. Then we went to Crete – the op art patterns of *Ophrys cretica* won me over completely.

In drawing and painting terrestrial orchids I am aiming for a personal, stylised, interpretation of the plants within their landscape; for example the delicate lines of *Orchis quadripunctata* and *O. anatolica* or the clownlike faces of Burnt Tip Orchids. Some of the backgrounds I have used so far can be categorised as ‘day’ or ‘night’. The ‘day’ backgrounds are reds, oranges and purples; for example the shapes of jagged mountains and fir trees in the Alps or layer upon layer of Cretan mountains overlapping each other endlessly into the distance. I have used a flat picture plane with little perspective in order to concentrate on the design qualities. The ‘night’ paintings aim to show shapes and outlines of orchids appearing and disappearing in a dim, rather dreamy light that is not intended to be naturalistic.



Orchis quadripunctata
(Drawing by Sylvia Temple)

So far I have been using acrylics paints for my orchidaceous landscapes as I like their strong, clear colours and the challenge of using them. I had been experiment-

ing with acrylic paints around the time I began to get interested in orchids. Acrylics are very different from the oils, gouache and pastels that I had used at art college and subsequently. Acrylic paints can be diluted in water and dry quickly to an impervious finish. They are painted on specially prepared paper or board. Care needs to be taken when mixing acrylics as the colours, so intense when squeezed from the tube, can go muddy. I have used 3 coats of paint with a gloss medium to give a sheen to the backgrounds of the 'day' paintings. Iridescent White acrylic gives a pearly effect to the whites and lately I have been experimenting with Antique Gold acrylic with the aim of developing the mystery and symbolism of the paintings.

Painting terrestrial orchids has combined my previous experiences of flower painting for fabric design and painting landscapes out-of-doors in various places during my life. The variety of flowers and habitat with the endless ways they could be expressed aesthetically seems to ensure a good supply of subjects and enjoyment.

Note from Ed.

More examples of Sylvia's work can be seen on her website : <http://fp.wtemple.co.uk>, and in the front cover of Issues 11 and 14 of the HOS Newsletter.

Orchids on the Internet

Simon Tarrant

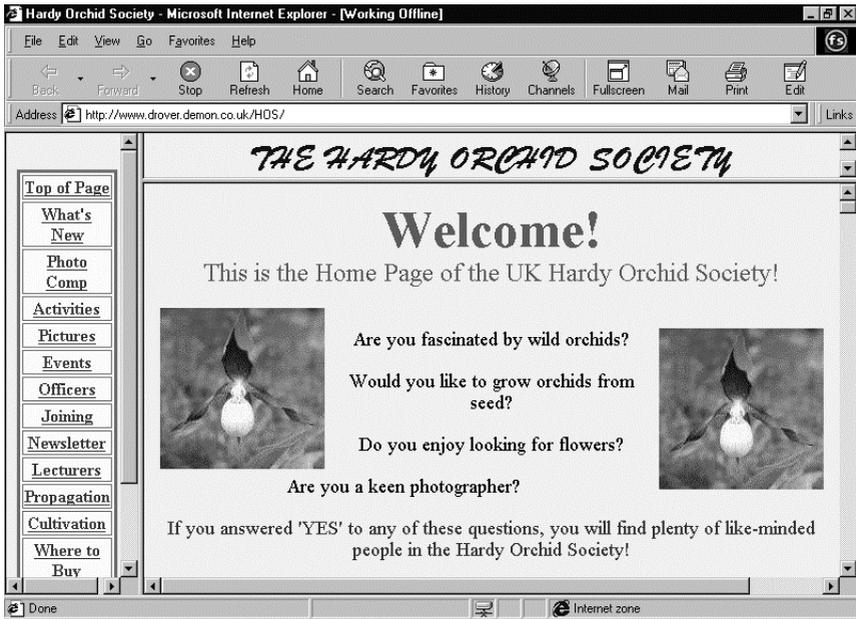
Back in Newsletter No. 8 in April 1998 Bill Temple listed some websites of interest to hardy orchid enthusiasts, with an invitation to the rest of us to keep each other aware of any sites that may be of interest. Since then the number of orchidaceous websites has increased at a phenomenal rate, and I would like to list just a few of the sites I have found, which are either of interest in themselves, or point the way to other sites which may be worthy of exploration. I should point out that this is a very random selection designed to encourage further investigation, it's not intended to be definitive or to imply my favourite sites. I have chosen to concentrate on the aspects of orchids in the wild and their conservation, but there is also plenty of information available on growing and propagating hardy orchids.

<http://members.xoom.com/eopsite/eophome.htm> is the site of a Dutch orchid enthusiast, Frank Verhart, lavishly illustrated with photographs taken on different orchid hunting holidays in Europe. The range of *Ophrys* and *Orchis* pictures is particularly impressive, but what makes this site outstanding is the really comprehensive set of links that Frank has compiled. This should be a first port of call for anyone seeking information on orchids in the wild anywhere in Europe.

Einer Ludvigsen has been studying the orchids of Denmark for some years, and has

published his results at <http://www.nativeorchid.net/DKObs>. This is an informative site about a region that may not be so rich in orchids as other parts of Europe, but has great relevance to those engaged in conservation work throughout Europe.

Also of interest to conservationists is the Polish site <http://www.rosputa.topnet.pl>, which details the plight of a species-rich peat bog near Augustow in north-east Poland. It contains over 40% of the Polish orchid flora, including the last known site for *Herminium monorchis* in the country, but unfortunately is threatened with imminent destruction to make way for the Via Baltica – a superhighway being constructed from western Europe to the Baltic states. The text is in Polish, but an English version is promised.



<http://www.multimania.com/orchidee> is a website created by Pascal Pernot in France. He has devised a slideshow of Orchids of Sardinia, with around sixty images in thumbnail form, with a zoom option if you want the detail.

The Hardy Orchid Society's equivalent in Italy is GIROS, the *Gruppo Italiano per la Ricerca sulle Orchidee Spontanee*. Their website is in the throes of being updated at present, but is still able to provide information on Italian orchids and their conservation. It's at <http://astr17pi.difi.unipi.it/Orchids>.

The Internet has proved enormously popular among the North Americans, not surprisingly, and given the great distances the orchid hunter can travel looking for plants in the wild, some research on the web is essential before crossing the Atlantic.

One of the most comprehensive websites in Canada is maintained by Kevin Tipson, and is to be found at <http://www.millicentorchids.com/native/oajuly1999.htm>. The site contains a stunning gallery of photographs of Canadian orchids as well as descriptions of habitats, and information about conservation, photography and so on. It also has a comprehensive set of links to other sites (click on the lynx!).

Olin Karch is an enthusiast from Kansas who has a website at <http://www.sunflower.com/~olin/orchids/orchids.htm> which covers exotics, but also describes and illustrates some native orchids from Kansas and other regions in America. At <http://www.sunflower.com/~olin/orchids/europe.htm> he has photographs and descriptions of orchids seen on his holidays in Scotland and elsewhere in Europe.

Photographs form the graphical basis for all of the sites described so far, but Michael Sherman has set up a website, The Ojibwa Artist Naturalist, to display his drawings of North American orchids. <http://SirOrfeo.tripod.com/orchids/index.htm> is the address, and for each orchid Michael gives some habitat information.

Still in America I want to mention http://www.orchids.org/ooc/na_orchids/us_orchids_java.shtml which is a checklist of orchid species occurring in the United States. I haven't checked every state, but this provides species lists for each state, with some non-detailed distribution maps. Again, a number of links are provided.

Our own Bill and Sylvia Temple now have a website including some of Bill's photographs and Sylvia's paintings, with a technical section looking at the morphology of *Dactylorhizas*. It's at <http://fp.wtemple.f9.co.uk>. I was particularly impressed with the speed with which the different pages opened. Some of the sites with a lot of photographs can take a long time to open.

And finally, don't forget the Society's own website, <http://>

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the Membership Secretary



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In the Deep Midwinter David Horsfall

It is said that madness takes many forms and to some the dedicated plant lover exhibits a peculiar form of mental instability, but it does not affect us all in quite the same way.

Imagine if you would the scene in the Austrian Alps. It is February and the whole picture book effect is of snow and ice covering the hills, valleys and fields with soft white billowing folds. Snow, even in Austria is not always like that. It can be hard and icy, soft and slushy or just plain absent. However on this occasion the snow is living up to the Tourist Office's claims and lies deep across the slopes.

The Austrians, German and others are gliding sinuously and competently down the pistes, erect and under full control; they are awe inspiring, especially the three year olds. Enter stage left the archetypal Englishman, the very epitome of the bumbling amateur. Tall and heavy and very short-sighted he attempts to imitate the more fortunate who live in the mountains and ski every year and possibly every weekend. However with skis with a will and a mind of their own, his progress is more a matter of submitting to the laws of gravity and falling down the hillside in a less than controlled fashion.

The inevitable fall occurs at the very worst possible place. The hill suddenly descends towards a steep cliff, and of course the snow chooses this moment to abandon him and turns to ice. The skier is now spread-eagled on the floor, nose a few inches away from the ice, glasses sliding down his nose with more skill than he possesses. At a range of a few inches it is possible for him to see through the ice and examine the tangled and brown remnants of the summer vegetation.

Accelerating gently towards the cliff, scrabbling desperately to stop before the slope runs out and the cliff starts, one would be forgiven for stating that one's life unredeemed before you. But no, this is another madman and all he can think at this time is that this slope is where the *Nigritella nigra* grows in the summer. As I said, not all of us are deranged in quite the same way.

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Autumn Meeting

A provisional date has been booked for Sunday 29th October 2000 at Horticulture Research International, Wellesbourne. The Photographic Competition will be a good opportunity to exhibit your latest images in print or slide format – expose some film now or collect some pixels (if you have converted to digital). There will also be Illustrated Talks and Plant Sales to look forward to.