

A vibrant pink orchid in a green meadow with snow-capped mountains in the background.

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of the  
**HARDY ORCHID SOCIETY**

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## The Hardy Orchid Society

Our aim is to promote interest in the study of Native European Orchids and those from similar temperate climates throughout the world. We cover such varied aspects as field study, cultivation and propagation, photography, taxonomy and systematics, and practical conservation. We welcome articles relating to any of these subjects, which will be considered for publication by the editorial committee. Please send your submissions to the Editor, and please structure your text according to the "Advice to Authors" (see website [www.hardyorchidsociety.org.uk](http://www.hardyorchidsociety.org.uk), January 2004 Journal, Members' Handbook or contact the Editor). Views expressed in journal articles are those of their author(s) and may not reflect those of HOS.

## The Hardy Orchid Society Committee

**President:** Prof. Richard Bateman, Jodrell Laboratory, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 3DS

**Chairman:** Celia Wright, The Windmill, Vennington, Westbury, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY5 9RG [celia.wright@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:celia.wright@tiscali.co.uk)

**Vice-Chairman:** David Hughes, Linmoor Cottage, Highwood, Ringwood, Hants., BH24 3LE [davidechughes@talktalk.net](mailto:davidechughes@talktalk.net)

**Secretary:** Alan Leck, 61 Fraser Close, Deeping St. James, Peterborough, PE6 8QL [alanleck@plus.com](mailto:alanleck@plus.com)

**Treasurer:** John Wallington, 17, Springbank, Eversley Park Road, London, N21 1JH [jrwallington@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:jrwallington@blueyonder.co.uk)

**Membership Secretary:** Moira Tarrant, Bumbys, Fox Road, Mashbury, Chelmsford, CM1 4TJ [m.tarrant@virgin.net](mailto:m.tarrant@virgin.net)

**Plant Show Secretary:** vacant

**Journal Editor:** Mike Gasson, Moor End Cottage, Moor End, Stibbard, Norfolk, NR21 0EJ [moorend@globalnet.co.uk](mailto:moorend@globalnet.co.uk)

**Southern Meetings Organiser:** Betty Barber, 8 Dean Close, Deeds Grove, High Wycombe, Bucks., HP12 3NS [betty.barber@gmail.com](mailto:betty.barber@gmail.com)

**Northern Meeting Organiser:** Ken Kitchen, Kincreag, Stonycroft Drive, Arnside, Carnforth, LA5 0EE [knak@kenak.plus.com](mailto:knak@kenak.plus.com)

**Publicity Officer:** Simon Tarrant, Bumbys, Fox Road, Mashbury, Chelmsford, CM1 4TJ [s.tarrant@virgin.net](mailto:s.tarrant@virgin.net)

**Seed Bank:** Philip Seaton, 52 Shrubbery Street, Kidderminster, Worcestershire, DY10 2QY [philip@seatonorchids.freeseerve.co.uk](mailto:philip@seatonorchids.freeseerve.co.uk)

**Journal Distributor:** Iain Wright, The Windmill, Vennington, Westbury, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY5 9RG [iaincwright@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:iaincwright@tiscali.co.uk)

**Conservation and Website:** Bill Temple, Primrose Cottage, Hanney Road, Steventon, Oxon., OX13 6AP [bill@billtemple.t9.co.uk](mailto:bill@billtemple.t9.co.uk)

**Field Meetings Co-ordinator:** Malcolm Brownsword, 14 Manor Close, West Hagbourne, Didcot, Oxfordshire, OX11 0NQ [malcolm.brownsword@tesco.net](mailto:malcolm.brownsword@tesco.net)

**Front Cover Photograph**

*Gymnadenia rhellicani x conopsea* (see article on page 30)

Photo by Tony Hughes

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**Editorial Note**

This first *JHOS* of 2011 features some interesting articles, including an account of orchids found in Iran. The Karel Kreutz connection extends to an intriguing article from Mike Clark on the effects of environmental conditions on the morphology of *Epipactis* at Kenfig with interesting implications for taxonomy. Congratulations to Tony Hughes on winning the Maren Talbot Trophy! As well as some of his competition images, Tony has contributed another interesting report from his travels. Journal space continues to be under some pressure and I must apologise to those still waiting for submitted work to appear in print. I will do my best to get these included as soon as space permits.

**Chairman's Note**

**Celia Wright**

In October's Journal, I wrote about the problems we have had with meeting venues in 2010. After a lot of hard work by our meetings organisers, we now have dates and locations for all three of our meetings in 2011.

**Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> March** - AGM, meeting and Plant Show at Kidlington as usual.

**Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> September** - Northern meeting at St Chad's Parish Centre, Leeds. I have been to a meeting of the local AGS group who meet there and the hall looks suitable for us. There is plenty of parking and access is easy. If you want to know more, look on the St Chad's website at:

<http://freespace.virgin.net/st.chads/Centre/Location.htm>

**Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> October** - The date has now been fixed for the autumn southern meeting at Capel Manor. They have a website with location details at:

<http://www.capel.ac.uk/enfield/>

Full details and maps will be provided on the booking forms for these two new meeting venues when they are sent out with the July Journal. I hope to meet many of you at one or more of these all day meetings next year. They provide an excellent opportunity to meet and talk with fellow hardy orchid enthusiasts in addition to an interesting speaker programme and access to hardy orchid plants for sale from nurseries and members. If any member would like to volunteer to give a talk, either a full length one or something for the "5 slides in 5 minutes" section, please get in touch with me. I'd also like to hear if anyone wishes to recommend a particular speaker, who does not have to be an HOS member. I'd like to end this note by wishing you all a very happy New Year.

## **Field Trips 2011** **Malcolm Brownsword**

As you will have read in David Hughes' report in the October edition of the Journal, another successful season of field trips was enjoyed by members in 2010. See below for the 2011 programme. Only HOS members are eligible. Field trips are limited to a maximum of 15 members unless otherwise stated. Membership numbers should be supplied to the field trip leader when booking. Members are responsible for their own safety and must ensure that they are suitably equipped for the conditions to be encountered. Packed lunches are usually required. Occasionally the leader may change plans before or during a meeting, in which case appropriate warning will be given. There may be a charge, usually £3 per member, as a donation to the host reserve. For full details and booking a place, contact the nominated leader and book early because places fill rapidly. Contact Malcolm Brownsword [malcolm.brownsword@tesco.net](mailto:malcolm.brownsword@tesco.net) if you have any general questions regarding field trips, and particularly if you would like to lead one in the future.

**Sunday 17 April; Bourne End, Buckinghamshire** to see the National Collection of Pleione held by Ian Butterfield. Ian also grows Calanthe hybrids.

Contact Malcolm Brownsword [malcolm.brownsword@tesco.net](mailto:malcolm.brownsword@tesco.net)

**Monday 2 May; Samphire Hoe** for *Ophrys sphegodes*, followed by another site for *Orchis purpurea* and other orchids.

Contact Mike Parsons [mikeparsons30@talktalk.net](mailto:mikeparsons30@talktalk.net)

**Sunday 8 May; Chilterns** to see Military and Fly Orchids, White helleborine, Lady and Monkey Orchids and their hybrid, plus spring butterflies.

Contact Malcolm Brownsword [malcolm.brownsword@tesco.net](mailto:malcolm.brownsword@tesco.net)

**Sunday 22 May; Chappett's Copse, Hampshire** for Sword-leaved helleborine and Bird's Nest Orchid.

Contact Nigel Johnson [cassandene@waitrose.com](mailto:cassandene@waitrose.com)

**Monday 30 May; Folkestone** for *Ophrys fuciflora/holoserica*, *Orchis anthropomorpha* and other orchids.

Contact Mike Parsons [mikeparsons30@talktalk.net](mailto:mikeparsons30@talktalk.net)

**Saturday 11 June; Hampshire** for an orchid identification session (garden plants, followed by field trip).

Contact David Hughes [davidcchughes@talktalk.net](mailto:davidcchughes@talktalk.net)

**Saturday 18 June; Chilterns, Aston Clinton area, Buckinghamshire** for massed Fragrant Orchids, Greater butterfly, Common spotted, Musk and other orchids, as well as butterflies.

Contact Peter Daltry [peter.daltry@tesco.net](mailto:peter.daltry@tesco.net)

**Sunday 19 June; Porton Down, Wiltshire** for up to 8 species of orchid, including Fragrant, Frog, Bird's Nest and Common Spotted, as well as other rare plants such as Yellow Bird's Nest and Meadow Clarey, and also butterflies. (Preference given to those who missed out in 2008)

Contact Malcolm Brownsword [malcolm.brownsword@tesco.net](mailto:malcolm.brownsword@tesco.net)

**Sunday 10 July;** Tynedale and Holy Island, Northumberland, principally for the Tyne and Lindisfarne Helleborines. Also Common Spotted and Pyramidal Orchids, the last of the Northern Marsh Orchids, plus Marsh Helleborines in their thousands on Holy Island. Note that this trip involves a 2 hour drive between localities; numbers restricted to 10. The trip may be extended to take in other northern helleborines on the Saturday (Dune Helleborine; Green-flowered Helleborine) and Monday (Dark-red Helleborine).

Contact Colin Scrutton - [Colin.Scrutton@dunelm.org.uk](mailto:Colin.Scrutton@dunelm.org.uk)

**Friday 22 July; Upper Teesdale** for Creeping Ladies Tresses and Lesser Twayblades.

Contact Alan Gendle [alan@gendle.plus.com](mailto:alan@gendle.plus.com)

**Saturday 23 July; Alston** for inland Dune Helleborine, Frog, Common-spotted var. *alpina*, Early and Northern Marsh Orchids plus hybrids, finishing with Marsh Fragrant Orchid.

Contact Alan Gendle [alan@gendle.plus.com](mailto:alan@gendle.plus.com)

**Saturday 27 August; The New Forest** for *Spiranthes*, other plants and also Dragonflies.

Contact David Hughes [davidcchughes@talktalk.net](mailto:davidcchughes@talktalk.net)

## Conservation Update

**Bill Temple**

With regard to my work as Conservation Officer, this year has included the usual mix of relocating a few Bee orchids threatened by cable-laying operations and work on the three existing conservation projects raising orchids from seed. These projects are steadily progressing. A new component has been the start of a project with Waitrose Wildcare to advise dairy farmers on how to increase the number of orchids on their land. This project has made a promising start. The Hardy Orchid Society has started running courses for members on growing orchids from seed, I hope that this will result in more members being able to undertake conservation projects to raise orchids from seed.

## Comment on Hartslock Hybrids

**Bill Temple**

Following Richard Bateman's very interesting and provocative article in the last *JHOS* and comments on the discussion forum, it is clear that there are healthy differences of opinion between members of the society. My personal views, while mainly in agreement with Richard's, differ in one important respect. While I agree that it would be very interesting to see what happens at Hartslock and may even turn out to be important for future problems at other sites, I would be much happier if the Lady Orchids, hybrids and a few Monkey Orchids were relocated to another site at least 5 miles downwind of Hartslock. If we look at the numbers for the first year that hybrids were noted and for 2010 and then extrapolate the numbers to 2015 at the same rate of increase then the numbers in the table appear.

	<b>2005</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015 estimate</b>
<b>Lady Orchids</b>	5	21	88
<b>Hybrids</b>	23	309	3,939
<b>Monkey Orchids</b>	274	448	732

It is clear that the number of hybrids is increasing much faster than the numbers of the species. My guess is that by 2015 it would be difficult, if not impossible, to control the number of hybrids without inflicting considerable damage on the SSSI, hence my concerns. It is my personal belief that French Lady orchid seed was deliberately introduced to Hartslock. The appearance of *Himantoglossum robertianum* a few miles from Hartslock and rumours of French *Spiranthes aestivalis* seed being introduced to the New Forest have helped me form that opinion.



## Orchid Meadow

A newly opened nursery for British / European native orchids by mail order. Plants are propagated on-site from seed, and by division, using legally obtained stock.

Website: [www.orchidmeadow.co.uk](http://www.orchidmeadow.co.uk)

Tony Heys, 14 Culllesden Road, Kenley, Surrey, CR8 5LR

e-mail: [Anthony.heys@sky.com](mailto:Anthony.heys@sky.com)

Please contact me by e-mail or send S.A.E. for a plant list and order form

### Photographic Competition Winners

#### **Class 1. An orchidaceous landscape, print size up to 7x5 inches (15 entries)**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Tony Hughes - *Gymnadenia conopsea* (Dolomites)  
2<sup>nd</sup> Patrick Marks - *Gymnadenia borealis* (Sutherland)  
3<sup>rd</sup> Simon Andrew - *Anacamptis morio* (Dorset)

#### **Class 2. A group of orchid plants, print size up to 7x5 inches (17 entries)**

- 1<sup>st</sup> David Pearce - *Orchis anatolica* (Cyprus)  
2<sup>nd</sup> Ron Harrison - *Dactylorhiza maculata* (Hebrides)  
3<sup>rd</sup> Tony Hughes - *Anacamptis papilionacea* (Sardinia)

#### **Class 3. A single orchid plant, print size up to 7x5 inches (19 entries)**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Patrick Marks - *Cypripedium calceolus* (Vercors)  
2<sup>nd</sup> Christine Hughes - *Orchis boryi* (Crete)  
3<sup>rd</sup> Ron Harrison - *Orchis spitzelii* (Crete)

#### **Class 4. A close-up, print size up to 7x5 inches (19 entries)**

- 1<sup>st</sup>= Ron Harrison - *Ophrys candica* (Crete)  
1<sup>st</sup>= Patrick Marks - *Ophrys cornuta* (Corfu)  
2<sup>nd</sup> Alan Blackman - *Dactylorhiza maculata* (Andorra)  
3<sup>rd</sup> Michael Waller - *Ophrys cornuta* (Bulgaria)

#### **Class 5. An orchidaceous landscape, print size up to A4 (16 entries)**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Patrick Marks - *Anacamptis laxiflora* (Corfu)  
2<sup>nd</sup> Tony Hughes - *Anacamptis longicornu* (Sardinia)  
3<sup>rd</sup> Alan Blackman - *Dactylorhiza maculata* (Yorkshire Dales)

#### **Class 6. A group of orchid plants, print size up to A4 (19 entries)**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Tom Turner - *Spiranthes spirales* (Surrey)  
2<sup>nd</sup>= Ron Harrison - *Ophrys lutea* (Crete)  
2<sup>nd</sup>= Alan Blackman - *Dactylorhiza praetermissa* (Kent)  
3<sup>rd</sup>= David Hughes - *Orchis italica* (Crete)  
3<sup>rd</sup>= Tony Hughes - *Anacamptis longicornu* & *A. papilionacea* (Sardinia)

**Class 7. A single orchid plant, print size up to A4 (20 entries)**

- 1<sup>st</sup>= David Hughes - *Anacamptis morio* (Dorset)  
1<sup>st</sup>= Tony Hughes - *Orchis ichnusa* (Sardinia)  
2<sup>nd</sup> Mike Gasson - *Dactylorhiza praetermissa* (Norfolk)  
3<sup>rd</sup> Tom Turner - *Epipactis* (Surrey)

**Class 8. A close-up, print size up to A4 (21 entries)**

- 1<sup>st</sup> John Spencer - *Orchis adenocheila* (Iran)  
2<sup>nd</sup> Christine Hughes - *Orchis simia* (Crete)  
3<sup>rd</sup>= Ron Harrison - *Serapias orientalis* (Crete)  
3<sup>rd</sup>= Tony Hughes - *Ophrys panattensis* (Sardinia)

**Class 13. Novice Class: a hardy orchid picture, print size up to A4 (6 entries)**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Jean Claessens - *Orchis mascula* (Vercors, France)  
2<sup>nd</sup> Karen Gregory - *Orchis pallens* (Vercors, France)  
3<sup>rd</sup> Tom Turner - *Epipactis helleborine* (Surrey)

**Class 14. Orchidaceous landscape, maximum 1400 pixels wide and 1050 pixels high in uncompressed JPEG form (11 entries)**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Tony Hughes - *Gymnadenia conopsea* (Dolomites)  
2<sup>nd</sup> Sean Cole - *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* & *D. praetermissa*  
3<sup>rd</sup> David Hughes - *Dactylorhiza purpurella*

**Class 15. A group of orchids, maximum 1400 pixels wide and 1050 pixels high in uncompressed JPEG form (12 entries)**

- 1<sup>st</sup> David Pearce - *Ophrys kotschy* (Cyprus)  
2<sup>nd</sup> Ken Kitchen - *Cypripedium calceolus* (Cumbria)  
3<sup>rd</sup> Mike Gasson - *Dactylorhiza* hybrid (Norfolk)

**Class 16. A single orchid plant maximum 1400 pixels high and 1050 pixels wide in uncompressed JPEG form (14 entries)**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Tony Hughes - *Serapias cordigera* (Sardinia)  
2<sup>nd</sup> David Hughes - *Platanthera bifolia* (Cumbria)  
3<sup>rd</sup> John Spencer - *Orchis adenocheila* (Iran)

**Class 17. A close up maximum 1400 pixels high and 1050 pixels wide in uncompressed JPEG form (17 entries)**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Mike Gasson - *Dactylorhiza incarnata* (Norfolk)  
2<sup>nd</sup> David Pearce - *Ophrys umbilicata* subsp. *attica* (Cyprus)  
3<sup>rd</sup> David Hughes - *Orchis prisca*

**Maren Talbot Trophy** awarded to Tony Hughes for his Class 16 winning entry

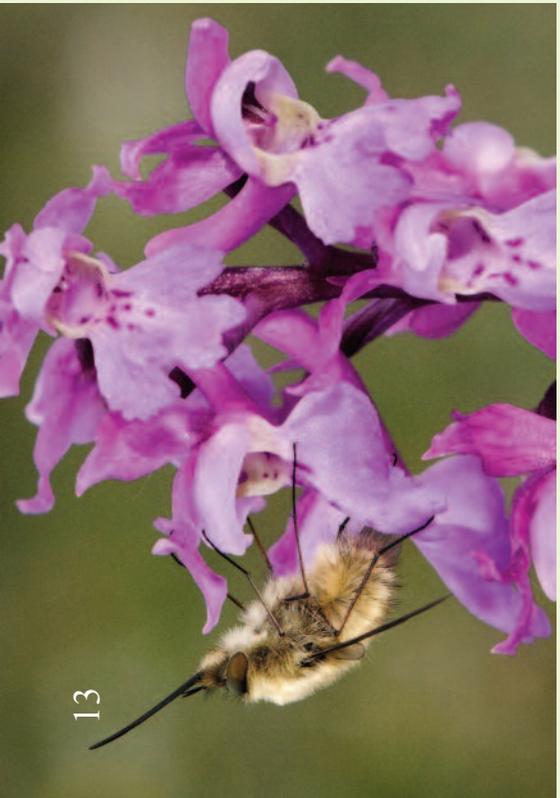
The following three pages feature some of the first placed winning images. All are displayed on the HOS website. Photographs are identified by a numbers indicating the relevant class. Where there are two first placed entries they are differentiated by a letter – “a” for first cited and “b” for second cited in the results lists.



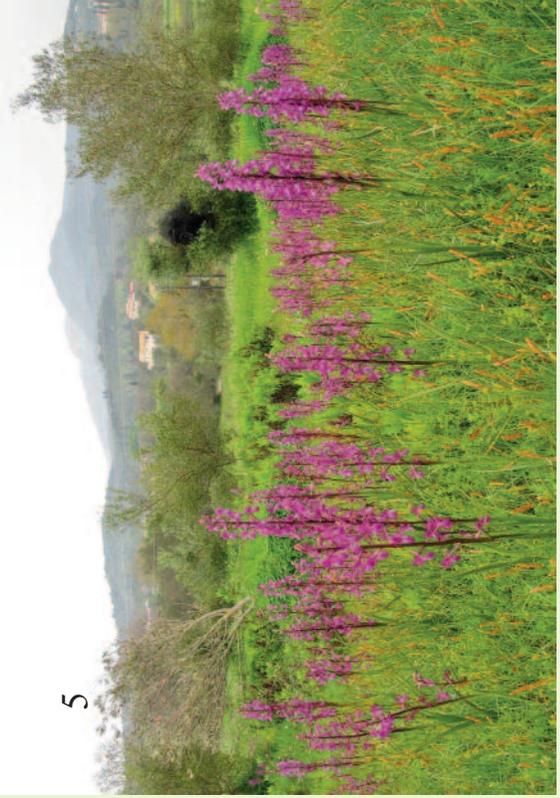
14



15



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## In the Footsteps of Renz: Orchids in Iran Karel Kreutz & John Spencer

The deserts of central Iran act as a natural barrier between the European and Mediterranean orchids we are familiar with, and the Himalayan orchids that can be seen in the far east of the country. Although Iran is twice the size of Turkey, it has far fewer orchid species or plants. This means that much time can be spent in driving between sites. The landscape is incredibly varied and you can quickly travel from snow covered peaks, through oak and beech woods to barren desert in a few hours. Our trip ran from April 21<sup>st</sup> to May 8<sup>th</sup> 2010 and covered three areas: the southern province of Fars in the Zagros mountains, the northern arc of the Alborz mountains below the Caspian Sea and Kordestan in the west close to the Iraqi border. Simply to move between these three areas involved us in journeys totalling several days and the total distance that we travelled by car was nearly 7,000 kms. One consolation was that for the equivalent of £1 you could buy 15 litres of petrol.

The one man responsible for finding and naming most of Iran's orchids, in the years before 1976, was the Swiss botanist Dr. Jany Renz (1907 - 1999). After Renz almost nobody travelled to Iran specifically for orchids until 2005 and 2006. In these 2 years a mostly German team methodically tracked down and rediscovered most of Renz's sites. The information that they passed on to us made our trip possible.

In Iran, 2010 was an early season with the result that we only saw *Orchis ade-nocheila* at its upper limit of 1,600m. *Orchis punctulata* was almost completely over and *Anacamptis (Orchis) collina*, which we saw at two sites, was too far gone for a photo. *Orchis simia* was past its best and of *Orchis anatolica* there was no sign. Our stay coincided with a spell of unusually wet weather, even for northern Iran, with the result that we only had one totally dry day. As the bad weather continued our itinerary fell further and further behind. Eventually, we were forced to make cuts. In the end, we didn't get to the North West and, in consequence, missed out on *Cephalanthera caucasica*, *Dactylorhiza flavescens* and *Neottia nidus-avis*.

With our friend from Germany, Karl-Heinz Masur, and our local driver, Hossein, we were a four man team. Our odyssey started with a quick thrust south to Yasuj in the province of Fars to see the newly named *Ophrys zagrica*. What we saw was a *Ophrys mammosa*-like plant which did not impress as being noticeably different from other members of that group. The German group saw it when the plants were

Fig. 1: Alborz Mountains from Kalardasht (26.04.2010)

Fig. 2: *Ophrys zagrica*, Fars, Gandoman (23.04.2010)

Fig. 3: *Ophrys kojurensis*, Mazandaran, Kojur (25.04.2010)

Photos by John Spencer (Fig. 1) and Karel Kreutz (Figs. 2 & 3)

1



2



3



starting to flower. At that stage the plants do look different with the flowers darker in colour than the typical *Ophrys mammosa*. When we visited the sites, about two weeks later in the year than the German group, the plants had the height of typical *Ophrys mammosa* with the size and colour of the flowers being almost the same. For plants such as these which are close to *Ophrys mammosa* with a disjunctive distribution the rank of subspecies would be appropriate. Therefore we will propose the name *Ophrys mammosa* subsp. *zagrica*. We found about 50 plants, scattered at two sites. The richer of these was at the Morga Pass south of Gandoman where about 40 plants were flowering in a south facing rocky slope with sparse vegetation. The plants proved difficult to find. Most of them were past their best or were protected by dense shrubbery from grazing sheep. On both sites no other orchid species was found. On our way back it started to rain making the descent by car on an unpaved road very dangerous.

After a quick visit to the Imam Mosque at Esfahan, it was back north, through Tehran and over the Alborz Mountains to Chalus on the Caspian Sea. The next few days were spent exploring the hills around Kojur and Kalardasht. Here we saw another newly named *Ophrys*, the aptly named *Ophrys kojurensis*. This appeared to have much in common with *Ophrys caucasica*, which visitors to north east Turkey might be familiar with. However, when we went on to further sites, we found *Ophrys kojurensis* which did look different. It would have been better to describe this species from one of these sites, since at the locus classicus, we were unable to differentiate it from *Ophrys caucasica*. Growing with *Ophrys kojurensis* was *Ophrys oestrifera* with a small, neatly marked lip, small flowers and a typical speculum. We found many of these plants in about five sites. There were also hybrids between these two species at two sites. The *Ophrys oestrifera* will be described as new to science as *Ophrys oestrifera* subsp. *elbursana*.

The elusive *Orchis adenocheila* was high on our list of targets. Initially, we found only plants that had gone over or were well on their way. Interestingly, at one site where *Orchis adenocheila* was almost over, near Chalus, we found two plants of *Platanthera bifolia* subsp. *atropatanica*, described from Azerbaijan. Although they were not yet in flower, the leaves and the spikes showed that it could only be that species. To find flowering *Orchis adenocheila* we were forced to go to higher altitudes, and, after spending much time, we turned up a handful of plants at 1,600m, in the beech woods near Kalardasht (Rudbarak) in the province of Mazandaran.

Fig. 4: *Ophrys oestrifera*, Mazandaran, Kojur-Alamdeh (25.04.2010)

Fig. 5: *Steveniella satyriodes*, Mazandaran, Alamdeh (27.04.2010)

Fig. 6: *Ophrys sintenisii*, Golestan, Bandar Gaz, (29.04.2010)

Fig. 7: *Orchis pinetorum*, Mazandaran, Kojur-Alamdeh (27.04.2010)

Photos by Karel Kreutz

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However, even here the plants were mostly starting to go over. Several days later we discovered two major colonies further east near Kadir between Kojur and Alemdeh, also in Mazandaran province. It was a privilege to see this beautiful species in many colours. Later, in the province of Golestan, between Gorgan and Aliabad we found a beautiful site just above dense clouds which had filled the valley. Many *Orchis adenocheila* were growing here in a chalk meadow in various colours and in full flower. *Orchis adenocheila* could be a “sister” species to *Orchis punctulata*, in the same way that *Orchis militaris* and *Orchis purpurea* are linked. Most plants have flowers with a white or cream lip but a minority have a distinctly yellow tinge. In addition, the occasional plant can have touches of pink or green which only adds to the appeal of the species. *Orchis adenocheila* is a rare species. It grows only in the north of Iran and in the southeast of Azerbaijan (Talysch). In Azerbaijan there are only few sites known with a small number of plants. Most of them grow near Lerik at high altitude in chalk meadows. In Iran this beautiful species is also very rare but more common than in Azerbaijan. The sites are mostly chalk meadows where they grow amid scrub and small trees.



Near Kadir (Mazandaran) we saw our first *Steveniella satyrioides*. As previously reported, the hood in the plants in Iran is marked with red spots, unlike the plants in Turkey or Azerbaijan which have plain hoods. The stem can be green and the basal leaf variegated. The plants in Iran are also much bigger than in Turkey with some of them reaching 40-50 cm. They also carry more flowers. These beautiful Iranian plants will be described as *Steveniella satyrioides* var. *iranica*. We found the Iranian *Steveniella* at about ten places, always on roadside banks. This appears to be its favoured habitat and well worth checking. Other orchids growing in this area were *Cephalanthera damasonium*, *Cephalanthera longifolia*, the spidery eastern form of *Orchis simia* and *Orchis*

Fig. 8 (above): *Orchis adenocheila* habitat, Golestan (01.05.2010)

Fig. 9: *Orchis adenocheila*, normal form, Mazandaran, Alamdeh (26.04.2010)

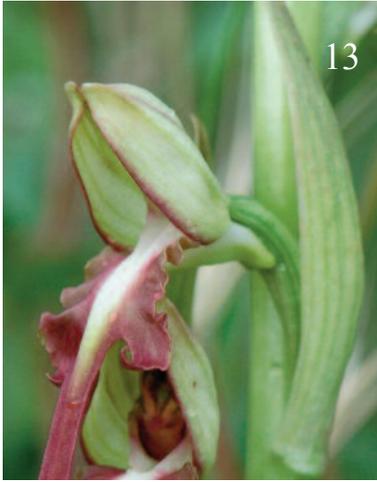
Fig. 10: *Orchis adenocheila*, normal form, Mazandaran, Alamdeh (27.04.2010)

Fig. 11: *Orchis adenocheila*, pink form, Golestan, Gorgan-Aliabad (01.05.2010)

Fig. 12: *Orchis adenocheila*, green form, Golestan, Gorgan-Aliabad (01.05.2010)

Photos by Karel Kreutz





*pinetorum* – the latter closely related to *Orchis mascula*. *Epipactis*, probably *Epipactis turcica*, was seen at an early stage.

*Orchis punctulata* is a rarity in Iran. At the only site for it that we visited, near Qaem Shahr, we found it almost completely over. However, the small, deflexed lips of the “*schelkownikowii*” variety could still be made out. This problematic form grows from Eastern Turkey to Iran, and is not recognised by many orchid specialists. Near Sari *Ophrys apifera* and *Anacamptis pyramidalis* were growing on a roadside verge under oak trees. The plants of both species were very large. *Anacamptis pyramidalis* reached almost 80 cm whilst the plants of *Ophrys apifera* were also very tall with numerous flowers. With rain falling, it was easy to imagine yourself in England, but the dark *Ophrys sintonisii*, also growing here, told you otherwise. We went on to visit the locus classicus for *Ophrys sintonisii* near Bandar Gaz (Golestan). This was an unprepossessing site being close to the entry point to a rubbish dump. The plants were mostly hidden by brambles and took some time to find. It was striking to see that the tall plants carried relatively large flowers. Probably there are more sites of *Ophrys sintonisii* in this area, but in Iran it is well known that there are far fewer orchid sites than in Greece or Turkey. The species are at the edge of their range with numbers greatly reduced by changing climate and geology.

Fig. 13: (above) *Himantoglossum affine*, Kermanshah, Kerend (03.05.2010)

Fig. 14 (above): *Epipactis turcica*, Mazandaran, Kojur-Alamdeh (27.04.2010)

Fig. 15: *Ophrys turcomanica*, Golestan, Maraveh Tappeh (30.04.2010)

Fig. 16: *Anacamptis (Orchis) elegans*, Zanjan, Ab Garm (02.05.2010)

Fig. 17: *Orchis simia*, Golestan, Ziarat (29.04.2010)

Fig. 18: *Ophrys apifera*, Mazandaran, Sari (28.04.2010)

Photos by Karel Kreutz & John Spencer (Fig. 13)

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The proximity of the Alborz Mountains to the Caspian Sea means that, normally, any sunshine is limited. Usually by early afternoon cloud has snaked up the valleys reducing visibility and making photography impossible. Near Gorgan we saw more *Orchis* species in the form of *Orchis simia*, *Orchis pinetorum* and variously coloured *Orchis adenocheila* plus the Iran rarity *Listera ovata*! However, we were looking forward to the highlight of our time in Golestan, a visit to the sites near Maraveh Tappeh close to the border with Turkmenistan, locus classicus for *Ophrys turcomanica* and a location where the yellow form of *Orchis adenocheila* and the *Orchis simia* x *Orchis adenocheila* hybrid have also been recorded. Alas, when we got there, after a long drive, it was raining heavily, the early plants were over and the later ones had been uprooted and were lying discarded on the grass. Nomads had beaten us to the site by a couple of days and had collected the tubers for sale. It was a truly dismal day but *Ophrys turcomanica* did impress as being a good species. Although very varied, the plants were united by their oval lip shape, bright colours and the more complex lip patterns. It definitely belongs to the *Ophrys transhyrcana* group whose true home lies only a little bit north in Turkmenistan (Kopet Dag). Also in flower here was *Anacamptis morio* var. *caucasica* with its small flowers and lax heads. It is really bad that today orchids are still being dug up to produce the drink salep. Because of this practice some very rare *Ophrys* species in Turkey are almost extinct. There should be a law in Iran to give the orchids some protection. The government of Iran should really take effective measures to protect the few endemic orchid species of their country!

We broke our marathon drive west at a site near Ab Garm where *Anacamptis elegans* was starting to flower on a site close to both road and river. In the past there have been many problems in identifying these plants and they have sometimes been described as being *Anacamptis palustris*. But, when *Anacamptis elegans* was finally correctly identified in Turkey, the distribution of this species became better known. Nowadays we know that it grows from Croatia and Hungary to the Aegean islands of Greece, to Turkey and Iran. Indeed the Iranian plants are typical *Anacamptis elegans*. Again it was raining and the weather only worsened as the journey went on with fog on the Shan Pass and violent thunderstorms nearing our destination of Kermanshah.

The next day we were, thankfully, out of the car and looking for orchids in a wooded valley near Kerend where the main road heads west for the Iraqi border. We were at the locus classicus for *Ophrys straussii* but also here were *Himantoglossum affine*

Fig. 19: *Comperia comperiana* in flower and *Himantoglossum affine* in bud  
Kermanshah, Kerend (03.05.2010)

Fig. 20: *Comperia comperiana*, Kermanshah, Kerend (03.05.2010)

Fig. 21: *Limodorum abortivum*, Kermanshah, Kerend (03.05.2010)

Fig. 22: *Cephalanthera kurdica*, Azarbaijan-e-Gharbi, Sardasht (06.05.2010)

Photos by Karel Kreutz



(probably *Himantoglossum affine* subsp. *pseudocaprinum*) and *Comperia comperiana* growing side by side. The former was nearly all in bud, the latter in full flower. *Himantoglossum affine* subsp. *pseudocaprinum* was originally described as a variety by J.J. Wood from plants in Iraq, which is not far from Kerend. These plants have much in common with *Himantoglossum affine* (habitat, flowers) but the lip shape and colouring are very much like *Himantoglossum caprinum* even if the white centre of the lip is unspotted. The name used by Wood is therefore very well chosen. The steep slopes had been grazed by cattle but pink clumps of *Cephalanthera kurdica* survived in the scrub. Near Kerend *Cephalanthera kurdica* grows in large numbers but never in the open since protection from grazing animals is needed. *Limodorum abortivum*, very rare in Iran, was past its best and *Anacamptis (Orchis) collina* was likewise going over. Also growing here was *Ophrys schulzei*, but like elsewhere in Iran, only in small numbers. Most of the plants were difficult to find since, once again, they used scrub as protection. Even large *Ophrys schulzei* plants only carry very small flowers with tiny rounded lips. Again, like the sites near Turkmenistan, many plants had been dug up. The new tubers to fuel next year's growth had been removed from *Comperia comperiana*. The fact that this is the locus classicus for *Ophrys straussii* did not save them either. We can only hope that the Iranian government will take action to prohibit this practice in future.

In welcome sunshine we drove north to the regional capital of Sanandaj (Kordestan). The rugged landscape, the people and even the orchids had much in common with eastern Turkey. The Kurdish women wore colourful clothing and the Kurdish men sported large, droopy moustaches and wore baggy trousers held up by broad cummerbunds. The following day we continued our journey north stopping only for the water meadows near Zagheh (Kordestan) where *Dactylorhiza umbrosa* was starting to flower. The plants here look different to those in Eastern Turkey. They are smaller with fewer, much paler, flowers. In this area there are many suitable wet meadows where *Dactylorhiza umbrosa* could grow, but we only saw the species at this one site. However, the first plants were only starting to flower and the species could be more widespread.

Our final sites were near Sardasht, which is also close to the border with Iraq. Here, in addition to the orchids seen at Kerend, we also got to see very tall plants of *Orchis simia* with numerous flowers and what Renz called *Ophrys kurdistanica*. This species appeared to be almost identical to *Ophrys cilicica* even if some plants displayed a lip slightly wider than the plants in Turkey. Also the speculum looked a lit-

Fig. 23: *Ophrys straussii*, Kermanshah, Kerend (03.05.2010)

Fig. 24: *Ophrys schulzei*, Kermanshah, Kerend (03.05.2010)

Fig. 25: *Ophrys kurdistanica*, Azarbaijan-e-Gharbi, Sardasht (06.05.2010)

Fig. 26: *Dactylorhiza umbrosa*, Kordestan, Divanderreh-Sanandaj (05.05.2010)

Photos by Karel Kreutz

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tle different, but these plants are much the same as *Ophrys cilicica*. Even making the Iranian plants a subspecies or variety of *Ophrys cilicica* would not be justified. Unfortunately we had no luck in trying to find the similarly named *Ophrys khuzestanica*, a member of the *Ophrys umbilicata* group. This is an early flowering species and we were probably too late. In the same area we found many more plants of *Cephalanthera kurdica*. Unlike the plants at most of the Turkish sites these were robust plants with many flowers. We also encountered more *Comperia comperiana* and *Ophrys schulzei*. Here, as at Golestan and Kerend, the tuber collectors had also been active. In Iran, the countryside is primarily regarded as a resource to be utilised. Any aesthetic appeal is very much secondary. So, children gather blue flowers not because they look good but because the petals taste sweet! Nature conservation has a long way to go.

Leaving Sardasht, we started the long journey back to Tehran and our flight home. To sum up, Iran at the present time is neither an easy or cheap destination for the orchid enthusiast, but shouldn't be missed. It is outside the scope of this article to comment on the numerous fritillaries, irises, tulips and other plants which compete for your attention. Iran has a rich culture and history and it was with regret that we left the country without visiting Persepolis. A local driver, at least for the cities, is essential and our driver, translator and aide Hossein gave excellent service. Planning your visit is important, since, such is the Iranian reputation for hospitality, that hotels can be thin on the ground. What sticks in the mind is the warmth and friendliness of the people and we look forward to the day when a trip to Iran is as straightforward as one to neighbouring Turkey.

Thanks to Heinz-Werner Zaiss and his group for the essential site information.

## **Studies on *Epipactis helleborine* s. l. Kenfig NNR**

**Michael J. Clark**

### **Introduction**

As reported by Lewis *et al.* (2009), two subspecies of *Epipactis helleborine* grow at Kenfig National Nature Reserve. The first is Broad-leaved Helleborine, *E. helleborine* subsp. *helleborine* (syn. *E. helleborine* s. str.), which is common in woods throughout the northern hemisphere. The second is Dutch Helleborine, *E. helleborine* subsp. *neerlandica* (syn. *E. neerlandica* and *E. helleborine* var. *neerlandica*), which was first described from sand dunes bordering the North Sea in the Netherlands but also occurs in sand dunes at Kenfig NNR and the Gower peninsula where it grows in the open in association with the Creeping Willow, *Salix repens*. Both of these subspecies are morphologically variable but, in typical forms, they are easily distinguished by their shape – flowers are more open in woodland plants (Figure 1) and more compact in plants growing in the open (Figure 2). Also they

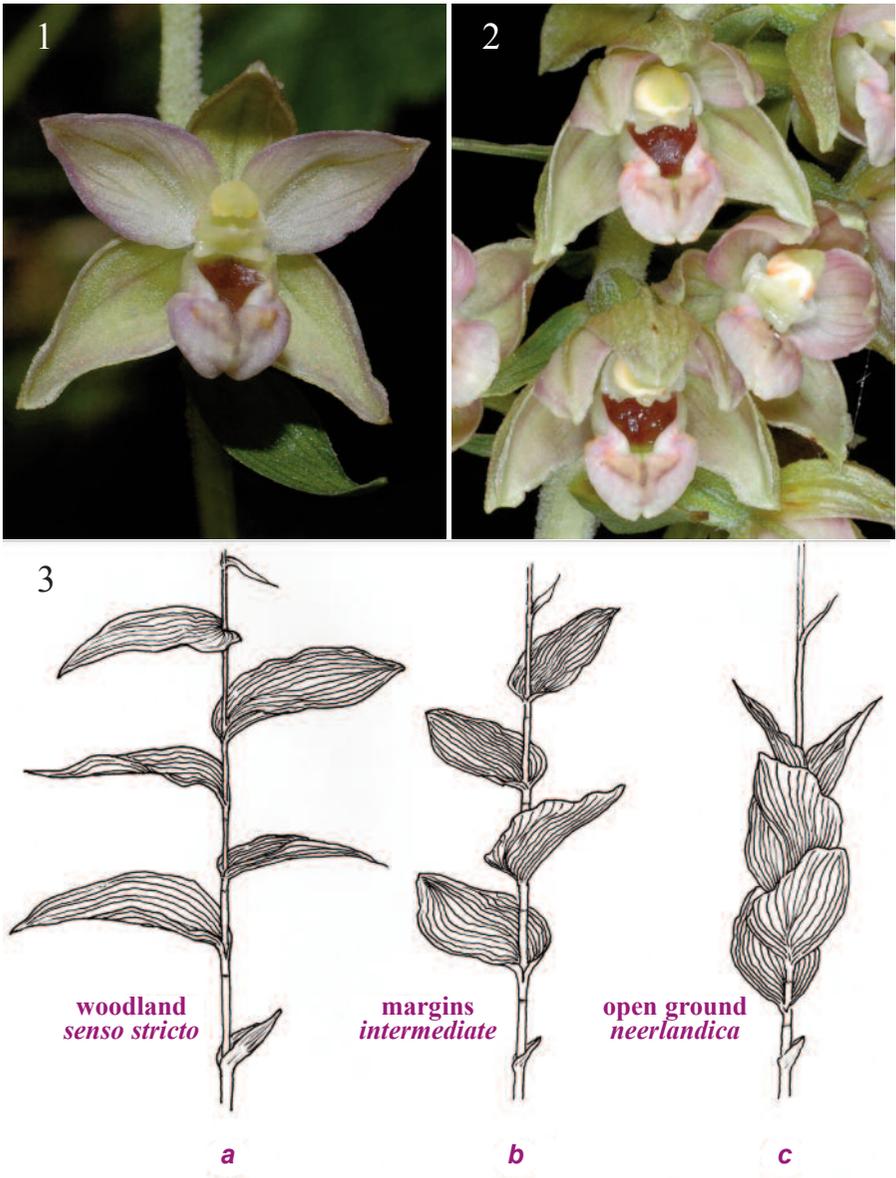


Fig. 1: More open flower form of *E. helleborine* plants growing in woodland.

Fig. 2: More compact flower form in *E. helleborine* plants growing in the open.

Fig. 3: Line drawings to illustrate the leaf structures of *E. helleborine* growing in woodland (a), in the margins (b) or in open ground (c).

Photos and drawing by Michael Clark

have distinct habitats. As explained by Kapteyn den Boumeester (1989), *E. helleborine* subsp. *helleborine* typically has broad leaves spaced along the stem; in addition, as seen under a microscope, the tuberculiform papillae on the leaf edge have a hook-shaped (uncinate) top. On the other hand, *E. helleborine* subsp. *neerlandica* typically has stiff, tightly packed, upwardly directed leaves clustered around the base of the stem; in addition, the tuberculiform papillae are smaller and do not have a hook-shaped (uncinate) top (Figure 3).

However, these differences are not constant which has raised the question as to whether subsp. *neerlandica* is genetically distinct from subsp. *helleborine* or simply an ecad – a morphological adaptation to its open sand dune habitat. The most recent study of this – entitled (in English translation) “Dutch Helleborine: locality variety or species in the making?” – was by Kuiper *et al.* (2009) who concluded that the two subspecies are not completely separated genetically.

In an earlier investigation into the taxonomical status of subsp. *neerlandica*, Van den Bussche (2003; 2004) transplanted 14 specimens of subsp. *neerlandica* from their natural sand-dune location to an area by a hornbeam hedgerow in his garden where subsp. *helleborine* had appeared spontaneously some years before. Unfortunately, initial results of morphological change were inconclusive and no final conclusion was ever published (probably because the plants died).

**Effect of shade on *Epipactis helleborine* s. l. at Kenfig NNR**

In addition to *Epipactis helleborine* subsp. *helleborine* and subsp. *neerlandica*, plants with a morphology intermediate these two subspecies are also found at Kenfig NNR. These are always growing in a semi-shaded position, most frequently partly shaded by taller specimens of *Salix repens* on northerly facing dune slopes, with the nearby plants in sunnier positions being subsp. *neerlandica*.

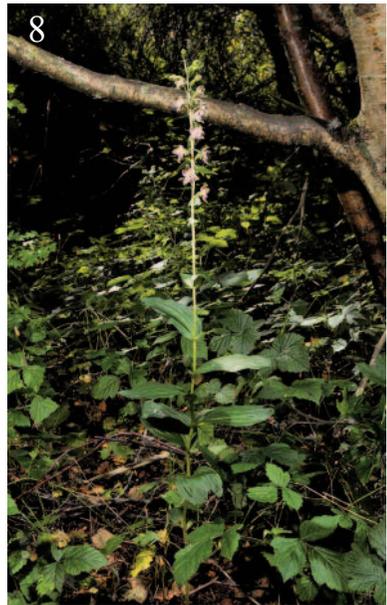


Fig. 4: *E. helleborine* subsp. *helleborine* growing under a tree in almost full shade.

Fig. 5: *E. helleborine* subsp. *neerlandica* growing in the open nearby.

Fig. 6: Intermediate plant growing in semi-shade between the other two plants.

Fig. 7: Shorter plant after tree clearance (*E. helleborine* subsp. *neerlandica*)

Fig. 8 (above): Taller plant before clearance (*E. helleborine* subsp. *helleborine*)

Photos by Michael Clark



In a particularly clear example of the effect of shade in 2010 on the morphology of *E. helleborine* s. l. at Kenfig NNR, I found three plants spaced and growing under a small birch on a north-facing dune slope. The plant (Figure 4) growing under the tree in almost full shade was subsp. *helleborine*, the plant (Figure 5) growing in the open a short distance away from the tree was subsp. *neerlandica*, while the plant (Figure 6) growing in the semi-shade on the edge of the tree between the other two plants was intermediate these two subspecies.

### **Effect of woodland clearance on specimen *Epipactis helleborine* subsp. *helleborine* at Kenfig NNR**

The recent clearance of woodland on Kenfig NNR, as part of a project to rejuvenate the dune system and thus promote stock grazing and firewood production for revenue generation, provided an unexpected opportunity to observe the effect of change of habitat on *Epipactis helleborine* subsp. *helleborine* in the field. In 2008, I recorded a small population of subsp. *helleborine* growing (without subsp. *neerlandica*) in a copse on the dunes on the south of the Reserve. Following clearance of all the trees from the copse that winter, I was surprised to find that the *E. helleborine* growing in the cleared area were now all of the subsp. *neerlandica* type.

In that instance, I was unsure whether the subsp. *neerlandica* in 2009 were the same individual plants as the subsp. *helleborine* in 2008. However, in 2009 I photographed a tall specimen of subsp. *helleborine* (Figure 8) growing on a wooded bank in the north of the Reserve when I also recorded its GPS location. Following the clearance of all the trees from the bank in the following winter, I revisited the exact location in 2010 when I found that the plant was now much shorter and looking like subsp. *neerlandica* (Figure 7).

### **Conclusion**

The above observations strongly suggest that, at least in coastal sand dune habitats, *Epipactis helleborine* subsp. *helleborine* and subsp. *neerlandica* are not genetically distinct taxa, but that subsp. *neerlandica* is simply an ecad – a morphological adaptation to growing in an open sand dune habitat.

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## “Not-Always-Black” Vanillas!

Tony Hughes

When Diana and I set out on the 26<sup>th</sup> June 2010 for a fortnight in the Dolomites, we planned to spend most of our time up in the mountains searching for alpiners, with a good chance of spotting a few orchids along the way. Our hotel was in Selva, some 1600m up in the Val Gardena, where there are several cable cars to higher places, and we had a hire car which enabled us to venture further afield.

Our hotel boasted a very small library which, curiously, consisted of “Beautiful Britain” plus a couple of photographic volumes on the flowers of the Dolomites. Both of these included several pictures labelled “*Nigritella nigra*”, which we were happy to up-date to “*Gymnadenia rhellicani*”. However, we were amazed that none of the photographs showed flowers of the usual very dark blackish-red colour typically associated with the “Black” Vanilla Orchid. Instead, the flower colours varied from brilliant red through many shades of pinky-orange to a pale creamy-yellow, with several bicolours thrown in. Unfortunately, the location of these wonders was given merely as “the Dolomites”, which cover a very large area.

Our holiday went pretty well. Long, hot, sunny days (only three thunderstorms, and they came in the evenings), picture-postcard views around every bend, and loads of fascinating flowers to identify and photograph. At the beginning of our stay, Vanilla Orchids were few and far between. However, as the days passed, their numbers increased until the short turf of many alpine meadows was studded with hundreds of the near-black pyramids of *G. rhellicani*.

We did occasionally see other species of Vanilla Orchids, which we rather tentatively identified as follows. *G. austriaca* was somewhat similar to *G. rhellicani*, but the flower colour was a much brighter shade of reddish-brown, and the flower spike was always domed, quite unlike the pointed pyramids of the early stages of *G. rhellicani*. *G. bicolor* is a recently defined species, previously included in *G. rubra*. Like *G. rubra*, it was quite robust, with flower spikes that rapidly elongated into domed cylinders as they developed. But their most striking characteristic was the way the flower colours were graded from intense ruby-red at the top through shades of pink to almost white at the bottom. Then there was *G. dolomitensis*, our least confident identification! These were always quite small plants with rather few-flowered, hemispherical flower spikes of a uniform ruby-red colour. Very close inspection showed that the lateral sepals were much longer and broader than the petals. However, in

Fig. 1: *Gymnadenia bicolor*

Fig. 2: *Gymnadenia austriaca*

Fig. 3: *Gymnadenia dolomitensis*

Fig. 4: Hybrid between *Gymnadenia rhellicani* and *Gymnadenia conopsea*

Photos by Tony Hughes

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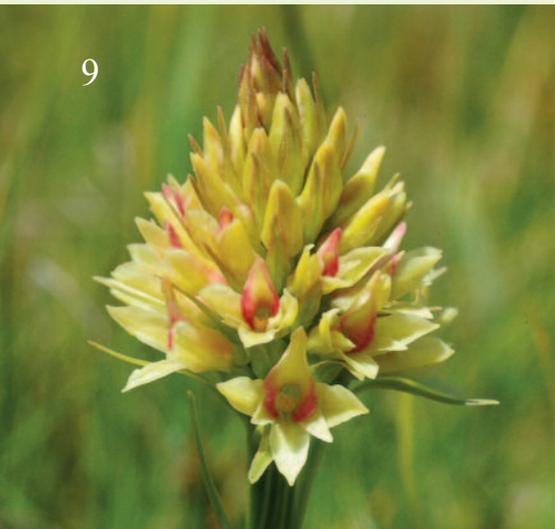
spite of all these less usual finds, *G. rhellicani* was by far the commonest species, but all the specimens we saw were unquestionably “Black” Vanillas.

Then a friend suggested a trip to the Alpe di Siusi, a very extensive area of rolling upland grassland, famous for its spectacular displays of spring and summer flowers. So on 8<sup>th</sup> July we drove to the low-lying village of Siusi and took a long gondola trip up to Compatsch, where a second gondola swept us up to the local high point of Pufplatsch at about 2100m. The short stroll down the north slope from the cable car station was unremarkable, but then we found ourselves in an orchid wonderland. The short turf was tinged pink with a vast array of Fragrant Orchids (*G. conopsea*) – sturdy plants in all shades from deep pink to pure white. And between them were the Vanilla Orchids, all being *G. rhellicani*. Most of them were the standard “black” colour, but there was a fair percentage of all the other shades shown in the hotel’s books, and in no time we were snapping away at the rich reds, the creamy yellows and the tantalising bicolours. We searched long and hard for a pure albino, but to no avail. Although a few spikes appeared almost white from a distance, close inspection always revealed at least a blush of pink on the edges of their lips.

Our excitement was caused not only by the amazing mix of Vanilla colours – in addition there were hybrids to contend with! The long, nectar-bearing spur of *G. conopsea* attracts a wide range of butterflies and moths as pollinators. In contrast, *G. rhellicani* has a tiny, globular spur, also nectar-bearing but seemingly better suited to creatures with small mouth parts. Nevertheless, it is reported to attract lepidoptera also. Consequently, in places where the two species occur in close proximity (i.e. almost anywhere in the Alps) it is not unusual to find their spectacular and readily distinguishable hybrids. The stature of a hybrid is usually mid-way between that of the parents, with a crowded flower spike, somewhat fatter and taller than a Vanilla Orchid, but not as long or as lax as a Fragrant. The structure of the individual flowers is also in some ways intermediate between the parents, the spur usually being around 5mm long, while the lip is tilted upwards, generally at about 45° to the vertical. But it is the colour that always catches the eye – a brilliant magenta-pink of remarkable richness and intensity.

Although we found dozens of examples of the hybrid, the range of colour shades was extremely narrow. This seemed somewhat surprising, since the Fragrant Orchids came in a broad range of pink shades, and the Vanillas encompassed an even wider range of colours. Several hours were spent wandering through this wonderland and then strolling down to the gondola station at Compatsch. Wherever the terrain and

Figures 5 to 10 Various colour forms of *Gymnadenia rhellicani*  
Photos by Tony Hughes



grazing were suitable, the Vanilla Orchids were present, and in their full range of colours. So what is so special about the Alpe di Siusi? The underlying rock is not the typical Dolomitic limestone, being of more recent metamorphic origin, which presumably results in soil far less alkaline than in most other parts of the Dolomites. Further, the number of orchid species encountered there was surprisingly small, with *G. conopsea* and *G. rhellicani* sharing joint first place, *Leucorchis* (*Gymnadenia*) *albida* and *Dactylorhiza* (*Coeloglossum*) *viridis* trailing far behind, and a solitary specimen of *Platanthera bifolia* scarcely counting. *Dactylorhiza alpestris* was also present, but only in the marshy areas. A notable absentee was *G. odoratissima*, which we had found in large numbers elsewhere in the surrounding countryside. So might the soil be the key to the anomalous range of Vanilla colours, or has there been some local genetic mutation affecting the production of the red pigments, or is there another explanation? And are there any other places nurturing a similarly bewildering range of colours?

### **Open Days, a Cautionary Tale** **Roy Bailey-Wood & Roger Gilbert**

Howardian Local Nature Reserve in Cardiff was established in 1973 on a local refuse tip. The Council provided a soil cover for the area and, with the help of local individuals, some 25,000 trees and shrubs were planted. Although sandwiched between two main roads, today the site is flourishing with a surprising range of flora and fauna species ([www.howardianlnr.org.uk](http://www.howardianlnr.org.uk)).

It is home to a modest number of orchids, all of which have seeded naturally – Southern Marsh-orchid, Common Spotted-orchid, Twayblade, Bee Orchid, Butterfly Orchid and Broad-leaved Helleborine. On 12<sup>th</sup> June this year Cardiff City Council held an “Orchid Walk” at the reserve. It was attended by about 20 people (details unrecorded) who were shown around by Council Rangers and wardens.



White striped leaves of an unusual  
Common Spotted-orchid  
Photo by Roy Bailey-Wood

They were also shown a plant of a variegated Common Spotted-orchid having leaves heavily marked with white stripes and which has flowered consistently over several years. One week after the Open Day the wardens discovered that this plant had been dug up! The lesson here is obvious and should warn others of what can happen. This is clearly a very distinctive plant and if any member comes across a similar plant, perhaps for sale, I would be grateful if they could let us know.

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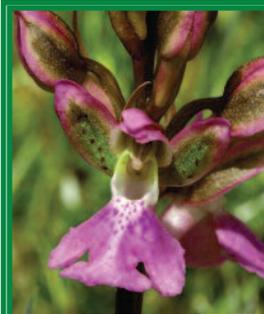


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