

Journal
of the
HARDY ORCHID SOCIETY



Vol. 8 No. 4 (62) October 2011

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, 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.

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Front Cover Photograph

Osmia sp. with pollinia from *Serapias cordigera* from “*The Flower of the European Orchid - Form and Function*” by Jean Claessens and Jacques Kleynen. See Book Review on page 135 and Northern Meeting Report in the Chairman’s Note on page 112.

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Editorial Note

The orchid literature features strongly in this issue with an article from Keith Fry that provides an overview of British and Irish orchid books and a description of his personal favorites. In addition, there are several references to the work of Jean Claessens and Jacques Kleynen that culminated in their publication of “*The Flower of the European Orchid: Form & Function*”. The stunning cover photograph is taken from this book which is reviewed by Simon Tarrant. I had the pleasure of fine tuning the English texts as they were written and in the process learnt a great deal from these masters of orchid pollination biology. The photography in the book is exceptional and it provides a comprehensive overview of the orchid pollination literature as well as recent important observations in the field – well worth a look!

I am pleased to include Peter Fitchett’s account of his efforts to protect orchids in his work place as it is a good example of HOS members contributing to the conservation agenda. I have also had feedback from David Johnson on the Kentish Lady Orchid population that I mentioned in the last *JHOS* and it does still appear to be under massive herbivore pressure. The *Dactylorhiza* theme from the last *JHOS* is picked up by Thomas Ennis who describes his long quest to identify correctly the “Saltee Orchid” on a small Irish island. Ian Phillips adds some diversity as a sense of smell features in his account of the Lizard Orchid. Lastly, there are some detailed accounts from the recent field trips that are now co-ordinated by Malcolm Brownsword. These events are an important part of HOS so do contact Malcolm if you have ideas for future orchid seasons.

Chairman's Note

Celia Wright

Since the last Journal we have held a very successful meeting in Leeds. I was encouraged to see that a number of southerners had ventured north to join the strong local contingent who always make our northern meetings so enjoyable with lots of interaction and laughter. Their journey was well rewarded by our excellent speakers. The orchids of Chile (Bill Temple) were new to many, while Alan Blackman's talk on southern France helped some new members to plan future trips there. Alan Gendle introduced us to the natural hybrids he has found in Cumbria; we hope to have a future Journal article in which he can expand on the features he looks for when deciding on their probable parentage. A highlight of the Leeds meeting was the talks by Jean Claessens and Jacques Kleynen who came from the Netherlands to tell us about their lifelong study of the structure and pollination of the European orchid flower. Their spare time for many years has been spent in the patient study of pollinators, waiting by a plant for several hours and sometimes days to see which insects visit a flower and transfer pollinia, and recording this with some of the best macro photographs I have ever seen. I was particularly impressed by their studies of the pollination of *Pseudorchis albida* by Microlepidoptera, small night flying moths, never previously reported in this detail. Part of the reward has been their production of a wonderful book, "*The Flower of the European Orchid: Form & Function*". This is appropriately dedicated to their wives who have travelled with them on their quest; like their husbands, they must have the patience of saints. Jacques and Jean were able to bring some copies to the meeting and I was not surprised to see them all sold and a list of names for orders. A further set of books has arrived in the UK, including four copies that have not been pre-ordered. These are available from me at the special offer price of £64 to the first four HOS members who contact me (celia.wright@tiscali.co.uk or 01743 884576) to arrange payment and delivery.

Now we are looking ahead to the meeting at Capel Manor at the end of October. Phil Cribb's talk on *Calanthe* will provide us with a comprehensive overview of the genus from an internationally respected speaker. We shall also hear about orchids from as far apart as Sardinia and Australia, not forgetting Scotland, while our President, Richard Bateman and Paula Rudall will introduce us to some of their latest research findings. All that and the photographic competition too, so book now if you haven't done so already.

In the last Journal, I promised to write again about increasing HOS involvement in conservation. We plan to share the committee's ideas with you at next year's AGM and Spring meeting. I will also be looking for speakers on the conservation theme for our 2012 meetings, so please let me know if you'd like to volunteer a talk or know of someone I could approach. My best wishes to you all for the rest of 2011.



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Field Trips 2011

Malcolm Brownsword

I have already approached a few members, asking if they would be prepared to lead a field trip next year, particularly to a site the society has not visited before. If you are prepared to do so, or know someone else who would, then please contact me by e-mail (malcolm.brownsword@tesco.net). In particular, I would like someone to lead a 2012 field trip to the Derbyshire Dales, probably to Lathkill Dale and/or other sites to see the Early Purple Orchids in flower. Individual reports from the 2011 field trips follow:

National Collection of Pleione, Bourne End 17th April – Led & Reported by Malcolm Brownsword

In terms of attendance, this was a disappointing start to the year's programme. The leader and then the deputy leader and one other member were forced to drop out at the last minute, and only one of the remaining five turned up on the day. Nevertheless, this lucky member had the undivided attention of Ian Butterfield, who had kindly offered his time for this trip.

Samphire Hoe 2nd May – Led by Mike Parsons & Reported by Colin Metherell

The field trip to Kent, organised by Mike Parsons, was a great success. At the first location on the coast we saw hundreds of Early Spider orchids in flower, although some were a little past their best. Also, a few Common Spotted Orchids were in leaf. Later we stopped at a wood in north Kent to see lots of spectacular Lady Orchids, Early Purple Orchids (mostly past their best), some Twayblades, and a few Man, and Bird's Nest Orchids. There were also some Helleborines in leaf. We saw seven orchid species in flower in one day. Excellent day out; thanks Mike for organising it.

Chappett's Copse, 15th May – Led by Nigel Johnson & Reported by Rosemary Webb

This trip had been brought forward by a week because of the exceptionally early season this year and the condition of the orchids. The group of six HOS members were fortunately able to manage this. We met in the small parking area at the Hampshire Wildlife Trust's reserve of Chappett's Copse, just east of the village of West Meon. Even before reaching the entrance to the reserve, spikes of Sword-leaved Helleborine, *Cephalanthera longifolia*, could be seen along the bank besides the little lane leading to the reserve. It was a fine, dry morning with mainly sunny, diffused and overcast conditions that were good for photography.

The reserve is accessed by a path which runs the length of the copse and the Sword-leaved Helleborines started to be visible within the first few metres. They were well

past their best with only a few flowers at the top of the spike being in anything like reasonable condition. This was very disappointing but it is fairly open and sunny here, perhaps they would be better further into the wood. We walked along the path to the area of the main reserve. A Birds-nest Orchid, *Neottia nidus-avis*, was in full flower beside the path, growing in a patch of leafmould beneath a large beech tree. In the main area for the Helleborines, there is a photographic area set aside, where there are fine plants, easily accessible without trampling and causing other damage. Here there were some plants still in flower but the extremely early season was very evident as so many spikes showed their lower flowers to be completely over. However, there were enough good spikes to keep the photographers happy and there was also a small colony of Fly Orchids, *Ophrys insectifera*, in perfect condition and good light. Four healthy shoots of Broad-leaved Helleborine, *Epipactis helleborine*, were also found amongst the Sword-leaved, giving promise of things to come later in the year. We moved to some of the other areas which are being carefully managed and which contain an equally magnificent display of the orchids, with the addition of a quantity of White Helleborines, *Cephalanthera damasonium*, which were in perfect flower. Chappett's Cope is a wonderful place; there were over 3700 Sword-leaved Helleborines in flower this year and in normal spring seasons this would have been the optimum time to see them – sadly the unusual conditions this year meant that they were past their best but it was still an enjoyable morning.

It was now lunchtime and the sky had become overcast. We were invited to Nigel's house to picnic and were taken on a tour of his lovely wild garden on a chalky downland site. There were many White Helleborines in flower under beech trees and in some open patches. There were also a quantity of Twayblades, *Neottia ovata*, in flower and in the damper area near the pond, the Southern-marsh Orchids, *Dactylorhiza praetermissa*, had their first flowers opening.

After lunch, we took a short drive, down another very narrow lane to another wood. We walked down a public footpath and entered the wood at the far end. There is a small colony of Fly Orchids here but there had been recent disturbance and none could be found that day. This wood is really notable for the large quantity of Birds-nest Orchids that occur here. Almost immediately we came across a group of good sized spikes with some fine seedheads from the previous year. All through the wood, there was a fine show of White Helleborines and many more groups and individual plants of Birds-nest Orchid. Anyone unfamiliar with this wood would probably be impressed by the quantity of Birds-Nest orchids. However, apart from being an exceptionally early season, it has also been very dry this spring. There were, in fact, many fewer Birds-nest Orchids than usual here today.

We climbed the hill, through the wood and returned to the cars on another footpath. All the way along, there were plants of White Helleborine and some very fine Birds-

nest Orchids. Perhaps an indication of the effects of seasonal variation and lack of rainfall could be seen in one group of Birds-nest Orchids. Today, there were four flowering spikes under a large beech tree surrounded by fourteen seed-heads from last year's flowering which also followed a dry spring and the flowering was not as good as in previous years.

The Chilterns 15th May – Led & Reported by Malcolm Brownsword



Fly Orchid at Homefield Wood
Photo by Malcolm Brownsword

Fourteen members visited Homefield Wood and Hartslock where a total of 10 orchid species and one hybrid were seen, over half of them in flower. At Homefield Wood the Military and Fly orchids were just in flower, both in the meadow area and in the woodland glades. White Helleborines were past their best and none of the Greater Butterfly orchids under the rather dense canopy of trees were going to flower this year, only pairs of large healthy leaves being visible. Although it was too early for their flowering, we found about fifteen Broad-leaved Helleborines, half of them in a shady corner of the meadow area, and the spotted leaves of Common-spotted orchids were clearly visible.

Moving on to Hartslock, the two flowering Lady orchids were past their best, but 80 or so of the controversial Lady × Monkey hybrids were at their best, almost 3 weeks after the onset of flowering. In this very shallow soil overlying chalk, many Monkey orchids had turned yellow and shrivelled in the dry spring, and none were in flower (about 30 did flower two weeks later, but this is a small fraction of the number flowering last year). The healthy leaves of Common-spotted and Pyramidal Orchids suggested there would be a good showing of flowers later in the year. This proved to be the case. Several new members saw some orchid



Lady × Monkey hybrid
Photo by Malcolm Brownsword

species for the first time on this visit and the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust benefited from a collection of £40.

Kent 30th May – Led & Reported by Mike Parsons

We all met up in Folkestone, mainly to see *Ophrys fuciflora* (*holoserica*) on the hills around the town. I was a bit worried that the orchids would be past their best this year as the main site often has very early blooms. We were very lucky and managed to find 15 *O. fuciflora* fully in flower. Last year being a cold year we managed to find just seven orchids, whereas two years ago there were over 30. The site on Sugarloaf Hill did not reveal anything this year (15 found in bloom two years ago). Also, there were eight *Orchis anthropophora* in good flower, whereas three years ago there were none at all. The nearest site is probably ten miles away. We did not find any *Ophrys apifera* this time, although there some were on the lawns of nearby houses. There were also a few *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* just coming out and some *Anacamptis pyramidalis* emerging.

We visited Caesar's Camp which also has some *Op. fuciflora* but it had been overgrazed so we could only see *Gymnadenia conopsea* and *Listera* (*Neottia*) *ovata* on the steep sides of the hill. There was a lot there of the latter species two years ago and none last year as it was too cold. The only thing I could not understand was that in the main field for the orchids was a herd of Highland cattle. I would have thought that they would have been introduced after the orchids had seeded. Later on we tried to find *Himantoglossum hircinum* at a local site but were out of luck as only one had appeared this year and had been eaten, and no others had emerged even though there were nine plants last year.

Field Trip and Orchid Education Day 11th June – Led & Reported by David Hughes

Nine members met in the leader's home in the New Forest for what we believe is the first attempt by the society to instruct in orchid identification. There were sufficient *Dactylorhiza maculata* that we were able to dissect some plants and florets, becoming familiar with different parts and terminology. As usual the knowledge of the participants was much greater than that of the leader so he learnt a lot. The party then moved to a boggy part of the forest where marsh orchids led to the usual dispute about their identity, the final verdict being *Dactylorhiza incarnata* subsp. *pulchella*. A colony of *Platanthera bifolia* led to no disagreement.

The afternoon was spent on the chalk downland on Fontmell Down 30 miles away. *Anacamptis pyramidalis* and *Gymnadenia conopsea* were coming into flower, *Platanthera chlorantha* and *Neottia ovata* just going over and *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* in abundance, giving the chance to compare the downland and heath species. *Ophrys apifera* had been absent the week before but now was perfect and in abundance, with

promise of even better to come. We hope the idea of basic orchid identification instruction will prove popular and would be pleased to hear from any members who would like help or to instruct.

The Chilterns 18th May – Led & Reported by Peter Daltry

A typical changeable June day with heavy showers and sunny spells forecast saw a group of HOS members meeting on the Chiltern Escarpment overlooking Princes Risborough. After the usual introductions and pleasantries, we drove to our first site, only a few hundred metres down the road. Here, in the roadside verge in a thick canopy of beech were a few specimens of Violet Helleborine (*Epipactis purpurata*), not yet in flower and looking rather sinister with their purplish-green hooked stems emerging from the leaf-litter. There were no signs this year of the strikingly variegated specimens of the Broad-leaved Helleborine (*Epipactis helleborine*) found in the same area in the past. After a short car journey in the same area we found more Violet Helleborine in a similar habitat. However, in addition to the normal type there were two specimens of the variety *Epipactis purpurata* var. *rosea*; these plants lack any chlorophyll and are a stunning rosy pink colour, looking like they have been fashioned out of pink plastic or chewing-gum. The plants are caged, not as a protection from their Triffid-like appearance but from the hoards of muntjac deer!

A further short car ride brought us to Grangelands/Pulpit Hill where stunning panoramic views across Buckinghamshire towards Oxfordshire greeted us. Here, in high summer, the area is alive with downland butterflies such as Marbled White and



White Pyramidal Orchid
Anacamptis pyramidalis
Photo by Malcolm Brownsword

Chalkhill Blue; today however, instead of butterflies we encountered golf-ball sized Roman snails by the dozen. A short walk along the well-used track through some beech woodland enabled us to find a small, just about to flower, group of Broad Leaved Helleborine cowering at the base of a beech tree and a few spikes of Bird's-Nest Orchid (*Neottia nidus-avis*) erupting randomly from the bare soil. Further on, clustered under a beech tree was a colony of around fifty White Helleborine (*Cephalanthera damasonium*), many decapitated by the muntjac deer and rabbits and all now finished flowering. On the downland itself, protected by coarse vegetation, specimens of Chalk Fragrant Orchid (*Gymnadenia conopsea*), including the white variety var. *albiflora*, Common Spotted Orchid

(*Dactylorhiza fuchsia*) Pyramidal Orchid (*Anacamptis pyramidalis*) and Common Twayblade (*Neottia ovata*) were found in a visual medley in the grass. Typically tiny specimens of Musk Orchid (*Herminium monorchis*) were growing in short turf amongst the similar looking lady's bedstraw.



Chalk Fragrant Orchids
Photo by Malcolm Brownsword

After a lunch break interrupted by a rain shower we drove past Chequers and on to Aston Clinton Ragpits. Here, at some point in the past, chalk has been extracted leaving a layer of thin soil over an undulating series of depressions. The first orchid to greet us was a specimen of Greater Butterfly Orchid (*Platanthera chlorantha*) followed by several thousand flowering spikes – 13,000 have been counted – of Chalk Fragrant Orchid and lesser numbers of Pyramidal Orchid (including a superb var. *albiflora*), Common Spotted Orchid and Common Twayblade. Two flowering spikes of Bee Orchid (*Ophrys apifera*) were found, as were White Helleborine (nearly 1 metre tall!) and Broad-leaved Helleborine. Other plants of note included wild specimens of *Daphne mezereum* and Adder's Tongue fern. The Greater Butterfly Orchid (or should it be Giant Butterfly Orchid as some were so robust?) has had its best show here for many years, and the Common Spotted Orchids were showing some particularly robust and interesting specimens this year. I would like to thank the fellow HOS members who attended for making it such a pleasurable day out.

Porton Down 19th June – Led & Reported by Malcolm Brownsword



Ichneumon Wasp with pollinia
on Frog Orchid
Photo by Malcolm Brownsword

Twenty nine members took part in the society's second visit to Porton Down. The conservation officer had allowed us to visit again after only three years on condition that we supplied records, not just of orchids, but also other plants and also animals (the latter in its widest sense). Following my subsequent forwarding of the records he was very pleased with the results, which included several first records. My particular thanks to the seven members who contributed their lists.

The weather stayed dry but it was windy at times. The dry spring had resulted in some of the orchids flowering less well than they had done for our first visit, but nevertheless we

saw large numbers of Chalk Fragrant and Common Spotted Orchids. A particular highlight was a single hybrid between these two species, which I had previously only see at Aston Clinton Ragpits. Another highlight was watching an Ichneumon Wasp with four pairs of pollinia attached to its head slowly moving on a Frog Orchid. To the delight of the photographers amongst us (but not necessarily to the rest) it obligingly remained on the plant for perhaps fifteen minutes. In one area we saw Southern Marsh Orchid and its hybrids with Common Spotted Orchid and there were also a few specimens of the "Leopard Spotted" *f. junialis* of Southern Marsh Orchid. Bird's Nest and Pyramidal Orchids were also seen in good numbers, as well as White Helleborine and still-to-flower Broad-leaved and perhaps Green-flowered Helleborines. The single Lady Orchid, discovered at least three years ago, had flowered a few weeks earlier.



Hybrid Chalk Fragrant ×
Common Spotted Orchid
Photo by Malcolm Brownsword

In addition to the orchids, of the many plant species recorded, the Yellow Bird's Nest, Bastard Toadflax, Meadow Clary, Cyprus

Spurge and Deadly Nightshade probably drew the most interest. Hairy Violet, the foodplant for the Dark Green Fritillary butterfly was also seen, as were at least twenty specimens of this large butterfly whose numbers are declining all over the U.K. Other insects that were seen included Bloody-nosed Beetle, Dark Bush Cricket and a Wood Tiger Moth, an uncommon species. Roe deer, buzzards and a single Peregrine falcon were also spotted. Throughout our visit, we were accompanied by several local volunteers who were our guides and they were extremely helpful. Some of our more experienced members also helped the flow of knowledge move a little in the opposite direction and I think that the whole visit was greatly enjoyed by all present.

Tynedale and Holy Island 9-11th July – Led & Reported by Colin & Angela Scrutton

This year we added extra days before and after the main event. We began on Saturday with a visit to Ainsdale Dunes on the Lancashire coast to see the Dune Helleborine (*Epipactis dunensis*) for comparison with the Tyne Helleborine and Lindisfarne Helleborine (*Epipactis sancta*). Five of our group of nine enthusiastic participants joined us for that and a few spikes of Green-flowered Helleborine (*Epipactis phyllanthes*) were found in flower as a bonus. On the Sunday we found plenty of good spikes of Tyne Helleborine on the South Tyne and all agreed on the clear morphological distinction between it and the coastal Dune Helleborine, at least at the sites visited. There were fewer Lindisfarne Helleborines flowering on Holy Island this year, but several good spikes were seen, as well as a variant of Common Spotted Orchid (*D. fuchsii* var. *rhodochila*). As helleborines were the theme, we added a trip to Bishop Middleham Quarry, Co. Durham, the stronghold of the Dark-red Helleborine (*Epipactis atrorubens*), on the Monday. There was a profusion of flowering spikes, together with many, mainly Marsh, Fragrant Orchids (*Gymnadenia densiflora*). One or two spikes of Common Fragrant Orchid (*Gymnadenia conopsea*) were claimed and the party agreed that separating these two species, particularly where they occur together and presumably hybridise, is all but impossible. A couple

David Hughes
taking photographs of the
Lindisfarne Helleborine

Photo by Colin Scrutton



of Bee Orchids (*Ophrys apifera*) were still recognisable, but a bonus was a small spike of the Fragrant × Common Spotted hybrid (*×Dactylodenia st-quintinii*). Altogether the trip seemed to go well and we were fortunate to be dry (weather-wise) throughout!

Orchids in the high Pennines 22 & 23th July – Led & Reported by Alan Gendle



Creeping Lady's-tresses (top)
Photo by Alan Gendle

Habitat of Creeping Lady's-tresses (bottom)
Photo by John Spencer

The trip began on Friday morning with a visit to Cliburn Moss NNR, reputedly a relic of the ancient Caledonian forest. A fine display of Creeping Lady's-tresses (*Goodyera repens*) was observed on boggy woodland floor. A short drive to the east brought us to a roadside site of Green-flowered Helleborine (*Epipactis phyllanthes*); this particular variety was *vectensis*. The original plan had been to visit Moorhouse NNR in Upper Teesdale. A reconnaissance trip into the area earlier in the week to the Lesser Twayblade site revealed that all the plants had gone over, so the trip continued to stay in the Eden valley area. On a visit to the Waitby Greenriggs reserve the group looked at the masses of Fragrant Orchids and Marsh Helleborine. We continued to Smardale NNR to see Broad-leaved Helleborine (*Epipactis helleborine*) but the plants we found were all still in bud.

The group reconvened on Saturday morning in Alston, England's highest market town. The South Tyne and Nent valleys were dominated by lead mining for centuries. The result of this mining activity has produced some interesting orchid sites. Alston railway station, built as a terminus for a narrow gauge line to export lead, proved to be an ideal site for the inland variety of Dune Helleborine (*Epipactis dunensis*) which is always found on ground polluted with heavy metals. Over 50 flowering spikes were counted in the car park and track side area. Our next stop in the Nent valley was to visit

the waste tips of an old lead mine. The site contains hundreds of Frog Orchids (*Dactylorhiza viridis*) with colours ranging from bright green to red.

We left the Nent valley and headed over a mountain road for the South Tyne valley. On route at 1670 feet we not only found a few spikes of Northern Fragrant Orchid (*Gymnadenia borealis*) going over, but three fine hybrids between Northern Fragrant and Common Spotted Orchids in flower. Descending into the South Tyne valley, our next stop was at the washing floor of Bentyfield lead mine. Exploring around the area we found Northern Marsh Orchids (*Dactylorhiza purpurella*), Early Marsh Orchids (*Dactylorhiza incarnata*) and Common Spotted Orchids (*Dactylorhiza fuchsii*). The variety *alpina* was present in the Spotted Orchid population. After lunch we headed towards Garrigill. A roadside stop saw us admiring a fine collection of Early Marsh × Northern Marsh hybrids. Our final stop on the return to Alston was another roadside site with hundreds of Common Twayblades (*Neottia ovata*) flowering on the bank side.



Frog Orchids showing variation in flower colour
Photos by Alan Gendle

The New Forest 27th August – Led & Reported by David Hughes

A full party of Hardy Orchid Society members met in the New Forest on a blustery day to admire the copious numbers of *Spiranthes spiralis* growing on the forest lawns. There were as a conservative estimate 10,000 spikes. *Spiranthes* like to grow out on the lawn but look better nestling in the pink spikes of heather or dangerously between the hooves of a highland cow. Inevitably at this time of year this was a one orchid day but the party also enjoyed other forest specialities like Field Gentian, *Gentianella campestre*, Royal Fern *Osmunda regalis* and Hampshire Purslane, *Ludwigia palustris*.

They Are Only Weeds - A Conservation Battle

Peter Fitchett

Twelve years ago I started work at an engineering company on the edge of a Cotswold town. I soon realised what a gem of a site it was. Deer, fox, wood mouse, lots of butterflies and insects were seen regularly. For several years the site, which had a stream, woods and grassland, provided a wealth of flora and fauna to enjoy in the early morning and at lunch times. A couple of years ago we employed a new handy man who was more than enthusiastic with his mower and strimmer. Despite pleas not to cut the swathe of cuckoo flowers blooming on the front lawn they were mown down in their prime with the result that this year we had no flowers and consequently no visits of Orange Tip butterflies.

In the coppice, a good population of cowslips and cuckoo flowers grow and last year, whilst I went to take some photos, I noticed for the first time Common Spotted Orchids in leaf. On closer inspection I recognised some Twayblades. Normally this area is also cut but somehow got overlooked. I reported the finds to the factory site manager and company environment officer. Consequently future maintenance in this area was postponed. To my surprise over the summer a small population of Pyramid Orchids, Bee Orchids and Broad Leaved Helleborines also emerged.

Perhaps I became complacent and all was not well as both factory site manager and environment officer left during the winter and their duties were shared out. Arriving at work one morning this April I saw one of the factory workers driving the mower

to the coppice. Urgent requests not to cut the cowslips were rebuffed with “they’re only weeds and we got to tidy the place up”. Some urgent negotiation with his foreman explaining that the site contained hardy native orchids (some incredulity here – orchids are big and tropical aren’t they) halted the cutting, and produced a promise not to cut again until the orchids had set seeds. I also managed to get an agreement not to mow within one metre of the edge of the coppice where Bee and Pyramids Orchids grow.



Fig 1(above): Broad Leaved Helleborine

Fig 2 (opposite): Bee Orchid Fig 3: Pyramidal Orchid

Fig 4: Unmown area at coppice edge with sticks protecting the Bee Orchids

Photos by Peter Fitchett



I contacted our local Wildlife Trust who sent me a mowing guidance sheet which advises when to cut and when not to. This had the benefit of conveying some kind of authority to the site staff and has proved useful in convincing my colleagues that I am talking sense and not just being “difficult”. The season has rewarded us with nearly eighty blooms in five species. The orchids are setting seed now and soon the mowers will be allowed back to cut it all down. Other areas of the site have not fared so well. Cowslips and Lords and Ladies (*Arum maculatum*) elsewhere have been cut and in an area where we have steelwork in long term storage nettles and thistles in flower have been strimmed, despite requests to wait until after seed has been set. Suggestions to cut around the groups of toadstools in the autumn grass meet with refusal as they look “untidy”.

Vigilance is vital and the ability to have a hard skin to suffer the butt of jokes is necessary. It's not just large building companies who can destroy our environment, those on our doorstep can be just as damaging. Put a power tool in the hands of a maintenance man and nothing is safe. The scope of the destruction that can be wrought in a few minutes is frightening – so what if they are cut, this is a factory not a wildlife reserve and anyway they are not rare and grow all over the Cotswolds is the reply – what's all the fuss, after all they are only weeds!

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Occurrence of *Dactylorhiza purpurella* var. *cambrensis* in Ireland

Thomas Ennis

Great Saltee and Little Saltee are islands that lie about 4 km south of the Co. Wexford coast at the south-east corner of Ireland. The Saltees (Salt Islands) get their name from the old Norse, Ireland having been a much favoured haunt of the Vikings. Great Saltee, the larger of the two islands, is 1900 m long by up to 400 m wide and covers approximately 87 hectares.

I first visited Great Saltee in September and early October 1957 when I was a member of a party manning the bird observatory. During that period many interesting bird migrants were recorded but undoubtedly the greatest surprise was the news delivered by the trawler men, who came to take us back to Kilmore Quay at the end of our stay, that Russia had launched a "Sputnik". I made further visits to the Island in subsequent years but always in the autumn and always in pursuit of studies on bird migration.

It was some 20 years later that the late Raymond Piper mentioned to me that the island held an interesting population of marsh orchids whose identity was the subject of much speculation. Raymond, in turn, had learned about these orchids from Richard "Dick" Deegan, Dublin botanist and accomplished wildlife photographer, who had regarded them as "mystery orchids". Prompted by Dick's intriguing comments, Raymond visited Great Saltee for the first time in 1971 and subsequently on at least three occasions during the 1970s and 80s. Following these visits he made numerous notes on the orchid (referred to hereafter as the Saltee Orchid) and prepared several detailed drawings and paintings.

I have visited Great Saltee regularly during the last 25 years, usually in early June. My main purpose has been to photograph sea birds but I have also photographed other natural history subjects, including the beautiful Saltee Orchids. Both the location of the main colony and the size of the plants have altered over the years. When I first saw them back in the early 1980s, the main colony was situated in and around a small, shallow pond 200 m south of the farmhouse. The orchids at this location were up to 60 cm in height and very sturdy. Smaller numbers were also found in a wet area immediately opposite the farmhouse. Raymond mentioned in his notes that on his first visit in 1971 "the orchid could be counted in the tens of thousands" but on a visit he made in 1983 he remarked on a great change, implying a profound decrease in numbers. My own experience is that during the 1990s the numbers at the pond steadily decreased as it gradually became choked with vegetation until no open water remained and the orchids disappeared. Over the same period orchid numbers in the wet area opposite the farmhouse and in the adjoining drier areas increased (Fig. 1). Between the years 2003 and 2007 numbers were steady at about 400 flow-

ering plants. These were generally smaller and less robust than the orchids at the original pond site, averaging around 25cm. However, the pepper-dot pattern on the leaves and the colour and shape of the flowers were similar. For a time in the 1990s lesser numbers of the orchids occurred in another small wet area on the north side of the ruined buildings near the head of the steps at the landing. Although careful searches have been made annually, no orchids have been found at this or the pond site for many years.

On 10th June 2008 I found a small but completely new colony of 25 flowering and 5 non-flowering orchids, virtually hidden under bracken in a small damp drain 20 m northeast of the foundations of the old wooden bungalow and approximately 250 m east of the farmhouse. This group was unusual in that only one third had the characteristic spotted leaves, the rest being plain-leaved. At the same time only two flowering orchids with a few non-flowering plants, some still retaining the previous year's seed-heads, were to be found in the hitherto flourishing farmhouse colony, where the ground had dried out due to a long period of low rainfall.

Although the plants from the various locations described above varied in size, they were remarkably similar in colour and proportion. Their leaves were light green with numerous dark, round, equal sized, dots. Raymond noted that some larger plants from the shallow pond area bore a few small ring spots among the solid dot markings. I also have encountered examples that showed a few ring spots (Fig. 2). Few had plain, unmarked leaves (except for the easterly situated group I found in June 2008, where the majority were plain leaved). The leaves were comparable to those of the Northern Marsh Orchid, *Dactylorhiza purpurella*, but were relatively longer and narrower and, in larger specimens, quite fleshy. The flowers varied in colour from deep reddish-purple to pinkish-purple (Fig. 3), never as deep purple as is typical of *D. purpurella*. Most were marked with short dashes and loops at the centre of the labellum and many had white or whitish throats (Fig. 4) and, in some plants, the bracts and top of stem also bore the short dash markings (Fig. 5). In other plants the uppermost part of the stem was flushed purple (Fig. 6). Unlike most *D. purpurella* in Ireland, the labellum in the Saltee Orchid is often three lobed (Fig.7). Raymond remarked on the orchid having a pleasantly sweet fragrance of honey and hawthorn but alas, I have never been able to detect this scent. In his notes, Raymond states that this was the only orchid species that he could find on Great Saltee and this has been my own experience, despite searching all suitable sites over the past 25 years.

Fig 1: Orchids opposite the farmhouse on Great Saltee

Fig 2: Saltee Orchid with a few ring spots

Fig 3: Saltee Orchid with pinkish-purple flowers

Photos by Tom Ennis

1



2



3



Raymond gave much thought to the identity of these plants. He thought that they had affinities with both *D. purpurella* and the Southern Marsh Orchid, *D. praetermissa*, but the flower colour, labellum shape and leaf pattern were so very different from

either species that he sought an answer elsewhere. Since Raymond's death, I have been given the opportunity to re-examine his wonderful botanical drawings and notes. From these I see that he eventually settled on the plant's identity as being *D. majalis junialis* (= *D. praetermissa junialis*) a view that he sometimes expressed in our conversations. I tended to think the overall resemblance to *D. purpurella* was so strong that I found it difficult to accept this conclusion, but I was unable to offer a better solution to the problem.

During the course of correspondence with Richard Bateman on another subject, he happened to have sight of one of my photographs of the Saltee Orchid which he identified as *Dactylorhiza purpurella* (T. & T. A. Steph.) Soó var. *cambrensis* (R. H. Roberts) R. M. Bateman & Denholm. The authoritative description and photograph of var. *cambrensis* published in Foley & Clarke (2005) left little room for doubt in my mind. While Bateman (2006) has shown that var. *cambrensis* occurs in Ireland, I was particularly impressed by the resemblance of the Saltee Orchid to photographs of Welsh examples of this orchid (Figs. 8 & 9); see also Ettliger 1976; Lang 1989; Delforge 2006.



Fig. 4 (above top): Saltee Orchid with whitish throat

Fig. 5: Saltee Orchid with short dash markings on bracts and top of stem

Fig. 6: Saltee Orchid with stem flushed purple

Fig. 7 (above bottom): Three lobed labellum in the Saltee Orchid

Fig. 8: *Dactylorhiza purpurella* var. *cambrensis* from Porthmadog, Gwynedd

Fig. 9: *Dactylorhiza purpurella* var. *cambrensis* from Ynyslas, Dyfed

Photos by Tom Ennis & Barry Tattersall (Figs. 8 & 9)

5



6



8



9



Neither Raymond nor I, nor indeed any other botanist I have met, has explored the nearby island of Little Saltee. As it lies 2 km northeast of Great Saltee, it would be interesting to see whether it supports any colonies of the Saltee Orchid. Searches on the nearby Co. Wexford mainland by Raymond and me in the 1980s met with no success. A six-day botanical survey of Great Saltee carried out by the great R. Ll. Praeger and some distinguished friends in June 1913, led Praeger (1913) to record *Orchis incarnata* (= *Dactylorhiza incarnata*, Early Marsh Orchid) as occurring there but he gave its status as “very rare”. Their party only found two plants both near the farmhouse. If we consider how little was known about the identification of marsh orchids in those days I consider that it is reasonable to suggest that the plant found was actually the Saltee Orchid. Nor am I particularly concerned about it being deemed “very rare”, as my own recent experience shows that its status can be quite dynamic. Praeger also stated that it was “the only orchid on the island.” The Welsh distribution of *cambrensis* lies some 200 km northeast of Great Saltee. I leave it to those who like to meditate on such issues to suggest the Saltee Orchids could have originated from seed blown westward from Wales or, bearing in mind the direction of the prevailing wind in the British Isles, dare I suggest that the converse could have been the case?

Acknowledgements

I thank Barry Tattersall for providing photographs of *D. purpurella* var. *cambrensis* taken at Welsh sites, Richard Bateman for critical reading of the manuscript, Robert Nash for assistance in research and Helen Clair Hughes for permitting me to examine the notes and drawings of the late Raymond Piper. I am particularly grateful to my good friend Liz Platts who not only provided me with comments and advice on the presentation of this paper but who also came to my rescue with a draft version of the text after I had lost all my copies due to a computer failure.

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Odour of *Himantoglossum hircinum*

Ian Phillips



Himantoglossum hircinum from
the Refugio de Juanar, Málaga
Photo by Ian Phillips

Having lived in Málaga, in southern Spain, for the past fifteen years, I have had the pleasure of seeing the Lizard Orchid in a variety of sites in and around the province. The oddity from the start was my inability to detect much of an odour of any kind, let alone “the quite strong smell of goats” that Summerhayes had long before taught me to expect (Summerhayes 1968), which even older favourites confirmed (Clapham Tutin and Warburg 1962). I have found that on only one exceptional occasion have I noted an odour of any strength, when I was led to investigate a strong but pleasant smell of new-mown grass coming from thick vegetation in which I found a fine spike of the orchid to be hiding. Otherwise, a very slight grassy smell, or simply nothing.

On consulting my various books I found that most hold the smell of goats to be a major feature of the orchid. Thus, McClintock and Fitter (1956) say that it smells “of billy goat, especially in a confined space”; Lang (1980, 2001) has “the flowers smelling very strongly of goats” or emitting “a pungent smell of billygoat”; Turner Ettliger (1997) notes that “the strong scent resembles (at least to some people) that of the billy-goat”; the Harraps say that “the strong scent recalls a billy goat and is most pungent in the evenings” (Harrap and Harrap 2005); and Foley and Clarke (2005) also note “the powerful goat-like smell”. I gained from these British sources that special circumstances might be necessary for the smell to reach its full potential – perhaps the Harraps’ late evening, Jenkinson’s “warm lounge” or compartments on trains or closed cars with captive spikes

being particularly suitable (Lousley 1969 , Lang 1980, Jenkinson 1991), or that not all found the smell unpleasantly goat-like (Turner Ettlenger's "some people"). However, speaking for Europe as a whole, Flora Europea simply notes "a strong odour" (Tutin *et al.* 1980), while Delforge (2001) has "fleurs á odeur fétide", and Buttler notes "flowers smell strongly of goat" (Buttler 1991), while Baumann and Künkele's statement that "Die Blüten besitzen einem starken und unangenehmen, bockartigen Geruch" seems (to me!) to be along the same lines (Baumann and Künkele 1982). Local Spanish sources have "flores grandes, con un fuerte olor desagradable" (Velasco Ortega and Beltrán Barea (2008) and "un fuerte olor fétido" (Becerra Parra and Robles Dominguez 2009) All this led me to wonder whether I was suffering from a simple inability to detect the odour, perhaps suffering a rare genetic abnormality. However, all of my visitors tested directly by me in Andalucía were also unable to detect other than a faint pleasant odour. The working of the usual law led me to light in the last book that I consulted. In this, it states that in France, *H. hircinum* varies little "á l'exclusion de l'odeur des fleurs, parfois relativement agreeable dans les formes méridionales" (Bournérias 1998). My hypotheses are that *H. hircinum* smells sweet in the south of Europe, that the odour is usually feeble, and that, in any case, not all find the odour unpleasant. Has anyone tested such hypotheses? Richard Bateman tells me that it might even be possible to make appropriate biochemical investigations.

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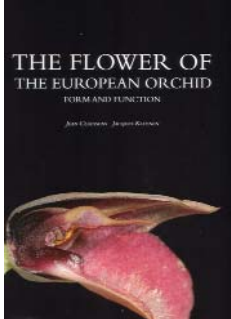
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Book Review: *The Flower of the European Orchid*

Simon Tarrant



The Flower of the European Orchid - Form and Function

by Jean Claessens and Jacques Kleynen

Hardback, 440 pp. ISBN 978-90-9025556-9

Published by Jean Claessens and Jacques Kleynen

(www.europeanorchids.com)

Price €72.50 via the website

Many books on European orchids are field guides, and most of them fuel the debate between lumpers and splitters. This book uses a genus format and it is not intended for use in the field – rather, it is a celebration of the flowers of European orchids. As the authors developed an interest in the morphology of orchid flowers they focussed increasingly on pollination methods and pollinating insects. They have travelled throughout Europe to study and record orchids and their pollinators, and they have also made an extensive study of existing literature to further their knowledge and understanding of their chosen subject. Arguably, this book provides the most comprehensive account since Charles Darwin's ground-breaking "*On the Various Contrivances by Which Orchids are Pollinated by Insects*" and in the preface Richard Bateman describes it as "an unparalleled account of the floral structure and reproductive biology of the orchids of Europe and Asia Minor".

What sets this book apart, indeed its crowning glory, is the outstandingly superb photography, ranging from habitat shots to the use of microscopy to show incredible levels of detail. For every genus we are shown flower spikes, individual flowers and detailed close-ups of the component parts of the flower, with a special emphasis on the column and pollinia. I am particularly impressed by the stunning pictures of pollinating insects with pollinia attached to their bodies as they move from flower to flower (see *coer* photograph of this issue for an example). The photographs are accompanied by detailed text including general descriptions, morphological adaptations and observations about pollination. This is backed up by tables listing all pollinating insects recorded from the 1860s to 2011 by orchid species, proportion of fruit set, mechanisms of autogamy (self-fertilisation, but don't worry, they also provide a glossary), and a comprehensive bibliography.

Books About British Orchids - A Personal View

Keith Fry

Orchids fascinate many people and book collecting is also very popular. Combine the two and I guess you could end up with obsession. I confess to being very keen to obtain all the books ever written about British wild orchids and to read and study them. This also extends, I am somewhat ashamed to admit, into collecting all the books written about European Orchids but in English!

I have been collecting these books on and off for over 40 years and have an almost complete collection apart from one or two examples of extremely expensive or very hard to obtain items. Some were easy and cheap to find and some were extremely difficult and some very costly! The availability of the internet and the ability to source books from around the world has made an enormous difference and has been a major factor in building this sort of collection.



I first became interested in orchids whilst I was student studying botany at Cardiff University. I recall that I was on a field trip to Kenfig Dunes in South Wales (now a National Nature Reserve, but then just a coastal dune area), when I noticed some brightly coloured flowers in the turf. I was fascinated by the form of the inflorescence but most of all by the colour range. On asking one of the staff what they were, I was told “green winged orchids”. I was hooked! I purchased a copy of Summerhayes’ fabulous book and I was doubly hooked!

It would be very easy in an article such as this simply to catalogue all the books (and folios) from the first by A. D. Webster called “*British Orchids*” and published in

Gavin Bone’s water colour painting of *Orchis simia* from “*The Wild Orchids of Britain*” by Jocelyn Brooke (Image reprinted by permission of The Random House Group Ltd)





1886, to the latest by Martin J Halley entitled “*Sowerby’s Botany Revisited - British Orchids*”, published in 2010. I have instead decided to make this a very personal journey through what I believe to be the best books. I have also included one illustration from some of my book selections of *Orchis simia* to give some comparisons. In addition, to give the complete view I have provided a catalogue of all the books (I think it is complete!) at the end. I am sure that not all will agree with my selections or my views, but I hope that the article at least provides enjoyable reading. I have also included in this article books about orchids based on English counties, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. The county based floras are particularly interesting and useful since they give a local perspective on national distributions. For example: Martin Jenkinson’s “*Wild Orchids of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight*”, his similar book on Dorset and Julia Gibson’s “*Orchids of Surrey*”.

My very favourite book is by Jocelyn Brooke, I guess because the illustrations are not photographs but are prints from water colours by Gavin Bone which have an indefinable quality giving them vibrancy and life. This was published in 1950 priced at £8 8s (8 guineas or £8.40!). I first saw this book in about 1968 on sale in David’s second hand bookshop in Cambridge (my home town) for £10. I did not have £10 and had to wait another 5 years to buy it, but for £20! I am so glad that I bought it – it has given much pleasure since.

My second choice is Victor Summerhayes’ New Naturalist Number 19 entitled “*Wild Orchids of Britain*”, published in 1951 priced 21s (£1.05) This is an excellent guide with good photographs (for its time) written with knowledge and style by an acknowledged expert in the field. This was my first book and as such must hold a special place in my memories. I have one much thumbed dog eared copy and a pristine first edition.

My next choice has to be the “masterwork” by Colonel M. J. Godfery. This was written in 1933 and priced at £7.7s (7 guineas or £7.35). Although it was written largely in Switzerland, from where came many of the plants used in the illustrations by his wife Hilda, nevertheless it is of British orchids. It is one of those books written by scholarly amateurs who have the time and independent means to pursue unusual hobbies. It justly deserves the descriptor “tome”. Although it is as far removed from a field guide as it is possible to be, it nevertheless provides an insight into the thinking of botanists who would quite happily dig up a plant to improve study. Such a thing today almost qualifies as heresy!

Plate illustrating *Orchis simia* from “*Monograph and Iconograph of Native British Orchidaceae*” by Colonel M. J. Godfery. (Image reprinted by permission of Cambridge University Press)

My fourth choice is David Lang's most excellent book "*A Guide to the Wild Orchids of Great Britain and Ireland*". David's style is easy to read (with a personal dimension) and the photographs are excellent. The bibliography is extensive and although the nomenclature is now out of date, the names are those which many people continue to use since they are what we have grown up with. I have to confess that I have difficulty with *Anacamptis morio*! It was published in 1989 and cost £8.95. David has written two other works – one earlier and one later.



Simon Harrap's photographs of *Orchis simia* as used in "*Orchids of Britain and Ireland*" by Anne and Simon Harrap

continue to use since they are what we have grown up with. I have to confess that I have difficulty with *Anacamptis morio*! It was published in 1989 and cost £8.95. David has written two other works – one earlier and one later.

My penultimate choice is the superb "*Orchids of Britain and Ireland - A Field and Site Guide*" by Anne and Simon Harrap, published in 2005. This is a most useable masterpiece which contains much that one would wish to know about British Wild Orchids. Outstanding photographs show the character of the plant as well as the detail. The second edition (2009) was more than just a reprint, and included some new photographs as well as re-written accounts for *Spiranthes romanoffiana* and *Dactylorhiza ebudensis*.

My final choice is my latest acquisition which was published in 2010 – "*Sowerby's Botany Revisited*". For those who love the illustrations in Sowerby's Botany, then this will stir the heart. Martin Halley has painstakingly reproduced Sowerby's hand coloured images to create plates which enhance the quality, but lose none of the charm.

Before leaving this topic I must mention the Field Studies Council's outstanding series of guides, one of which is entitled Guide to Orchids. It is well illustrated, light and easily portable, has a very useful key and is waterproof. What more could you ask! It is by Richard and Mavis Gulliver and Carol

Roberts, published in 2008 and was incredibly reasonably priced at £3.50.

These then are my choices. I have omitted some excellent works, but as I said, this was a personal journey which I hope you have enjoyed travelling with me. Happy orchid hunting!

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ISBN 978-1-85153-233-9
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Plate illustrating *Orchis simia* from "*Sowerby's Botany Revisited - British Orchids*" by Martin Halley (Image courtesy of RestoredPrints.com – available from <http://www.blurb.com/bookstore/detail/1593359>)



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