

Journal
of the
HARDY ORCHID SOCIETY



Vol. 2 No 3 (37) July 2005

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, January 2004 Journal or contact the Editor).

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Front Cover Photograph

Ophrys insectifera forma *luteomarginata* with green petals in North Hampshire, photographed by Graham Giles (article on page 81).

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Editorial Note

A short note to encourage members to submit articles to the Journal, and to invite your views on the contents and style. For the orchid growers, your experiences with Seramis are of current interest for a future article. Also, I would like to take the opportunity to thank Patrick Marks for passing on his Journal tips, and for his help in getting this issue together.

HOS Finance and Subscription Reminder

You will see from the AGM report that HOS finances are reasonably healthy, and that no increase in subscription is required at present. A previous AGM prudently decided that we should maintain reserves of about one year's expenditure, and we are nearly there. However, your Committee is keen to develop the Journal and to be able to afford occasional capital purchases (such as a PA system or a digital projector to improve our meetings). Consequently we are considering several ways of raising extra funds and have decided initially to increase the fee for attending meetings by a modest £1, starting with Harlow Carr on 3rd September.

Also a gentle reminder that membership payments for 2005/6 are now overdue (May 1st deadline). We welcome payment by Standing Order, and forms are available on the website or from the Membership Secretary, Maren Talbot. Subscriptions are as below and the joining fee is waived for new members paying by Standing Order:

Britain & rest of Europe:	Single Member £12; Family £15
All Other Countries:	Single Member £16; Family £19
Joining Fee:	Single Member or Family £2.50

The HOS Harlow Carr Meeting Saturday September 3rd 2005

For the third year in succession we are holding our "Northern" meeting in the Study Centre at the RHS Harlow Carr Gardens. An application form for the meeting is included with this Journal. Please note that advanced booking is essential. Space in the Study Centre is limited to about 60 people, so places will be allocated on a "first come, first served" basis. Harlow Carr Garden is in Crag Lane (HG3 1QB), just off the Otley Road (B6162) on the west side of Harrogate. You will be required to show your HOS Membership Card to get free entry to the garden for the meeting.

The provisional programme is as follows (details subject to change):

- | | |
|------------|---|
| 10.00 a.m. | Doors open; Tea/Coffee; Sales tables. |
| 10.45 a.m. | Chairman's Introduction. |
| 10.50 a.m. | Laender Wolstenholme "Orchids in the Manchester Museum. Herbarium". |
| 11.55 a.m. | Michael Lowe "Mediterranean Orchids". |
| 1.00 p.m. | Lunch. |
| 2.15 p.m. | "Spring Flowers of Crete" or "Orchids of Slovenia". |
| 3.15 p.m. | Phil Seaton "All about Seeds and Fungi". |
| 4.15 p.m. | Tea/Coffee. |
| 5.00 p.m. | Meeting closes. |

HOS AGM and Spring Meeting Tony Hughes

The Chairman welcomed the 100 or so members present, thanked the Officers and Committee for their support over the previous year, and reported that 2004 had been a very good year for the Society. All the meetings had been well-attended, and the Photo Show had been one of the best ever. The Journal had now completed nearly 2 years in its "full colour" format, representing a glowing testament to the knowledge and enthusiasm of its contributors, and to the investment of time and care by the Editor, Patrick Marks, and his helpers. The HOS Website, now completely re-written, continues to expand in Bill Temple's capable hands. It has been visited some 50,000 times since its inception in 1999, spreading news of the HOS around the world and doing a great recruitment job. Other publicity initiatives include a new recruiting pamphlet and a growing collection of laminated orchid photos available for exhibition purposes. Practical conservation remains a major activity, with further "orchid rescue" operations and participation in propagation trials of *Epipactis youngiana*. The only damp squib during the year was the planned field trip to Kenfig - it was rained off!

The proposed changes to the HOS rules (distributed with the April 2005 Journal) were then discussed and approved - please retain your copies for future reference.

The Treasurer reported that, largely thanks to the increased subscriptions and some savings on meetings, we had been able to finance the improved Journal and still record a surplus of £800. With net assets of £7623 (slightly less than one year's expenditure) subscriptions did not need to be increased this year.

The Membership Secretary reported that membership had increased slightly, with some 441 subscriptions representing 526 individual members.

The Chairman thanked the 3 retiring Committee Members (Patrick Marks, Ted Weeks and Bill Temple), prior to the elections for the coming year of Officers, Committee and Auditors (see inside Front Cover for details).

Members were then encouraged to make their views known about the Journal and its contents, and to consider writing their own contributions. Finally, the planned activities for the rest of the year were reviewed (see Jan and April Journals) and a few minor points discussed under "AOB".

The rest of the day's activities, the talks and the Plant Show, are reported below.

HOS Plant Show 24th April 2005

Eric Webster

A rather more sparse than usual show this year with only 27 plants on the show bench from 10 exhibitors. I am sure that part of the problem has been the weather which seems to have played havoc with other plants too. Mary Randall, an experienced Alpine Garden Society Judge and also an HOS member, judged the show and our thanks go to her for a job well done.

The Best Plant in Show Trophy this year went to **Maren Talbot** for a magnificent display of *Pleione* "**Tongariro**" (photograph on page 73) and the **RHS Banksian Medal** went to **Richard Manuel** for the highest aggregate prize points in the show. Congratulations to both.

Doreen and I would like to thank those who helped set up the show tables, those who supported the show, and those who helped to pack up at the end of the day. Let's see if we can beat the weather and make next year a better show.

Results of the Plant Show Photographs by Colin Clay

Class 3 (2 entries)

1st **Alexander Jean**: *Ophrys splendida*; *Ophrys araneola*; *Ophrys lutea*

2nd **Michael Powell**: *Neotinea (Orchis) ustulata*; *Aceras anthropophorum*; *Dactylorhiza sambucina* red/yellow form

Class 6 (2 entries)

1st **Richard Manuel**: *Anacamptis (Orchis) morio*

2nd **Neil Hubbard**: *Anacamptis (Orchis) laxiflora*



Alexander Jean's Class 3
winner *Ophrys lutea*



Richard Manuel's Class 6
winner *Anacamptis morio*

Class 7 (1 entry)

1st **Richard Manuel**: *Serapias olbia* x *Anacamptis (Orchis) morio*

Class 8 (4 entries)

1st **Jim Gooch**: *Leptoceras menzeisii*

2nd **Malcolm Brownsword**: *Calanthe seiboldii*

3rd **Doreen Webster**: *Calanthe bicolor*

Class 9 (1 entry)

1st **Michael Powell**: *Dactylorhiza sambucina* red form

2nd **Peter Scott**: *Orchis mascula*

Class 10 (2 entries)

1st **Richard Manuel**: *Orchis x penzigiana* (*O. mascula* x *provincialis*)

Class 11 (2 entries)

1st **Malcolm Brownsword**: *Ophrys reinholdii*

3rd **Peter Scott**: *Ophrys araneola*

Class 12 (4 entries)

1st **Jim Gooch**: *Serapias lingua*

2nd **John Haggart**: *Serapias lingua*

3rd **Peter Scott**: *Serapias lingua*

Class 13 (1 entry)

1st **Michael Powell**: *Cypripedium formosanum*

Class 14 (4 entries)

1st **Maren Talbot**: *Pleione* "Tongariro"

2nd **Malcolm Brownsword**: *Calanthe discolor*

3rd **Malcolm Brownsword**: *Pleione* "Vesuvius Phoenix"



Malcolm Brownsword's
Class 11 winner
Ophrys reinholdii

(There were no entries in **Classes 1, 2, 4 and 5**)



Jim Gooch's Class 12
winner
Serapias lingua



Michael Powell's Class 13
winner
Cypripedium formosanum

The Raby Castle Orchid Show - "Maren's Weed Garden"

Chris Barker

A new star in the staging and arranging of an orchid display made her debut at the Raby Castle Orchid Show over the May Bank Holiday weekend. Maren arrived at Raby on the Friday afternoon with what appeared to be a car full of weeds collected from her allotment, all carefully potted up and ready for display. She proceeded to put together a very natural looking mini-landscape of weeds, grasses, and moss and I must confess at this point I named it 'Maren's Weed Garden.' Into this natural setting a range of hardy orchids was inserted, and by the end of the afternoon the weed garden had become the perfect backdrop for displaying the orchids in an interesting and eye catching way.

The display had two stars that were much admired, Norman Heywood's *Cypripedium plectrochilum* and Maren's *Pleione* "Tongariro" bowl, which had won Best in Show at the HOS Spring meeting. The Darlington Orchid Society and the NE of England Society added to the plants Maren had brought, resulting in a display that included *Anacamptis*, *Calanthe*, *Cypripedium*, *Dactylorhiza*, *Pleione* and *Serapias*. Maren had fun labeling all the plants from the orchids right down to the grass, although I was a little disappointed to see that the grass had not been given its Latin name. Next to the display was an information table for application forms, Journals, copies of recent articles etc. with the laminated orchid pictures used as a backdrop. The large HOS laminates were displayed prominently in the marquee where potting and culture sessions took place.

The Show ran for the three days of the Bank Holiday weekend, and it proved to be a great success with the numbers of visitors well up on previous years. I am sure that the Show's hardy orchid theme and the presence of the HOS helped to attract people to the event. The 'Weed Garden' always seemed to be surrounded by an admiring group of people, and Maren was kept very busy answering questions about the plants and the HOS.

Although only four new members enrolled during the weekend, many visitors took away details of the Society and we can hope that some will join at a later date. The success of the event should not just be measured in new members joining the Society. To quote from our web site - "*The main activities of the Hardy Orchid Society are centred on sharing the pleasures and knowledge of hardy orchids as widely as possible.*" This was definitely achieved and we can be certain that there are plenty of people with an interest in hardy orchids in the NE of England. Maren should be congratulated on a job well done!

At the end of the Show I was amazed to see that Maren's car looked even fuller than when she arrived. For one foolish moment I had a picture of her taking all the weeds back home and carefully re-planting them in her allotment, but soon realised that she had succumbed to buying the odd one or twenty orchids.



Maren Talbot's Best in the Show *Pleione* "Tongariro" on display at Raby Castle
Photo by Chris Barker

Orchids of Sussex **Report on David Lang's talk at Kidlington**

The name "David Lang" is well-known to most orchid lovers, thanks to his publications over the last 25 years. This talk covered some of the content of his 2001 publication "*Wild Orchids of Sussex*" - and it was a great delight to all. We were taken on a well-illustrated journey through all the major orchid habitats of the county, from the spectacular chalk downs to the depths of the woods, noting particularly the stark differences between East and West Sussex. And all along the way we were entertained by fascinating anecdotes about the orchids and their individual curiosities. While most of the orchids discussed were authentic local natives, several came from the sad list of "thought to be locally extinct", some were more probably myths and

and legends, while a few others were just waiting for a bit more global warming before hopping across from France!

Several especially interesting and unusual orchids were discussed, including the mysterious achlorophyllous form of the Violet Helleborine (*Epipactis purpurata*). In the absence of chlorophyll it possesses pinkish mauve foliage, and seems to glow in the reduced light of the woodland habitat that it favours. The county has sites for the Sword-leaved Helleborine, and can boast of several records for *Cephalalthera damasonium* x *longifolia*, its hybrid with the White Helleborine.

Dactylorhiza fuschii var. *rhodochila* is a striking variant of the Common Spotted Orchid in which the labellum is a dark reddish-purple colour. It is present at three sites in Sussex.

Several distinct forms of the Bee Orchid grow in the county, including *Ophrys apifera* var. *trollii* (the “Wasp Orchid”) with its characteristic pointed labellum, and *Op. apifera* var. *chlorantha*, which lacks red-brown pigmentation. Of especial note was the recent discovery of *Op. apifera* var. *atrofuscus*, a beautiful orchid in which the lip has no marking and assumes a dark chocolate-brown colouration. The peloric form, in which the labellum is replaced with a pink sepal-like structure, is also something of a Sussex speciality. In addition, the rare hybrid between the Bee Orchid and the Fly Orchid (*Ophrys apifera* x *insectifera*) was found in West Sussex at the turn of the millennium.

All three subspecies of the Fragrant Orchid (*Gymnadenia conopsea*) occur in Sussex, and the case was made for their possible taxonomic elevation to the rank of species. Notable factors are their distinct morphologies and habitat preferences, as well as the existence of intermediate forms, presumed to be hybrids.

The presentation featured some stunning pollination photographs, including an original taken by Howard Jones that featured a digger wasp “mating” with a Fly Orchid. Observations of the nectar-induced “stoned behaviour” of the wasp pollinator of the Broad-Leaved Helleborine provided a light-hearted moment.

With at least 28 current species and various varieties, forms and hybrids, Sussex sounds like a great place to explore. For more details, including distribution maps, you will have to consult “*Wild Orchids of Sussex*” by David Lang, Pomegranate Press, 2001 (ISBN 0-9533493-3-0). Discussion at the end of the talk drew attention to the fact that this book includes a chapter “Sussex Botanologia” that reviews the botanists who have made an impact on the study of the county’s orchids. The description of this rich collection of personalities adds to the authoritative account of the orchid flora, which formed the basis of a most enjoyable presentation.

Growing Orchids in the Garden Part 1

Tony Hughes' talk at Kidlington

Of the many possible reasons for wanting to grow orchids in the garden, three readily spring to mind. Firstly, it is possible to have really spectacular displays; secondly, they need rather less attention than when grown in small pots or under cover; and thirdly, it is a good way to get one up on the neighbours! The downside, however, is that you are restricted to plants that are fully hardy in your location, and you are not in total control of things like the weather and pests.



Photo by Tony Hughes

There are two basic approaches to consider. If you don't want to alter your soil, you will only succeed with those varieties that are well-suited to your situation and conditions. Alternatively, if you are prepared for some extra work, you can attempt to create an artificial environment, possibly a raised bed or large container, that is appropriate for the types you really want to grow. Whichever approach suits you, the first step must be to learn about the situations in the wild which are favoured by your chosen plants.

It is sensible to start with varieties that are vigorous growers and which occur in a wide range of natural situations. Several *Dactylorhiza* and *Epipactis* species are good to start with, and some very rewarding hybrids are also available. Leave the expensive, less vigorous, slow to propagate varieties until you have some experience. And expect some disasters!

For those who like a "natural" look, growing orchids in grass is an obvious way. My own way of growing orchids on my back lawn has been discussed *ad nauseam* (see HOS Newsletter No. 14, p. 16, Oct. 1999, and No. 28, p. 21, April 2003). It has at least a little merit since, although it leaves a great deal to chance, it saves a lot of mowing until about August when all the seed should have been shed. Unfortunately, I do have to remove pernicious weeds by hand - in my case these include Dandelions, Plantains and Ragwort. However, there are many "pretty" weeds that are worth encouraging, with Yellow Rattle being one of the most desirable. Not only does it flower quite attractively, but it grows as a semi-parasite on the roots of the grass, stunting its growth and allowing the orchids to be seen to best advantage.

Growing Orchids in the Garden Part 2

Bill Temple

If there are wild orchids within a mile or so of your garden, you garden without chemicals and you have no natural orchids, then your garden probably does not contain the fungi necessary to germinate native orchids. Under these circumstances you are likely to have the most success with orchid species that propagate vegetatively.

Orchids that propagate vegetatively include *Epipactis gigantea*, *E. palustris* and most species of *Dactylorhiza*. These species also have the advantage that they are the easiest to grow. Most of the *Dactylorhizas* that are sold by nurseries are divisions, rather than seed raised and are hybrids, usually exhibiting hybrid vigour. If you are lucky, they may come with fungi that will eventually allow seed of other orchids to germinate.

The fungi normally associated with orchids usually have an aversion to fertilisers containing ammonia, although applications of modest amounts (1 handful per sq metre) of Blood, Fish and Bone fertiliser to the above orchids seem beneficial and do not prevent seed from being germinated by natural fungi. Obviously the application of fungicides is disastrous. The major reason for orchid deaths is water.

The most successful methods of growing orchids are those that replicate their natural growing conditions. *Epipactis gigantea* and *E. palustris* normally grow close to alkaline streams or in dune slacks so they are constantly kept moist by oxygenated water. They will not grow beside stagnant water or in stinking bogs. These rhizomatous species will position their roots at a depth dependant upon the moisture level in their growing medium. If kept too dry their roots will go to the bottom of a 52 cm diameter pot; if kept too wet they will be within 0.5 cm of the surface. I aim to grow them so that their roots are 15 - 20 cm below the surface. These species tend to multiply by a factor of 3 to 4 per year when happy; if growing in containers they should be divided every 2 or 3 years in order to avoid overcrowding. Due to their variable root depth, hoeing is not recommended.

Most *Dactylorhizas* are wetland plants and like alkaline conditions similar to those of the *Epipactis* species above. Many of our native *Dactylorhizas* naturally grow in association with *E. palustris* although the Common spotted orchid (*D. fuchsii*) can tolerate drier conditions. These tuberous orchids can be deep rooted, but their tubers are normally fairly close to the surface. Soon after flowering the replacement tubers produce shoots, which usually stay just below the soil surface until February or March, so hoeing at virtually any time of year can decapitate them.

WATER - this is by far the most important thing: too much or too little and they die.

Whether they are growing in compost or in normal garden soil it is necessary to water them in times of drought. I do not mean water daily, I mean if there is no rain for 2 or more weeks in summer then water them with a bucket full of water per 52 cm pot every two weeks or so. *Dactylorhiza* roots can reach the bottom of 52 cm pots.

COMPOSTS - these are dependent on the natural rainfall and the frequency of watering. I live in a relatively dry area (640 mm/year) and have to water them most summers. I use a mixture of 1 part of commercial (peat free) compost and 1-2 parts of grit or Perlite. In a wet area of the country grittier composts may be used. Please do not assume that these are the only composts that work. Most members grow these species successfully and almost all use different mixtures; it is water supply that decides what compost is best. The species above are very adaptable, which is why they are normally easy to grow.

CONTAINERS - I grow the above either in 52 cm diameter plastic pots, which are sunk into the ground up to their rims, or in raised beds with a wick of capillary matting between the compost and a reservoir of water. I prefer pots for the *Dactylorhizas* and raised beds for the *Epipactis*, although either genus will grow happily in either type of container. The raised bed is shown in the accompanying drawing.

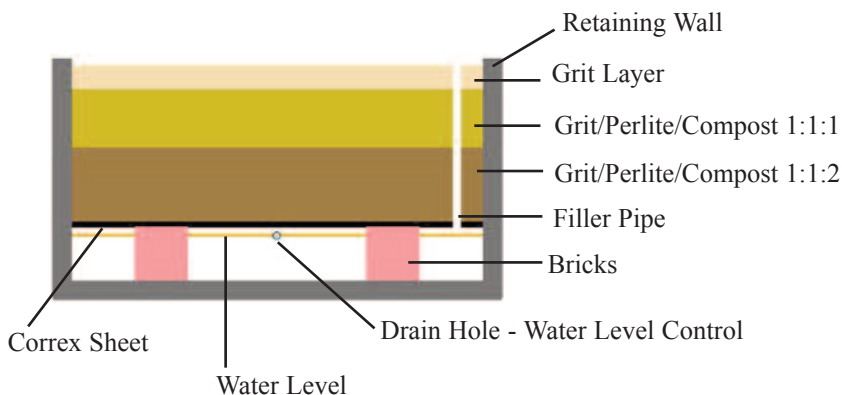


Diagram of *Epipactis* Raised Bed

Other orchids - these are more difficult. If they are reluctant to propagate vegetatively and you have no naturally occurring appropriate fungi then they are destined to eventually die. Orchids normally growing in wooded environments tend to obtain some of their carbon and nitrogen from trees via ectomycorrhizal fungi; these fungi

are reported to resent disturbance of the ground. Examples of this type of orchid include *Cephalanthera*, *Epipactis helleborine*, *E. leptochila*, *Neottia nidus-avis*, *Corallorhiza* and *Ophrys insectifera*. The chances of establishing these orchids in gardens are therefore not good.

Ophrys apifera is a lawn loving species, but it is likely to eventually die out if no fungi are present; its water requirements are critical around flowering time, and a shortage at this time will normally result in plant death. As this frequently happens in nature this has led to the widespread, but false, belief that *Ophrys apifera* is monocarpic (i.e. dies after flowering).

In the USA *Cypripedium* growers suggest that the total dissolved solids in any water used on the plants should not exceed 300 parts per million. They also suggest that fertilisers containing ammonium ions should not be used.

The collection of orchid plants or seed is not permitted without the permission of the landowner (and English Nature for Schedule 8 species). The maximum fine for illegal collection is £5000 per plant collected or damaged (e.g. by seed collection). Without the appropriate fungi, collected seed will not germinate in a garden.

A number of 'difficult to propagate' terrestrial orchid species have been collected from the wild by unscrupulous orchid dealers, who then supply false information in order to obtain certificates. Please do not buy such plants. If in doubt, please ask the Conservation Officer if the firm has a history and if the species are likely to be wild collected.

A question was raised about slugs and snails after the talks. In the garden I use jam jars buried up to their rims containing beer or cider, with a propped-up roof tile above them to allow a good sized gap, but keep the rain out. Around the orchids I find that coarse grit on top of the orchid beds acts a deterrent. Copper sheet is known to be good at repelling molluscs, hence its use as boat hull cladding. Some people claim that it gives the molluscs an electric shock, but I suspect that it is toxic to them. Excess copper is also toxic to plants, so copper slug repelling rings should not be placed too close to orchids.

A question was also raised about Bank voles. There are large numbers of voles in my lawn but I have not found any sign of vole damage to orchids, most of which are not close to the lawn. The orchids that I have growing in the lawn have chicken wire under them to prevent the moles tunnelling through the tubers.

HOS Field Trip to East Kent on 29th May 2005

Alan Blackman

The following members met at Stelling Minnis, south of Canterbury. Nigel Johnson, Rosemary Webb, David Slimming, Edwina Welham and her husband, Liz Copas, Tony Beresford, Jim and Rosemary Hill, David and Christine Hughes, Mike Baker and his wife, and the leader Alan Blackman. The weather was overcast and by the mid afternoon it started to rain, but this did not interfere with the day's activities.

The morning was spent at the Kent Wildlife Trust reserve at Park Gate Down. In the early 1970's *Orchis simia* seed from the nearby site discovered in the 1950's had been scattered on a small area of this reserve, and thirty odd years later they have spread over a very large part of the reserve, with counts into three figures - plenty to go round and no queues for photographs. They were in perfect condition and plenty of film was used (and pixels produced). Also seen here was a nice colony of *Platanthera chlorantha* on the open downland - just beginning to open the first flowers, *Ophrys insectifera*, *Listera ovata*, *Orchis mascula* (mainly gone over) a few *Anacamptis (Orchis) morio*, many *Gymnadenia conopsea* (some just starting to open their flowers), and a comparable number of *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* still in tight bud. Another plant species that proved to be of interest was the lovely *Aquilegia vulgaris* at the top of the bank.

After a picnic lunch on the common at Stelling Minnis we went to a woodland a few miles north (not the original planned visit to Yockletts Bank). This alternative site was chosen because of the amazing concentration of *Orchis purpurea* in a small area of quite open woodland, which meant that keeping the group together was easier. However, due to the overwhelming sight of all these "ladies", one member of the group did manage to head off in the wrong direction, but was soon re-united with the group by some local horse-riders. The *Orchis purpurea* were absolutely fantastic, and included many variations in colour and lip shape. Lips varied from "crinoline dresses" to "trousers" (culottes maybe), with the ground colour ranging from pure white to quite a deep pink, and varying amounts of markings on them. The sepal/petal hoods varied from a really dark maroon/black to pale pink. There were also at least six hypochromic plants with pure white, unmarked lips and yellow/green hoods. Other species present were *Ophrys insectifera*, *Listera ovata* (literally 1,000's) and *Neottia nidus-avis* all in flower, and *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* in tight bud.

As mentioned, it started raining during the afternoon, but the Beech canopy kept us dry, and again plenty of film was used and pixels produced. Later in the afternoon, fourteen very satisfied members made their way home to places from Somerset to the Chilterns, and Hampshire to Essex.

More Pale Ladies

Mike Gasson

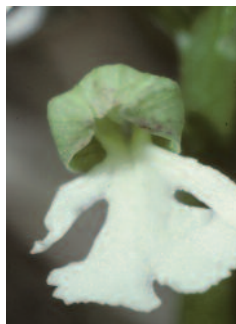
Readers of the April Journal probably noticed that the French straw hooded Lady Orchid was missing from page 47. It is included here together with a close up of the green hooded plant photographed at Yockletts Bank in the 1980s.



Straw hooded *Orchis purpurea* from France in 2004 (above) and two different pale variants from Kent 2005 (below)

As described in Alan Blackman's report, those members who joined the field trip to Kent at the end of May enjoyed a spectacular display of the variation that can occur in *Orchis purpurea*. This included several pale hooded hypochromic variants.

Although unable to take part in the HOS trip, I did manage to visit Kent this year and came across a similarly rich variety of colour variants at yet another site. The two other images here are from amongst the pale Kentish Lady Orchids encountered. In contrast to the orchids described in the earlier article, and some of those mentioned by Alan Blackman, these have feint spots on the lip. One of the plants has a distinct hint of anthocyanin in its straw coloured hood, whereas the other has an almost lemon coloured hood with barely visible lip marking.



Green hooded *Orchis purpurea* from Kent in 1980

Unusual forms of the Fly Orchid, *Ophrys insectifera* Les Lewis

Introduction

Although unusual forms (“variants”) of the Bee Orchid, *Ophrys apifera* are usually comprehensively described and illustrated in the standard orchid literature, this is not so in the case of the Fly Orchid, *Op. insectifera*. Nevertheless, various unusual forms of *Op. insectifera* do occur and this article describes some which have been recorded, especially in Britain.

Normally, *Op. insectifera* variants are only found growing with normal plants. Since, *Op. insectifera* is normally pollinated by pseudo-copulation by solitary wasps, such variants do not usually persist in any particular location, partly because they may be less well-adapted to deceive the wasps concerned, but more significantly because any cross-fertilisation which does occur is likely to be with normal plants growing nearby. However, like a normal *Op. insectifera*, a variant may sometimes reproduce vegetatively to form a clump of several spikes.

Named variants

Although rarely listed in the standard orchid literature, certain variant forms of *Op. insectifera* have been named as varieties.

***Ophrys insectifera* var. *ochroleuca* Camus (synonym: var. *virescens* Rolfe)**

Like *Op. apifera* var. *chlorantha*, this variety [Plate 1] lacks all (or almost all) of the dark anthocyanin pigments of the normal form resulting in a pale green labellum with a white speculum as well as green petals. Pictures of plants from old chalk workings in N. Hampshire are shown in “*Orchids of the British Isles*” (Foley & Clarke, 2005). It has been recorded from other sites in Hampshire and Kent by Mike Parsons and John Spencer, as well as in Wiltshire (see “*Britain’s Orchids*”, Lang, 2004). On the continent, it has been recorded at Wilje, Zuid-Limburg, Netherlands, and a plant from the Vercors mountains of France is shown in “*Die Orchideen Mitteleuropas und der Alpen*” (Presser, 2002).



Plate 1: *Ophrys insectifera*
var. *ochroleuca*
photo by John Spencer

Ophrys insectifera* var. *flavescens

This variety partially lacks the anthocyanin pigments of the normal form resulting in a yellowish-brown labellum with a pale blue or whitish speculum and greenish-brown petals. In the UK, two plants [Plate 2] were recorded in Gloucestershire in 1999 by John Spencer. On the continent, this variety, and similar partially achromatic plants with a greenish-brown labellum, have been recorded at Gilsdorf in the Eifel Mountains in Germany and near Lofer in Austria. Pictures of plants from Baden-Württemberg and the Eifel mountains, Germany are also shown in “*Die Orchideen Mitteleuropas und der Alpen*” (Presser, 2002). Just as *Op. apifera* var. *flavescens* is used by some authorities as a synonym for *Op. apifera* var. *chlorantha* (see, for example, comment by D. M. Turner Ettliger in *Watsonia* 22: 105), so *Op. insectifera* var. *flavescens* is sometimes also used as a synonym for *Op. insectifera* var. *ochroleuca*.



Plate 2: *Ophrys insectifera*
var. *flavescens*
Photo by John Spencer



Plate 3: *Ophrys insectifera*
var. *subbombifera*
Photo by John Spencer

Ophrys insectifera* var. *subbombifera
Ruppert

This variety is described by D. M. Turner Ettliger in “*Notes on British and Irish Orchids*” as having a labellum with a rounded or oval central lobe, although he also states that “plants tending to this variety are not rare and it is a matter of opinion where it starts”. A plant photographed at Leatherhead, Surrey is included in his “*Illustrations of British and Irish Orchids*”. On the continent, it has been recorded by John Spencer at Coustages, France [Plate 3], and a similar plant from the southern Frankenjura, Germany is shown in “*Die Orchideen Mitteleuropas und der Alpen*” (Presser,

2002). A form of this variety without a speculum (see below) has been recorded by Barry Tattersall in deciduous woodland in N. Hampshire.

***Ophrys insectifera* var. *parviflora* M. Schulze**

This variety is described in “*Guide des Orchidées d'Europe, d'Afrique du Nord et du Proche-Orient*” (Delforge, 2005) as a dwarf form with a slightly notched labellum which has been widely recorded in Europe, particularly in Britain and Germany. In “*Notes on British and Irish Orchids*”, Turner Ettliger (1997) describes it as having flowers “of only about half the usual size” and states that it seems to be very rare in Britain, occurring at random.

Variants with yellow-edged labellum

The lower edges of the divided central lobe of the labellum of *Op. insectifera* are often of a lighter brown or reddish-brown than the area immediately above. However, in a particularly striking form of *Op. insectifera* the central lobe of the labellum is brown with a broad yellow or greenish yellow band along its lower edge, sometimes with partly yellow side lobes. In Britain, this form [Plate 4] is best known from a marsh in Anglesey where was first discovered in 1995 by the Warden, Les Colley, and is still extant (12 spikes in 2005). However, the first record of this form in Britain appears to be a single plant [Plate 5] found by John Spencer on 21 May 1988 in the Cotswolds near Gloucester. As described and illustrated in “*Orchids of*



Plate 4: *Ophrys insectifera*
forma *luteomarginata*
with green petals
Photo by Graham Giles



Plate 5: *Ophrys insectifera*
forma *luteomarginata*
with greenish-brown petals
Photo by John Spencer



Plate 6: *Ophrys aymoninii*.
Photo by John Spencer

There are two other species in the *Op. insectifera* group which have a yellow-edged labellum. The first is *Op. aymoninii* [Plate 6] which is endemic to Aveyron and neighbouring départements in southern France. In addition to the yellow-edge, there are other differences from normal *Op. insectifera* plants: the labellum is more brightly coloured and broader (almost as wide as long when spread out), the side lobes are also more spread-out, the two antennae-like petals are yellowish-green (not purplish-black), the sepals are longer relative to the labellum, and the gynostegium (pollen sac)

at the top of the column is yellow or orangey-yellow (not stained red). Also, the perianth parts (sepal, petals and labellum) of *Op. aymoninii* are directed more forwards so that the angle between the lateral sepals, as well as that between the dorsal sepal

the British Isles" (Foley & Clarke, 2005), the plant has also been recorded for several years in deciduous woodland in N. Hampshire where 11 spikes flowered in 2005 [Cover Photograph]. Single plants have also previously been recorded at four other sites in N. Hampshire, Gloucestershire and Surrey. Internet websites show that it is also known from Germany (where it was recorded even earlier at Rassbach, Hessen on 23 May 1987), Nettenberg in Switzerland, the Cevennes in France and Catalonia in Spain (where it was also recorded by Simon Andrew).



Plate 7: *Ophrys subinsectifera*
Photo by John Spencer

and the labellum, is less than in *Op. insectifera*. The second yellow-edged species is the small-flowered *Op. subinsectifera* [Plate 7] which is endemic to Spain and characterised by its very short lateral lobes and short brownish petals often tipped green or yellow.

The yellow-edged plants recorded in Surrey, Catalonia and one site in Hampshire had the dark petals and red-stained gynostegium characteristic of a normal *Op. insectifera*. Those from Gloucestershire and Rassbach have green (or greenish-brown) petals similar to *Op. aymoninii* but a red-stained gynostegium. Those from Anglesey and the existing site in Hampshire have green petals and yellow gynostegium normally characteristic of *Op. aymoninii*. The similarity in appearance led to speculation that the British plants might actually be *Op. aymoninii*. However, after consulting Pierre Delforge, D. M. Turner Ettliger reported (BSBI News 77: 22) that the British plants did differ morphologically from *Op. aymoninii* and were in fact just a form of *Op. insectifera* only found growing with normal plants. In a personal communication (2005), Pierre Delforge elaborated these differences and confirmed his view that, for biological and morphological reasons, the British plants are a partially hypochromatic form of *Op. insectifera*.

The confusion with *Op. aymoninii* has not been helped by the fact that the yellow-edged form of *Op. insectifera* has not previously been fully described or named. As observed by D. M. Turner Ettliger (1998) when describing *Op. apifera* var. *belgarum*, infraspecific taxa have become progressively less often recognised among European orchids. However, as stated in “*Orchids of the British Isles*” (Foley & Clarke, 2005), expressly in relation to this yellow-edged form, variation within a species is the foundation for evolution. Although it is clearly not possible to predict its evolutionary potential at present, it would seem both appropriate and convenient to name it. In particular, this would have practical benefit in facilitating its identification and clearly distinguishing it taxonomically from *Op. aymoninii*. In line with the approach adopted by Sell & Murrell (1996) in “*The Flora of Great Britain and Ireland*” the rank of “forma” appears appropriate. Accordingly, the descriptive nomenclature *Op. insectifera* forma *luteomarginata* is proposed as follows:

***Ophrys insectifera* forma *luteomarginata* (forma nova)**

Description: like typical *insectifera* but always with a broad yellow or greenish-yellow band along the lower edge of labellum. *Petals* purplish-black, green or brownish green. *Gynostegium* is usually stained red but may be yellow or orangey-yellow. *Labellum* often almost as wide as long; *central lobe* clear dark or reddish-brown with broad yellow or greenish-yellow band along lower edge sometimes merging into adjacent brown area; *speculum* shiny blue to whitish; *lateral lobes* often stained or tipped with yellow.

(The alternative descriptive nomenclature “*Op. insectifera* forma *flavomarginata*” is not proposed since *Op. flavomarginata* (Renz) Baumann & Künkele is a rare orchid found in Cyprus and Israel.)

Plants from Aveyron and adjacent departments in France with the following features are *Ophrys aymoninii*:

perianth parts directed obliquely forward; *sepals* long; *petals* yellowish-green, sometimes with brownish base; *gynostegium* yellow; *labellum* brightly coloured, approximately wide as long; *central lobe* with broad bright yellow band along the lower edge of central lobe not merging into adjacent brown area, bluish speculum; *lateral lobes* outstretched, completely brown or brown with yellow tips, often curved longitudinally backwards to form a semi-cylinder.

Plants from the Pyrenean foothills and Navarra in the west to central Huesca in the east with the following features are *Op. subinsectifera*:

petals short, brownish, often tipped green or yellow; *gynostegium* stained red; *labellum* less wide than long with very short lateral lobes, dark brown with broad bright yellow or greenish-yellow band along the lower and lateral edges.

Other unusual colour forms

Brown sepals

Normally *Op. insectifera* has light green sepals. However, an otherwise normal *Op. insectifera* with brown sepals partially stained pink was recorded by John Spencer at Slad, Gloucestershire in 1991.

No speculum

As reported above, a var. *subbombifera* plant without a speculum [Plate 8] has been recorded by Barry Tattersall in N. Hampshire and is also illustrated in *Orchids of the British Isles*. An otherwise normal form without a speculum from Thüringen, Germany is shown in *Die Orchideen Mitteleuropas und der Alpen*.



Plate 8: *Ophrys insectifera*,
no speculum
Photo by Barry Tattersall

Silver or white speculum

The speculum is usually a reflective greyish-blue. However, it is occasionally silvery and otherwise normal plants with a white speculum (sometimes edged with black) have been recorded in Hampshire and Gloucestershire.

Yellow-speckled labellum

A plant with a yellow-speckled labellum has been recorded in Hampshire.

Peloric and other mutant forms

Labellum-like petals (Type A peloria)

A plant with the two petals replaced by two further labella has been recorded in Hampshire. The photograph is in the Hardy Orchid Society Newsletter (Bateman, 2001).

Sepal-like labellum and petals (*pseudopeloria*)

Two plants with the labellum and two petals replaced by three further sepals were found by Tony Hughes in the Avon Gorge, near Bristol around 1960.

Sepal-like petals, normal labellum

A single plant with the two normally antennae-like petals replaced by two sepals [Plate 9] has been recorded near Gloucester by John Spencer and Mike Parsons. (This form corresponds to *Op. apifera* var. *friburgensis* which is similarly characterised by sepal-like petals.)

Multiple sepals and petals

An otherwise normal plant with four sepals and four petals [Plate 10] was recorded by John Spencer near Millau, France.

Double-labellum ("*lusus*")

Plants with a double lip have been recorded near Arundel by Barry Tattersall [Plate 11]



Plate 9: *Ophrys insectifera*, sepal-like petals

Photo by John Spencer



Plate 10: *Ophrys insectifera*, multiple sepals and petals

Photo by John Spencer

and Arthur Hoare and on Anglesey by Les Colley. On the continent, similar plants have also been recorded in Schwäbische Alb, Germany and Aude, France.

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Plate 11: *Ophrys insectifera*,
double labellum
Photo by Barry Tattersall

Field Trip to the Dorset Coast on 30th April 2005

Norman Heywood

The day started out reasonably fine and dry, with a little coastal fog, which made it a little difficult for strangers to the area. But, we all met at Worth Matravers Car Park on time, which is on the Purbeck limestone ridge running from Swanage along the coast to Corfe Castle. This is a very ancient, and partially collapsed castle blocking the only natural gap through the ridge and forming the south side of the natural Poole Harbour.

At 10.00am we started our walk at a leisurely pace in an easterly direction on reasonable level ground. A few stiles slowed up those with creaking knees but we eventually joined the Priest's Path, an ancient byway which on a clear day has incredible views right across to the Needles on the west end of the Isle of Wight and across Bournemouth bay along to the Solent. However, today it had to be imagined, owing to the mist.

We then turned south down to Dancing Ledge, a favourite site for those who like to climb seriously. Also, it is the site of a stone quarry where in ancient days the boats drew right in to the side of the cliff for the stone to be loaded from a natural quay, of which there are a number along this stretch of coast. As soon as we came down the hill to the mid level of the cliff we started to find the Early Spider Orchids, and when we reached the level of the Coast Path they were there in thousands, in perfect condition for photography. I imagine we will see a few examples at Wisley Gardens during our Autumn meeting.

Luckily we had quite a few birders with us so much time was spent in bird identification. Along the cliffs we came upon a nice population of Green winged Orchids, *Anacamptis (Orchis) morio*, in a variety of colour forms. We then continued along the cliff path, and inland up to Worth Matravers. By then it was nearing one o'clock, so we had a lazy lunch, and then travelled in convoy back through Corfe and across to the Arne peninsula, a stretch of acid heathland with the old levelled ground across which the narrow gauge railway had carried clay trucks to a gunpowder manufacturing factory on the side of Poole harbour. As we arrived, those of us in the first couple of cars were lucky enough to see a Hobby fly off.

A quarter of a mile on either side of the road along the old track bed are proper bird hides, where you can sit in the dry, take your time and see the Dartford Warblers. The good news is that we all did, most for the first time.

From there we drove the short distance to the RSPB Arne Bird Sanctuary. This is on a promontory into the tidal Poole Harbour and has a range of sea and land birds as

well as large herds of Sika Deer. Sitting in the two storey bird hide there was some heated discussion as to whether we were looking at a Whimbrel or a Curlew; I'm pleased to advise that the Whimbrel won, I had never seen one before. We walked the whole of the perimeter of the reserve, and finally got back to the car park at about 5.30pm. I think I can say that a good varied day was had by all.

Chaos in Chios and the European Congress on Hardy Orchids

Mike J Parsons

I visited Chios with John Spencer between 11th and 19th April 2005 and also attended the 2nd European Congress on Hardy Orchids (13th to 16th April). Chios is the fifth largest Greek Island, south of Lesbos, north of Samos, and west of the Cesme peninsula of Turkey. I have been to all of these places in April and I was not expecting many species of orchid that I had not seen before. I realized how wrong I was after seeing the list of orchids that have been found on the island, a larger number than the neighbouring Greek islands. First there are thirteen different types of "*fusca*", four of which I had never heard of before and at least ten species from the "*scolopax*" family, which is hard to believe.

We arrived one day before the conference via Easyjet to Athens and Aegean Airways to Chios airport where we picked up our hired car and then settled in at the Golden Sand Hotel. The staff could not have been more helpful and we were soon in the car looking at sites. At Kallimasia near our hotel we had no trouble finding some good areas and it was not long before we found the ubiquitous *Ophrys sicula*, *Op. regisferdinandii* (which looks like a squashed fly), *Op. cinereophila*, (small *fusca*), *Op. minutula*, (small *scolopax*), *Op. umbilicata*, *Op. mammosa*, *Orchis anatolica*, *O. italica*, and *Himantoglossum (Barlia) robertianum*. It was here we also found *Op. tenthredinifera* subsp. *villosa*, and the only time we saw the nominate type. Also present were *Op. attaviria*, *Op. iricolor* and in bud everywhere *Anacamptis sancta* and *A. pyramidalis*, although we did see the latter in flower at Managros beach. In the area there were terraces full of *Tulipa aegenensis* still in good flower. It was near here that we bumped into Monika Hirth from Freiburg in Germany who together with Hannelore Spaeth described *Op. homeri* (Chios being Homer's birth place) in the AHO Journal. This orchid has a local distribution and is quite rare.

The conference started the following day at the purpose built conference centre in Chios town. Pantelis Saliaris had done a brilliant job organising the conference, especially for someone who does not own a mobile phone, and doesn't do e-mail. As a civil engineer he has also found time to publish in Greek the only reference book available – "*Wild Orchids of Chios*" (1999).

The conference was like the United Nations with all of us having earphones to hear the proceedings translated, but most of it was in English anyway. How considerate of our mainland neighbours! The conference was free and lunches and dinners were also provided free by the municipalities, a sort of PR job for promoting Chios and future tourism. The meals were eaten as Civic Receptions in villages all over the island. The speakers and their talks were:

Prof. D. Tyteca (Belgium) “Molecular phylogenetics of *Ophrys* groups based on DNA markers”.

Dr. D. L Roberts (UK) “When is an asymmetric plant-pollinator relationship symmetrical”.

Prof Dr E Sezik (Turkey) “Destruction of *Ophrys* species used to obtain salep in Turkey”.

Prof. R. M. Bateman (UK) “The critical importance of relationships: combining morphological and molecular data to detect optimal boundaries in problematic genera such as *Ophrys*”.

S. Malmgren (Sweden) “Asymbiotic propagation of European orchids”.

S. Sfikas (Greece) “The aridities and influence on the orchids of Greece”.

I. Karatzas (Greece) “XComptoglossum, a rare hybrid from from Lesbos”.

J H Willems (Netherlands) “Light climate and plant performance of *Ophrys insectifera* a threatened orchid species in the Netherlands”.

R. Nazzaro (Italy) “Orchids in Campania”.

B. Juskiewicz-Swaczyna (Poland) “Secondary expansions of *D.incarnata* in former arable areas of N E Poland”.

Prof H. Paulus (Austria) “Deceived males: Female mimicry as pollination strategy in the Mediterranean orchid genus *Ophrys*”.

Prof J. E. Bjørndalen (Norway) “*O.insectifera* at the edge of its geographical range: aspects of ecology, vegetation affiliation and conservation in Norway ‘

A. Alibertis (Greece) ‘Orchids of Crete: Endemics- *Ophrys*”.

Dr M. Akhalkatsi (Georgia) “Orchids and their habitats in Georgia”.

The field trips started the following day and we decided to follow the coaches. We did not have a good start as we got a puncture but with the help of Georgia, one of the aides, we were soon on our way to a new venue. After looking at one good site for *Op. ferrum-equinum* and the usual array of orchids we all decided that the customary two hour lunch was not for us. After a large climb we found a carpet full of the endemic single flowered yellow fritillary *Fritillaria peline*. It was a picture but here it was too high for most other plants to be in bloom. Further down we stopped at a few more sites, saw *Orchis intacta* and then came to a site for the newly described *Op. persephoniae*, a large robust ‘*fusca*’ type with large yellow edges. It was great to have Hannes Paulus with us as he had described this species a few years ago, and was able to show us the orchid being pollinated and how it was different



Ophrys ferrum-equinum
Photo by John Spencer



Ophrys parosica,
Photo by John Spencer

from other species. He also showed us at least five different ways we could tell *Op. phryganae* from *Op. sicula*. It was the only place we saw *Anacamptis papilionacea* plants, which were well past their best as were some *Ophrys sitiaca* standing near the roadside.

The following day we decided to look for *Op. homeri*, which we eventually found in the south of the island. Whilst seeking the orchid we did find the newly described species *Op. parosica*, a large pretty mottled 'fusca' type with yellow edges, and possibly *Ophrys punctulata*, which may be another form of *Op. parosica*. Next to this orchid we found *Op. leucadica* and *Op. blitopertha*. It was then that Monika and Hannes turned up in their own car and looked at the orchids that we had found. A *Blitopertha* beetle (confirmed by Hannes) landed on the plant thought to be *Op. blitopertha*, thereby confirming our identification and showing that the orchid was not *Op. persephonae* that in some ways it resembled. It was a good day except that we could not find *Orchis punctulata* which had been seen on an organised tour a week earlier. This was only the second record of this orchid for the island.

John and I often floated off from the main groups, but it was easy to re-find them as big parties do not move fast and the coaches had to take their time round the hairpin bends. In one area we visited we saw more *Op. ferrum-equinum*, some very large in the shape of *Op. labiosa* and some looking remarkably like *Op. spruneri*, both of which are reported from the areas we visited. We were guided to the north of the island where we found *Op. straussii* and *Op. reinholdii* as well as their hybrids. On the way we believe we found a

Himantoglossum rosette near Fita. Himantoglossums have never been found on the island, apart from the renamed *Barlia*. I reported it to Pantelis Saliaris and he and Alibertis Antonis (author of 'Orchids of Crete') went to the site and found even more rosettes and a rising *Op. phrygia*. So we will all have to wait patiently until June to see what happens, maybe *H. comperianum*, *H. montis-tauri* or *H. caprinum*. On another site which Richard Bateman and Paula Rudall had passed on to us we found *Neotinea tridentata* with loads of other orchids.

After the conference we had two days spare. The first day we visited the caves but the army had military manoeuvres in the area so we decided so see if we could find *Op. lindia*, another 'fusca' type orchid recently described by Hannes Paulus from Rhodes and reported as appearing on the island near Olympi by Mike Taylor. We found something similar and wished we had Hannes with us to confirm. However the site was very good and we added *Orchis (Aceras) anthropophora*, *Op. brevisfera* and the first bud of *Op. fuciflora* to our list. Before going back we paid another last visit to see *Op. homeri* where we re-met our Greek friends Nicholas Petrou and sister Maria. Grace did wonderful sketches of some of the rare orchids we had seen that day.

The last day we went up to the far north of the island and by the roadside found a very apple green *Op. bucephala* with some very leafy *Serapias bergonii*, before climbing up the slopes of Mount Pelineon mainly to see the early *Op. dodekanensis*. This was recently described from Rhodes and we found it in a meadow with thousands of *O. anatolica*. On the way we saw several species including



Ophrys dodekanensis
Photo by John Spencer



Ophrys bucephala
Photo by John Spencer

O. provincialis, *O. intacta*, *Op. omegaifera*, going over *Op. basilissa* and the emerging spikes of *Limodorum abortivum*. We tried to find the *Epipactis* rosettes that Dr. Wolfgang Rohm had found on a previous visit, but we failed miserably.

After descending the mountain we went to the west of the island for our rendezvous with Mike Taylor. We were joined by some other naturalists and we all visited some meadows near a river. Here we found quite a few different species of orchid including large numbers of *Anacamptis (Orchis) morio* subsp. *picta*, *Serapias vomeracea*, and *S. bergonii*. We saw a lone *Op. cornuta* and some *S. parviflora*, apparently rare on Chios, and quite a few *Op. apifera* in bud. Afterwards we all had a nice cup of tea with Ruth and our companions from our walk, a refreshing end to our holiday. Until now Chios has been a well kept secret with more orchid lovers visiting Rhodes to the south. On the basis our experiences, things are about to change.

I would like to thank everyone who helped me during the conference, and a special mention to John Spencer and Graham Giles who helped with this article. Let's hope they do not wait another five years before there is another European orchid conference.

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As usual I have a wide selection of seedlings in the genera *Anacamptis (Orchis)*, *Ophrys*, *Pterostylis*, *Serapias* and others, plus a selection of *Cypripedium* for Autumn delivery.

Please note: my 2005 catalogue will be ready at the end of July –then it is first-come first-served....

Please send a C5 S.A.E. for your copy (all previous customers will get one automatically).

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The logo for SERAMIS, featuring the word "SERAMIS" in bold, red, sans-serif capital letters on a yellow background with a green horizontal bar at the bottom.A photograph of several orchid plants with long, thin stems and large, striped flowers. The flowers are light-colored with dark stripes and are arranged in a cluster. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green.

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