

ISSN 1649-1173

Pollinia

Volume 6. Issue 2

January 2008

Newsletter of the Irish Orchid Society
IRISH ORCHID SOCIETY

*Nollaig Shona agus
Athbhliain faoi
Mhaise Daoibh.*



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Official Newsletter of the Irish Orchid Society

c/o National Botanic Gardens,
Glasnevin
Dublin 9
Ireland

From the Editor

These days, especially in the modern cities of the “New” Ireland, Christmas has become almost as commercial and glittery as just about anywhere else. In the past, it was brilliantly plain. The baby Jesus was in His crib, Mary and Joseph were on either side of Him, and shepherds with their sheep looked on in adoration.

Back then, the Christmas season in Ireland was filled with laughter, happiness and good will. It is still. Peace to “Men (and Women) of Good Will.” Easier said than done, of course, but desired by most.

Much has changed over the years, but we continue to wish each other a Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year, as I do to all of you.

IOS Member Trudy Lomax wins this issue’s Prize Book for her contribution on our summer trip to Mullaghmore. Next issue’s winner may be you, if you write something.

If you cannot directly contribute, please at a minimum send me your thoughts on what type of publication you would like. Please email me at: editor@pollinia.org

IOS MEMBERSHIP DETAILS

Annual Subscriptions
(renewable June of each year)

- Adult Single 20.00 Euro
 - Family 30.00 Euro
 - OAP/Student* 15.00 Euro
- (*Confirmation of student status required)

Subscriptions for those joining at the Orchid Fayre 2006 are renewable June 2007 (subscription taken as if joined in June)

Cheques or PO made payable to the Irish Orchid Society.

Applications, and other society communications, should be made to the Secretary of the Irish Orchid Society:

**Mary Bradshaw
(Secretary)
Irish Orchid Society
c/o National Botanical Gardens
Glasnevin, Dublin 9.**

Editorial Information

Please send any comments or contributions to the Editorial Staff.

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Contributions of articles, pictures or comments should be sent by email to: editor@pollinia.org or by post to: Laurence T. May, Bellarush, Castlebaldwin, Co. Sligo, Ireland.

POLLINIA (pol-LIN-ee-uh)

The compact packets of pollen found in orchid flowers.

Waxy pollen clumps or grains usually found in the anthers of most orchids; often yellow, distinct, and found under the pollen cap of the column..

Contains male reproductive cells.

Latin *pollin-*, stem of pollen "fine flour, dust"

COVER PHOTOS

FRONT COVER:

Greeting of the Season in Irish, with the lovely *Coelogyne mooreana* "Brockhurst" (see page 21.)

BACK COVER:

Members of the IOS who braved the sun, the blue skies and warm weather on a trip to Mullaghmore. See Page 16 for details. Photo courtesy of IOS member Martin O'Sullivan, Sligo.

THE PLEASURE OF LIVING ALONE

Beop-jeong, a Buddhist monk who thoroughly practices Buddhism's doctrine of non-possession, has written a collection of essays, including one on the value and pleasure of living alone. This publication is the first in five years since his previous essay titled "Letters from a Wooden Hut" was published.

In his words, being alone should not be understood as a narrow sense of living alone far away from people. Talking about the true meaning of being alone, the monk quotes a short sentence from Thomas Merton: "You can be together as much as you are alone" because a human cannot feel his whole existence when being with someone.

Kim Heung-sook writes

"One evening while gathering peppers I was suddenly reminded of an essay by the widely respected monk, "Beop-jeong." He lived as freely as the cloud in a little mountainous cottage, leaving or returning to his hermitage as he wished, until he was presented with a potted orchid.

He took care of the plant well, providing it with the right amount of sunshine and wind. Then one day, he became aware of the fact that he wasn't free as he used to be because of his love of the orchid. He gave it away and retrieved freedom.

THE FLOWERING OF THE STRANGE ORCHID

The buying of orchids always has in it a certain speculative flavour. You have before you the brown shrivelled lump of tissue, and for the rest you must trust your judgment, or the auctioneer, or your good-luck, as your taste may incline. The plant may be moribund or dead, or it may be just a respectable purchase, fair value for your money, or perhaps-for the thing has happened again and again-there slowly unfolds before the delighted eyes of the happy purchaser, day after day, some new variety, some novel richness, a strange twist of the labellum, or some subtler coloration or unexpected mimicry.

Pride, beauty, and profit blossom together on one delicate green spike, and it may be, even immortality. For the new miracle of Nature may stand in need of a new specific name, and what so convenient as that of its discoverer? "*Johnsmithia!*" There have been worse names. It was perhaps the hope of some such happy discovery that made Winter-Wedderburn such a frequent attendant at these sales-that hope, and also, maybe, the fact that he had nothing else of the slightest interest to do in the world.

He was a shy, lonely, rather ineffectual man, provided with just enough income to keep off the spur of necessity, and not enough nervous energy to make him seek any exacting employments. He might have collected stamps or coins, or translated Horace, or bound books, or invented new species of diatoms. But, as it happened, he grew orchids, and had one ambitious little hothouse.

"I have a fancy," he said over his coffee, "that something is going to happen to me to-day."

He spoke -as he moved and thought - slowly.

"Oh, don't say THAT!" said his house-keeper-who was also his remote cousin. For "something happening" was a euphemism that meant only one thing to her.

"You misunderstand me. I mean nothing unpleasant...though what I do mean I scarcely know."

"Today," he continued, after a pause, "Peters' are going to sell a batch of plants from the Andamans and the Indies. I shall go up and see what they have. It may be I shall buy something good, unawares. That may be it."

He passed his cup for his second cupful of coffee.

"Are these the things collected by that poor young fellow you told me of the other day?" asked his cousin as she filled his cup.

"Yes," he said, and became meditative over a piece of toast.

"Nothing ever does happen to me," he remarked presently, beginning to think aloud. "I wonder why? Things enough happen to other people. There is Harvey. Only the other week; on Monday he picked up sixpence, on Wednesday his chicks all had the staggers, on Friday his cousin came home from Australia, and on Saturday he broke his ankle. What a whirl of excitement-compared to me."

"I think I would rather be without so much excitement," said his housekeeper. "It can't be good for you."

"I suppose it's troublesome. Still...you see, nothing ever happens to me. When I was a little boy I never had accidents. I never fell in love as I grew up. Never married...I wonder how it feels to have something happen to you, something really remarkable."

"That orchid-collector was only thirty-six-twenty years younger than myself-when he died. And he had been married twice, and divorced once; he had had malarial fever four times, and once he broke his thigh. He killed a Malay once, and once he was wounded by a poisoned dart. And in the end he was killed by jungle-leeches. It must have all been very troublesome, but then it must have been very interesting, you know-except, perhaps, the leeches."

"I am sure it was not good for him," said the lady, with conviction.

"Perhaps not." And then Wedderburn looked at his watch. "Twenty-tree minutes past eight. I am going up by the quarter to twelve train, so that there is plenty of time. I think I shall wear my alpaca jacket-it is quite warm enough-and my grey felt hat and brown shoes. I suppose--"

He glanced out of the window at the serene sky and sunlit garden, and then nervously at his cousin's face.

"I think you had better take an umbrella if you are going to London," she said, in a voice that admitted of no denial. "There's all between here and the station coming back."

When he returned he was in a state of mild excitement. He had made a purchase. It was rarely that he could make up his mind quickly enough to buy, but this time he had done so.

"There are Vanas," he said, "and a Dendrobe and some Palaeonophis." He surveyed his purchases lovingly as he consumed his soup. They were laid out on the spotless tablecloth before him, and he was telling his cousin all about them as he slowly meandered through his dinner. It was his custom to live all his visits to London over again in the evening for her and his own entertainment.

"I knew something would happen to-day. And I have bought all these. Some of them—some of them—I feel sure, do you know, that some of them will be remarkable. I don't know how it is, but I feel just as sure as if someone had told me that some of these will turn out remarkable."

"That one"—he pointed to a shrivelled rhizome—"was not identified. It may be a Phalaenopsis—or it may not. It may be a new species, or even a new genus. And it was the last that poor Batten ever collected."

"I don't like the look of it," said his housekeeper. "It's such an ugly shape."

"To me it scarcely seems to have a shape."

"I don't like those things that stick out," said his housekeeper.

"It shall be put away in a pot to-morrow."

"It looks," said the housekeeper, "like a spider shamming dead."

Wedderburn smiled and surveyed the root with his head on one side.

"It is certainly not a pretty lump of stuff. But you can never judge of these things from their dry appearance. It may turn out to be a very beautiful orchid indeed How busy I shall be to-morrow! I must see to-night just exactly what to do with these things, and tomorrow I shall set to work.

They found poor Batten lying dead, or dying, in a mangrove swamp-I forget which," he began again presently, "with one of these very orchids crushed up under his body. He had been unwell for some days with some kind of native fever, and I suppose he fainted. These mangrove swamps are very unwholesome. Every drop of blood, they say, was taken out of him by the jungle-leeches. It may be that very plant that cost him his life to obtain."

"I think none the better of it for that."

"Me must work though women may weep," said Wedderburn, with profound gravity.

"Fancy dying away from every comfort in a nasty swamp! Fancy being ill of fever with nothing to take but chlorodyne and quinine-if men were left to themselves they would live on chlorodyne and quinine-and no one round you but horrible natives! They say the Andaman islanders are most disgusting wretches-and, anyhow, they can scarcely make good nurses, not having the necessary training. And just for people in England to have orchids!"

"I don't suppose it was comfortable, but some men seem to enjoy that kind of thing," said Wedderburn.

"Anyhow, the natives of his party were sufficiently civilized to take care of all his collection until his colleague, who was an ornithologist, came back again from the interior; though they could not tell the species of the orchid and had let it wither. And it makes these things more interesting."

"It makes them disgusting. I should be afraid of some of the malaria clinging to them. And just think, there has been a dead body lying across that ugly thing! I never thought of that before. There! I declare I cannot eat another mouthful of dinner!"

"I will take them off the table if you like, and put them in the window-seat. I can see them just as well there."

The next few days he was indeed singularly busy in his steamy little hot-house, fussing about with charcoal, lumps of teak, moss, and all the other mysteries of the orchid cultivator. He considered he was having a wonderfully eventful time. In the evening he would talk about these new orchids to his friends, and over and over again he reverted to his expectation of something strange.

Several of the Vandas and the Dendrobium died under his care, but presently the strange orchid began to show signs of life. He was delighted and took his housekeeper right away from jam-making to see it at once., directly he made the discovery.

"That is a bud," he said, "and presently there will be a lot of leaves there, and those little tings coming out here are aerial rootlets."

"They look to me like little white fingers poking out of the brown," said his housekeeper. "I don't like them."

"Why not?"

"I don't know. They look like fingers trying to get at you. I can't help my likes and dislikes."

"I don't know for certain, but I don't THINK there are any orchids I know that have aerial rootlets quite like that. It may be my fancy, of course. You see they are a little flattened at the ends."

"I don't like 'em," said his housekeeper, suddenly shivering and turning away. "I know it's very silly of me-and I'm very sorry, particularly as you like the thing so much. But I can't help thinking of that corpse."

"But it may not be that particular plant. That was merely a guess of mine."

His housekeeper shrugged her shoulders. "Anyhow I don't like it," she said.

He felt a little hurt at her dislike to the plant. But that did not prevent his talking to her about orchids generally, and this orchid in particular, whenever he felt inclined.

"There are such queer things about orchids," he said one day; "such possibilities of surprises. You know, Darwin studied their fertilisation, and showed that the whole structure of an ordinary orchid flower was contrived in order that moths might carry the pollen from plant to plant.

Well, it seems that there are lots of orchids known the flower of which cannot possibly be used for fertilisation in that way. Some of the *Cypripediums*, for instance; there are no insects known that can possibly fertilise them, and some of them have never been found with seed."

"But how do they form new plants?"

"By runners and tubers, and that kind of outgrowth. That is easily explained. The puzzle is, what are the flowers for?"

"Very likely," he added, "MY orchid may be something extraordinary in that way. If so, I shall study it. I have often thought of making researches as Darwin did. But hitherto I have not found the time, or something else has happened to prevent it. The leaves are beginning to unfold now. I do wish you would come and see them!"

But she said that the orchid-house was so hot it gave her the headache. She had seen the plant once again, and the aerial rootlets, which were now some of them more than a foot long, had unfortunately reminded

her of tentacles reaching out after something; and they got into her dreams, growing after her with incredible rapidity.

So that she had settled to her entire satisfaction that she would not see that plant again, and Wedderburn had to admire its leaves alone. They were of the ordinary broad form, and deep, glossy green, with splashes and dots of deep red towards the base. He knew of no other leaves quite like them.

The plant was placed on a low bench near the thermometer, and close by was a simple arrangement by which a tap dripped on the hot-water pipes and kept the air steamy. And he spent his afternoons now with some regularity meditating on the approaching flowering of this strange plant.

And at last the great thing happened. Directly he entered the little glass house he knew that the spike had burst out, although his great *Phalaenopsis Lowii* hid the corner where his new darling stood. There was a new odour in the air—a rich, intensely sweet scent, that overpowered every other in that crowded, steaming little greenhouse.

Directly he noticed this he hurried down to the strange orchid. And, behold! the trailing green spikes bore now three great splashes of blossom, from which this overpowering sweetness proceeded. He stopped before them in an ecstasy of admiration.

The flowers were white, with streaks of golden orange upon the petals; the heavy *labellum* was coiled into an intricate projection, and a wonderful bluish purple mingled there with the gold. He could see at once that the genus was altogether a new one. And the insufferable scent! How hot the place was! The blossoms swam before his eyes.

He would see if the temperature was right. He made a step towards the thermometer. Suddenly everything appeared unsteady. The bricks on the floor were dancing up and down.

Then the white blossoms, the green leaves behind them, the whole green house, seemed to sweep sideways, and then in a curve upward.

At half-past four his cousin made the tea, according to their invariable custom But Wedderburn did not come in for his tea.

"He is worshipping that horrid orchid," she told herself, and waited ten minutes. "His watch must have stopped. I will go and call him."

She went straight to the hothouse, and, opening the door, called his name. There was no reply. She noticed that the air was very close, and loaded with an intense perfume. Then she saw something lying on the bricks between the hot-water pipes.

For a minute, perhaps, she stood motionless.

He was lying, face upward, at the foot of the strange orchid. The tentacle-like aerial rootlets no longer swayed freely in the air, but were crowded together, a tangle of grey ropes, and stretched tight, with their ends closely applied to his chin and neck and hands.

She did not understand. Then she saw from one of the exultant tentacles upon his cheek there trickled a little thread of blood.

With an inarticulate cry she ran towards him, and tried to pull him away from the leech-like suckers. She snapped two of these tentacles, and their sap dripped red.

Then the overpowering scent of the blossom began to make her head reel. How they clung to him! She tore at the tough ropes, and he and the white inflorescence swam about her. She felt she was fainting, knew she must not. She left him and hastily opened the nearest door, and, after she had panted for a moment in the fresh air, she had a brilliant inspiration. She caught up a flower-pot and smashed in the windows at the end of the greenhouse.

Then she re-entered. She tugged now with renewed strength at Wedderburn's motionless body, and brought the strange orchid crashing to the floor. It still clung with the grimmest tenacity to its victim. In a frenzy, she lugged it and him into the open air.

Then she thought of tearing through the sucker rootlets one by one, and in another minute she had released him and was dragging him away from the horror.

He was white and bleeding from a dozen circular patches.

The odd-job man was coming up the garden, amazed at the smashing of glass, and saw her emerge, hauling the inanimate body with red-stained hands. For a moment he thought impossible things.

"Bring some water!" she cried, and her voice dispelled his fancies.

When, with unnatural alacrity, he returned with the water, he found her weeping with excitement and with Wedderburn's head upon her knee, wiping the blood from his face.

"What's the matter?" said Wedderburn, opening his eyes feebly, and closing them again at once.

"Go and tell Annie to come out here to me, and then go for Dr. Haddon at once," she said to the odd-job man as soon as he had brought the water; and added, seeing he hesitated: "I will tell you all about it when you come back."

Presently, Wedderburn opened his eyes again, and, seeing that he was troubled by the puzzle of his position, she explained to him: "You fainted in the hothouse."

"And the orchid?"

"I will see to that," she said.

Wedderburn had lost a good deal of blood, but beyond that he had suffered no very great injury. They gave him brandy mixed with some pink extract of meat, and carried him upstairs to bed. His housekeeper told her incredible story in fragments to Dr. Haddon. "Come to the orchid-house and see," she said.

The cold outer air was blowing in through the open door, and the sickly perfume was almost dispelled. Most of the torn aerial rootlets lay already withered amidst a number of dark stains upon the bricks. The stem of the inflorescence was broken by the fall of the plant, and the flowers were growing limp and brown at the edges of the petals. The doctor stooped towards it, then saw that one of the aerial rootlets still stirred feebly, and hesitated.

The next morning the strange orchid still lay there, black now and putrescent. The door banged intermittently in the morning breeze, and all the array of Wedderburn's orchids was shrivelled and prostrate. But Wedderburn himself was bright and garrulous upstairs in the glory of his strange adventure.

H.G.WELLS

(Originally published in *Pearson's Magazine*, April 1905).

Irish Orchid Society Website
www.irishorchidsociety.org

THE 19TH WORLD ORCHID CONGRESS

Special to the Irish Orchid Society

The 19th World Orchid Congress will be held in Miami Florida from January 23 to 27, 2008. The theme of the event is: "Orchids – Nature's Masterpiece". Hosted jointly by the Ft. Lauderdale and South Florida Orchid Societies, the event will be held at the newly renovated Exhibition Center of the Sheraton Miami Mart Hotel, which is conveniently located near the airport (MIA). The program will include lectures, workshops, parties and, of course, one of the largest orchid shows and sales in the world.

More than 250,000 persons are expected to attend. Admission is US\$20. The show is being chaired by Robert Fuchs, perhaps the world's most famous grower and hybridizer of Vandas (www.rforchids.com). (A burglary at one of his greenhouses years ago, with the theft of some of his most valuable cultivars, was the inspiration for "The Orchid Thief", by Susan Orlean, later made into the film "Adaptation").

The sub-tropical climate of South Florida, and the Miami area in particular, attracts the largest concentration of orchid growers and hobbyists in the continental United States. Orchid clubs abound in every city and town and there is a great interest in the conservation of the at least 96 species of orchids that are native to Florida. Miami is home to the Coalition for Orchid Species (www.orchidseos.com) as well as the world famous Fairchild Tropical Garden (fairchildgarden.org).

Miami is also home to a large volunteer group called "OrchidMania South Florida", which endows pediatric immunology at the University of Miami through orchid sales (www.orchidmania.org).

Visitors from the IOS will find the late January climate in Miami a delightful respite from the northern winter. There is usually very little rainfall and the temperature averages 24 degrees C.

A sweater or jacket is in order, though, as there can be cool evenings and mornings at that time of the year, especially if there are severe storms in the northern states. A sweater is also handy when entering some buildings that are heavily air-conditioned.

As Miami is located at 26 degrees latitude, travelers should also bring a floppy hat and sunscreen to protect against the strong sun. Extra film or memory cards should also be brought, as the show promises to be a photographer's delight.

The website for the Conference (www.19woc.com) is quite comprehensive and should answer most questions for the visitor. Those planning side trips from the event will need a rental car (alamo.com; avis.com; hertz.com). Some distances from Miami are: Orlando – 400 km; Key West – 240 km and Ft. Lauderdale – 40 km. The Everglades are just outside of the city and tours can be arranged through a travel agent. A trip there takes at least a day.

The five days of the Conference and Show will give orchid connoisseurs and novices alike a wonderful opportunity to admire the stunning orchid displays, discuss a variety of topics related to orchids and network within the orchid community – and – lucky holders of Euros will find irresistible bargains at the show! We hope to see you there.

DAVID A TRUSSELL
MIAMI, FLORIDA

19TH WORLD ORCHID CONFERENCE
JANUARY 23 - 27, 2008 MIAMI, FLORIDA
[HTTP://WWW.19WOC.COM/HOME.HTM](http://www.19woc.com/home.htm)

A CELEBRATION OF ORCHIDS

On Saturday 7th July 2007, the Irish Orchid Society came to Mullaghmore for their 5th Annual Field Trip. Led by Brendan Sayers, and ready to be fed and fuelled by the food and enthusiasm of Ulli Peiler, they arrived in dribs and drabs at the boatyard. A mountain of sandwiches quickly demolished, assorted orchid lovers, and variegated experts, plus two dogs, set out.

It was a beautiful afternoon, blue sky and warm sunshine.

“God loves the Irish Orchid Society” said Ulli, and surely He does, because this has been the worst summer for many years, and this day was one of the best we had. The air was scented with the smell of wild thyme and ladies bedstraw, the ground colourful with the purple of thyme and the yellows of heartsease and yellow wort, occasional clumps of harebells adding nodding blue caps to the mix.

Soon the scented air was thick with the magic of words and phrases such as ‘*Dactylorhiza!*’ ‘Yes, but is it ‘fuchsii’ or ‘maculata’? and ‘*Platanthera bifolia*, a lovely one!’ not to mention shouts of ‘*Gymnadenia conopsea!*’ as several people fell to their knees to catch the heavy vanilla perfume of one of the few scented wild orchids.

Someone points at Brendan Sayers, prostrate, nose to nose with a frog orchid, murmuring happily “*Coeloglossum viride*’ and asks “What’s his name?” – several voices reply “Brendan Sayers, of course” but the questioner says “No, no, I meant his *Latin* name!”

Epipactis palustris, *Listera ovata*, the lovely names roll off the tongue, and I am drunk on the heady mix of discussion by experts of the flowers I have loved since childhood and known only by their common names: Marsh helleborine, Twayblade, Butterfly orchid, Frog orchid and Pyramidal orchid – *Anacamptis pyramidalis* - which jewel the dune, machair* and fen with their bewildering variety of shades ranging from almost white, through dusky pinks and tones of lilac to deep, glowing ruby reds.

Highlight of my day, I spot a pure white orchid, which turns out to be unusual, an albino version of the usually deep red pyramidal orchid.

This is *Anacamptis pyramidalis Alba*. My ambition to discover a really rare orchid comes a little closer....*Anacamptis pyramidalis Alba Lomaxii!* I like that, it has a ring to it!

However, if there is a collective noun for wild orchids, it must be a Bewilderment, because there are so many variations and sub-species, it would make you dizzy.



Anacamptis pyramidalis

des. Two distinct types exist:

A type of sand-dune pasture, subject to agricultural cultivation, which prevails in wet and windy conditions;
The land between a beach and the area where sand encroaches on peat bogs further inland.

‡

Photo of IOS Members — Back Cover Page.

TRUDY LOMAX
Mullaghmore
Co. Sligo

Trudy Lomax will present a Lecture at the Organic Centre, Rossinver, Co. Leitrim on Saturday 5th July. Details in next issue of *Polinia*.

* [Ed.] The Irish word *machair* or *machar* refers to a fertile low-lying raised beach found on some of the coastlines of Ireland and Scotland, in particular the Outer Hebrides.

Little Brook Farm, Stryt Isa,
Pen-y-ffordd, Chester, CH4 0JY
Phone/Fax: +44 (0)1978 762454
E-mail: info@devaorchids.co.uk
Web: <http://www.devaorchids.com>
Chris's Mobile Number :- 0044-7725760993

DEVA ORCHIDS



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STOCK LISTS available September to April. Mail order service to Ireland at cost. Current list (July 2006) is available. Drop a line, email or fax, and we will post one off.

SHOWS. We attend the Irish Garden Heaven Show in June and the Glasnevin Orchid Fair. We are always willing to bring ordered plants to either of these events.

EASY PAYMENTS by Credit/Debit Card, Sterling or Euro cheque, Sterling or Euro cash.

YOUNG PLANT SPECIES. (see our July listing for varieties) Potted in 9cm pots and priced £6 each or 5 for £25. some are flowering sized whilst some may be 3 or 4 years to flower.

Proprietors: A.E. Channon BSc C.D. Channon I.Eng. M.I.Plant E. MBES

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THE IOS WELSH TRIP - A RIPPING TALE!

The eagerly awaited IOS three-day expedition to Wales and the north of England went ahead as planned on November the ninth. Tom Petherbridge single-handedly organised this highly enjoyable event, shepherding the 24 participating Society members all the way.

On arrival in Holyhead we were bussed directly to the nursery of Deva Orchids where our affable host, Chris Channon had kindly laid on hot drinks and all manner of snacks. His home and nursery are idyllically situated in the picturesque Pen-y-ffordd countryside close to Chester.

We descended like a plague of locusts, eye-balling every inch of his stock. The ubiquitous *Burrageara* “Nelly Isler” and *Oncidium* hybrids quickly went, as did his bargain pick of Epidendrums going for a fiver each. But for me it was his white standard *Phalaenopsis* that stole the show.

This class of *Phalaenopsis* hybrid is not to be confused with the smaller sized types familiar to us in the supermarkets. These had imposing flowers about 15 cm in diameter! I then was **struck by what must have been one of the largest Cattleyas I’ve ever seen** with leaves about 60cm in length; alas it was not in flower.

As darkness began to fall, members scurried on to the bus laden with box upon box of plants. We were then transported to our travel lodge accommodations. These were warm, comfortable and serviced by friendly staff. In fairness, travel lodges are really motels designed to cater for passing motorists for a night stop-over, so they are rather isolated from the town and the inadequate local taxi service only exacerbated this.

Personally, I did not care as several of us simply went over to **the nearby Pub restaurant “The Black Lion” which was very cosy indeed.**

IRISH ORCHID SOCIETY
c/o National Botanic Gardens
Glasnevin
Dublin 9



Dear IOS Member,

Following our recent and very successful trip to Wales in November, The North of England Orchid Society (NEOS) have invited us to visit them at Tatton Park on the 7th June 2008.

Seven UK orchid societies will be displaying, with eight to ten nurseries specializing in orchids.

This time we will have our own bus from Dublin to Leeds and back and avoid the long foot trek on and off the boat.

We will be staying in a 3* hotel in the centre of Manchester and will visit a nursery on Friday June 6th and spend the entire day at Tatton Park on Saturday June 7th.

The cost will be between €290/320 depending on the numbers and will cover travel, accommodation and breakfast for the two nights.

We would need to know **in writing only to the Society office** (as above) before Monday 14th January 2008.

If a sufficient number of members are interested then Olwyn Lanigan and I will go ahead and organise the trip.

May we take this opportunity of wishing you a Happy Christmas.

Sincerely Yours
On behalf of the Irish Orchid Society Committee

Tom Petherbridge
Honorary Treasurer
Mobile 087 9308845 FAX 01 8465102
E-mail: tom@misterstainless.com

On the Saturday morning, everyone was bright-eyed and bushy tailed, even Phillipa who was nursing a painful ear infection, and headed out for the coach trip to the North of England Orchid Society (NEOS) monthly show which was being held in the Barton Community Centre, Preston. The journey passed surprisingly quickly and we were frequently entertained by the driver Les, with his gems of information on the sites along the way such as pointing out to us the distant view of Blackpool tower on the horizon.

On reaching the show hall, my first impression was that it was rather small and on entering it was packed with friendly orchid fans of all ages. There were a stunning variety of flowering plants on display, quite an achievement for the time of year. The first commercial exhibitor stall that I called upon was that of David Stead, who was doing a substantial trade. I bought from him a *Dendrobium* **Berry 'Oda'** which is a miniature bright purple flowered *D. kingianum* hybrid with an intoxicating fragrance.

Next along the way were Ratcliffe Orchids who had a marvellous selection of young species plants. Then of course, there was Deva Orchids, with Chris in his element and I know some of us bought yet more plants from him as understandably he had kept back a lot of his best stock for the show. Then there was the hardy orchid specialist, Laneside Alpines. Because most hardy orchids are dormant at this time of year they had nothing much in leaf let alone in flower.

However they were selling many unusual plants including bee orchids at reasonable prices. Finally there was Phoenix Orchids, **who offered an Aladdin's cave of less frequently seen species** such as *Coelogyne granulosa* and *Dendrobium chrysotoxum*, **which I didn't hesitate to snap up. I also couldn't resist getting a handsome** *Laelia purpurata*. The health of their plants was outstanding.

Both the nurseries and the NEOS members had specimen plants on display, which unfortunately were not for sale, this despite my largest doe-eyed attempts towards changing their proud owners minds. Such were the large number of plants on show for judging from the NEOS members, it was possible for them to award prizes for individual orchid genera.

Tom Doran drew my attention to a superb unblemished mature *Psychopsis papilio* colloquially known as the “**Butterfly Orchid**” which had three 15cm flowers, marvellous! Next to it was *Coelogyne mooreana* “**Brockhurst**” which I normally associate with a spring blossom.

Then there was a monstrous clump of a *Dendrochilium* about 1 metre in width with dozens of flowering spikes cascading from it. At the back of a staging, I spied the most magnificent *Laeliocattleya* hybrid with the deepest petunia-purple flowers imaginable.

After the show, we went for lunch in “Owd Nell’s” tavern in Bilsborrow, Preston. A canal side hostelry complete with thatched roof, delicious real ales and dungeons for naughty girls and boys! During the refreshments, John Gay, president of the NEOS stood up to warmly thank us for attending and for the gift to his Society of a Tipperary crystal bowl, thoughtfully chosen by Peg Frost.

Tom Petherbridge mentioned afterwards that John might visit Ireland next year, perhaps to join us on our annual excursion to Bull Island or the Sligo field trip. This would be an honour for us **as he is one of Britain’s most respected orchid growers and a** Royal Horticultural Society judge at the Chelsea Flower Show.

After boarding the bus, we returned to the travel lodges via Chester. Chester, reputed to be the most haunted town in England exudes charm, affluence and history from every brick. The many Tudor-style buildings and the ongoing Roman archaeological excavations exemplified a deeply atmospheric ambience of times past.

Our Saturday night was quiet with a return to the local pub for a meal. However my ambitious fantasy of leading an orchid expedition through the dense mountainous rainforests of Borneo took a knock when I managed to get myself and two other souls lost on the short distance home. Much to the eternal amusement of some!

The next day, Remembrance Sunday, we set off for home. There was a buoyant mood on the bus and it was clear everyone had a great time. On route we stopped in Llanfairpwll and attended the Cenotaph ceremony before last minute shopping and back to the boat.

During the crossing, Tom expressed to me how it would have been better to organise the coach directly from Ireland to eliminate the delays and awkward luggage carrying between the bus stops and the shipping terminus.

However I think I can speak on behalf of everyone that Tom did a fantastic job.

But above all for me was the pleasure of meeting so many of the characters that make up our Society. Until the next time!

SHANE KERR

CURRENT ORCHID NAMES

In the article on the Welsh trip Shane Kerr mentions seeing a plant of *Laelia purpurata* at the nursery of Deva Orchids. The most current name for this species is *Sophronitis purpurata* and it is an often asked question as to why names of plants change so often. It is even a topic that took up much discussion at one of the members evenings earlier this year.

There are many reasons to have plants change name ranging from the discovery that an earlier name exists to the fact that a species may no longer be seen as unique and undeserving of a specific name. However once a name has been correctly published for a species it always remains associated with the species as a synonym.

The most current deluge of orchid name changes has been associated with the latest classification of the family. *Genera Orchidacearum*, a six Volume work, of which four are already published, gathers together all relevant information we have on the genera of the orchid family. The aim is to have groupings of plants that have the same evolutionary path which illustrates their genetic associations and not their similar physical traits that may be deceiving. This 'deceit' is often as a result of flowers taking a form that attracts pollinators and not the fact that they have similar origins.

So let us take a simple but closer look at *Sophronitis purpurata*. The species was first described for science by John Lindley and Joseph Paxton in 1852.

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Why Nero Wolfe Liked Orchids
Great Orchid Books of the Past
Members Q and A
And more...

In scientific journals the authors names in abbreviated form will follow the species name [**Laelia purpurata** Lindl. & Paxton.]. Two years later it was published as *Cattleya purpurata* by the Austrian Johann Georg Beer [**Cattleya purpurata** (Lindl. & Paxton) Beer] As you can see in the format, the original authors are acknowledged with their abbreviated names bracketed. Eight years later Heinrich Gustav Reichenbach published the species as *Bletia purpurata* [**Bletia purpurata** (Lindl. & Paxton) Rchb.f.].

Following a long period when the species received another ten names, most of which divided it into varieties based on flower colour the current nomenclature kicks in. The species was moved to the genus *Sophronitis* by Cássio van den Berg and Mark Wayne Chase in 2000 [**Sophronitis purpurata** (Lindl. & Paxton) van den Berg & M.W. Chase]. Again in 2002 Guy Chiron and Vitorino Paiva Castro published the species as *Hadrolaelia purpurata* [**Hadrolaelia purpurata** (Lindl. & Paxton) Chiron & V.P. Castro].

However the most recent name is not the currently accepted name and *Sophronitis purpurata* has been accepted by the worldwide orchid community. The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew publishes on the World Wide Web the *World Checklist of Selected Plant Families* which gives an up to date list of the accepted names of monocotyledonous plant families, of which the orchid family is one. Access to this is open to everyone who has access to the Web.

Name changes can be irritating and annoying to amateur growers and hobbyists and great confusion has been caused among orchid hybrids, where parents are no longer recognised within the genera they were placed when hybrids were registered. However, our understanding of what the real associations between orchid species are all the better now and the name changes can reflect that association. The American Orchid Society along with the Royal Horticultural Society has accepted *Genera Orchidacearum* and the names it proposes.

BRENDAN SAYERS

THAT CHRISTMAS ORCHID

In keeping with the season, I thought to include a short article about Christmas Orchids. However, a quick search brought up at least eight plants which claim the distinction of being THE “Christmas Orchid.” Below is the list. There may be more.

I think it best to write that whichever of your plants is in flower at Christmastime is your “Christmas Orchid.”

I like the *Calanthe triplicata*, a common evergreen terrestrial orchid

Description - It is a large species with hardly noticeable pseudo bulbs with 3 or 4 large pleated leaves up to 90 cm tall and 18 cm wide being very similar to *Phaius tankervilleae* in both looks and growth habits and unlike the northern members of the *Calanthe* genus does not lose its leaves. The inflorescence can be over a metre high with numerous 3 cm white flowers densely packed at the top of the spike with a *labellum* resembling a Lorraine cross. The flowers are very delicate and will mark badly if handled. This is caused by the leaves containing a chemical named Indican, which is the same as contained in the dye substance known as Woad. Flowering period is from late November to the end of January, this is the reason for the common name of Christmas Orchid. (Australasian Native Orchid Society).

CHRISTMAS BELL ORCHID	<i>Dendrobium lawesii</i>
CHRISTMAS FLOWER (LOCAL)	<i>Atorina (Epidendrum) erubescens</i>
CHRISTMAS LILY ORCHID	<i>Calanthe triplicata</i>
CHRISTMAS ORCHID	<i>Angraecum sesquipedale</i>
CHRISTMAS ORCHID	<i>Cattleya percivaliana</i>
CHRISTMAS ORCHID	<i>Cattleya trianaei</i>
CHRISTMAS STAR ORCHID	<i>Angraecum sesquipedale</i>
CHRISTMAS ORCHIDS	<i>Coelogyne Rochussenii</i>

LAURENCE T. MAY

RARE ORCHID FOUND ON SPOIL HEAP

Rare orchids found growing on a spoil tip next to an old coal mine could represent "evolution in progress", according to experts.

The orchids, known as Young's Helleborine, or *Epipactis Youngiana*, only grow at 10 locations in the UK. Experts believe they took root at Almond Bing, near Falkirk, almost as soon as the last miners left in the mid-1980s.

Only two sites in Scotland are known to support the rare flowers.

Each of the 10 areas of the UK on which the flower is found are former industrial sites.

Research suggests the species is a newly-developed variety of the more common Broadleaved Helleborine.

The finding could mean that the Broadleaved Helleborine has adapted itself to suit the inhospitable terrain of an old pit bing.

Plant experts working at the bing said the flowers showed evolution in action.

They have harvested thousands of minuscule seeds from the pink plants' green seedpods in an attempt to understand more about them.

Craig Macadam, biodiversity officer at Falkirk Council, said the plant "thrived" in the tough conditions at the bing, next to the former Muiravonside Colliery, which was flooded during the miners' strike of 1985 and later abandoned.

"This particular species is found at less than ten places across the UK - with only this one in Falkirk and another in West Lothian in Scotland," he said.

"The rest are spread across England and Wales."

Half of the seeds have been sent off to labs for further research by the UK Hardy Orchid Society, based at Oxford, while the rest have been replanted in other areas of former colliery bings to examine how they grow.

Mr Macadam added: "They seem to thrive on post-industrial landscapes and Almond Bing is just ideal for that.

"We don't know exactly how they got there, but we think they have been dormant in the soil and when the soil has been disturbed they have grown through the soil.

"The bing is covered in trees and other kinds of growth, but these orchids are unique."

Suzanne Cooper, spokeswoman for leading Plant protection charity Plantlife Scotland, said it was important to monitor rare plants to preserve them for future generations.

She added: "We will be excited to see what happens, both to the seeds being propagated and those that have been sown on site.

"We hope the information we obtain will help Plantlife Scotland to give the right advice about the conservation of these plants here at Almond Bing and other similar sites."

Source: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/scotland/tayside_and_central/7081306.stm



Young's Helleborine only grow at two sites in Scotland

TRIP TO ITALY

Dear IOS Member

Two of our Italian members have kindly offered to organise a trip to Bormio, Lombardy, Italy. There we would hope to see terrestrial orchids in their native habitat on the Alps in early June 2008.

Whilst there Emanuela/Michele will organise interesting local sights to visit, e.g. National Parks, Roman spas., etc.

The trip will cover five nights with two early morning flights.. There will a combination of bus tours and free time for you to explore with the help of our Italian members.

The cost will be approx €750 depending on how many are interested.

Ulli Peiler one of our Sligo members will be co-ordinating the trip together with Emanuela/Michele from Italy.

Ulli would need to know **in writing** c/o Orchid Society, Botanical Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin before Monday 14th January 2008.

If there is sufficient interest, then Emanuela/Michele and Ulli will go ahead, organise the trip and report back to those who are interested.

We take this opportunity to wish you a Happy Christmas.

Sincerely Yours,

On behalf of the Irish Orchid Society Committee

Tom Petherbridge
Honorary Treasurer
Mobile: 087 9308845
Email : tom@misterstainless.com

Ulli Peiler
Phone : 071-9165295
Mobile 086-08323155

Bormio websites : <http://www.bormio.it/english.htm>
<http://www.bormio.com/>
http://www.bormioonline.com/index_eng.htm

IRISH ORCHID SOCIETY - CALENDAR FOR 2008
JANUARY:: MAY

January 7, Monday – Members night

Members are invited to bring along any plants that they may wish to show to the meeting and any other orchid related things such as new books or photographs. The member evenings are a good opportunity to have questions on how to care for your orchids answered by experienced members.

February 4, Monday - Dick Warren

Dick Warren of Equatorial Plant Company is a well known and distinguished speaker and orchid propagator. He leads tours to the Atlantic Rainforests of South Eastern Brazil and is heavily involved in orchid conservation in that area. This should be one of the highlight talks of the 2008 calendar.

March 3, Monday - Potting workshop

How to pot or re-pot an orchid is one of the most asked questions. At this meeting we will address the questions in relation to compost, suitable containers or rafts for mounted material and aftercare of re-potted or divided plants.

April 5+6, Saturday & Sunday - Orchid Fair

April 4, Friday – Orchid Fair preview

The Annual Dublin Orchid Fair will take place at the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin. This event, organised by the Gardens is the premier orchid event in Ireland. It gives members the opportunity to browse through species and hybrids of orchids seldom seen for sale here. Deva Orchids from Chester and Burnham Nurseries from Devon will be offering plants, potting composts, orchid sundries and advice.

The Irish Orchid Society will also be in attendance at the fair where a show table for members to exhibit their plants will be available. Plants shown need to be of a high standard and various awards will be on offer. There will also be a table promotion table for the Irish Orchid Society where members are asked to give a few hours where they can explain about the role of the Society and encourage people to avail of the services the Society provides. Any members willing to spend some time on the stand should express their interest to Mary Bradshaw, Society Secretary.

May 12, Monday - Maren Talbot

Maren Talbot who runs the nursery "Heritage Orchids" in the UK will present a general talk on hardy orchids and will front a question and answer session on their cultivation afterwards .

Maren has forty years experience growing a wide variety of orchids. She is expected to bring some plants for sale!



