

The Hardy Orchid Society *Newsletter*



No. 23 January 2002

The Hardy Orchid Society Committee is...

President: Richard M Bateman

Vice-Presidents: Paul Harcourt Davies and Norman Heywood

Chairman: Richard Manuel, Wye View Cottage, Leys Hill, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire, HR9 5QU

Secretary: Sarah Marks, 83 Ladysmith, East Gomeldon, Salisbury, Wilts, SP4 6LE

Treasurer: Tony Beresford, Pound Farm, Wearne, Langport, Somerset, TA10 0QJ

Membership Secretary: Nick Storer, 17 Orchard Road, Lymm, Cheshire, WA13 9HH

Show Secretary: Doreen Webster, 25 Highfields Drive, Loughborough, Leics, LE11 3JS

Newsletter Editor: Moira Tarrant, Bumby's, Fox Rd., Mashbury, Chelmsford, CM1 4TJ

Meetings Secretary: Colin Clay, 14 Cromwell Place, Lighthorne Heath, Leamington Spa, CV33 9TG

Ordinary Member (publicity): Simon Tarrant, Bumby's, Fox Rd., Mashbury, Chelmsford, CM1 4TJ

Ordinary Member (Newsletter Dist.): Bill Temple, Primrose Cottage, Hanney Rd., Steventon, Oxon, OX13 6AP

Ordinary Member (Seed & Fungus Bank): Ted Weeks, 74 Over Lane, Almondsbury, Bristol, BS32 4BT

Co-opted Member (BOC Rep.): Richard Nicol, 1364 Evesham Rd., Astwood Bank, Redditch, Worcs, B96 6BD

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Colour Insert between Pages 10 and 11

Cover illustration: *Listera ovata*, by Bob Watson

Date for your Diary and a Plea **Spring Meeting 28th April 2002**

The next meeting will be on Sunday 28th April 2002 at Horticulture Research International, Wellesbourne, near Warwick and will include the Society AGM. Under the rules of the Society, Officers may only serve for 3 years in a post. This means that every year we have vacant posts. The next meeting will be no exception; the posts becoming available include Meetings Secretary – the title given to the person organising the two annual meetings, this involves booking speakers (other members of the committee are usually able to provide names for this), booking the hall and catering (the outgoing Meetings Sec. can provide some assistance with this). There is also a vacancy for the position of Secretary – this involves attending the 2 annual meetings and two committee meetings per year (if possible) and making notes. If you are interested in either of these posts, or any other posts please contact a committee member and indicate your interest. The committee and annual meetings are usually held in central England in order to try to reduce the number of ‘member miles’.

Member Contact Service **Nick Storer**

Some of you have shown interest in making contact with other HOS Members in your area. I also have a list of Members who are willing to be contacted. If you are interested in making contact with other HOS Members you can email me on nick.storer@enviros.com or write to me at the address shown on the inside cover of this newsletter. I will then send you back a list of members in your area with their telephone number and/or email address only. It is then up to you to make contact using the provided information. I hope it is obvious that there is no duty upon HOS members to respond favourably to your overtures. Please be considerate of others when you try to make contact.

Seed and Fungus Bank **Ted Weeks**

The Seed & Fungus List for 2001 -2002 is now available. Please send s.a.e to Ted Weeks, 74 Over Lane, Almondsbury, Bristol, BS32 4BT. I would like to thank members who donated seed this year but I'm afraid donations were rather scarce and there are only very limited amounts of fresh seed available. The two members who requested a list to be e-mailed to them - I'm afraid I accidentally deleted your e-mail address. Sorry!!

Conservation Project

Bill Temple

An area in Oxfordshire containing about 400 White Helleborines (*Cephalanthera damasonium*) is to be converted into a hotel next year. There is therefore an urgent need to move these plants, a secure area 400m away, with an existing population, has been selected. Volunteers will be needed both to dig the plants up and to replant them immediately afterwards. Could any possible volunteers please contact Bill Temple by email at bill@wtemple.f9.co.uk or by telephone 01235-831449. No date for the task has been set yet, but it is likely to be Sat/Sun April 20-21.

HOS Website Report

Tony Hughes

If you haven't checked out our website recently, you may have missed out on the two significant updates since the last issue of the Newsletter. About 20 more superb shots have been added to the "Pictures of British Orchids" section – to find the new pictures just click on the links marked with *** or ** characters. My personal favourite is Barry Tattersall's close-up of a small wasp in the "pseudocopulation" position on a Fly Orchid. With over 120 pictures in this section, the vast majority of British species are now well represented – but there is always room for more! The other major addition is the complete set of First Prize winning pictures from the recent HOS Photo Competition – a suitable tribute to the skill of so many of our photographers.

Early Spider Orchid and Dartford Warbler Field Trip, Dorset

Norman Heywood

This field trip will be for the more energetic and will take place on 27th April 2002. We shall meet at the Public Car Park in Worth Matravers (Grid Reference SY974776), which is halfway along the Purbeck ridge going west from Swanage towards Corfe. Meet at 10:00am to give plenty of time for people to get there. It is essential that stout footwear with good soles is worn, we shall be walking along the cliffs for about five miles. Our leader for this section will be Blair Sibun. Bring a picnic lunch.

After lunch we shall go to the RSPB reserve at Arne, an interesting reserve with a range of habitats. Part of the walk will be along the foreshore of Poole Harbour basin through a lot of heather heathland well known for the range of snakes and lizards which inhabit it. Unfortunately we shall be a little out of season for them unless we have a period of warm weather. It's about a half-hour drive from Worth Matravers to Arne, but we shall stop halfway to try to find a Dartford Warbler or two.

In the afternoon we intend to do a stroll of about three miles, but the morning will be strenuous; up, down and along the cliffs, dropping down into the quarries and caves.

If you wish to attend please drop a line to Norman Heywood, New Gate Farm, Scotchey Lane, Stour Provost, Gillingham, Dorset, SP8 5LT, or telephone 01747 838368, this line has an ansaphone.

Numbers will be limited, first come, first served. As a courtesy to other members will any members who put their names down to come on the trip, but find they are unable to come on the day, please notify Norman. We will definitely leave the meeting point to commence the walk at 10:00am.

RHS London Orchid Show 16 & 17 March 2002

The HOS is going to exhibit at this show. However, your help is needed. We need flowering plants to display (a chance to show-off all those Ophrys) & volunteers to help with manning the HOS exhibit during the exhibition days (to guard the plants and answer questions) & to help clear up on the Sunday afternoon.

If you can assist on the 16th or 17th please contact Richard Manuel on 01600 890644 or by email richard@orchis.co.uk. People helping will get free entry to the show. We hope to be able to transport plants from various parts of the UK, so even if you can't attend yourself your plants can. Please help this is a chance for the HOS to show at a national event.

News Item

German Fined for Orchid Theft

Cape Town - A German orchid dealer has been convicted by a Porterville magistrate of stealing protected plants from the Groot Winterhoek wilderness area near the Western Cape town. The man, Dr Heinrich Beyrle, was caught with an assortment of 57 plants in his possession, many of them listed in the Red Data Book of Endangered Species. Beyrle, who pleaded guilty on Thursday to two charges under the Cape Nature Conservation Ordinance, was sentenced to a fine of R8 000, or 18 months' jail, and was freed after paying the money on Thursday afternoon.

Beyrle is believed to have landed at Cape Town international airport on October 28. He was arrested on November 1 after being challenged by a field ranger in Groot Winterhoek, and attempting to escape. Cape Nature Conservation officials said the plants included 23 protected species from the Orchidaceae, Iridaceae and Proteaceae families. He was refused bail on his first appearance in court, and has been in jail in Porterville's Voorberg Prison since then.

Beyrle, who lives in Friedberg in Germany, runs a website - www.myorchids.de - which offers orchids from around the world for sale. It includes several South African plants, among them two-year-old *Disa crassicornis* from the Drakensberg escarpment for DM59, and three-year-old *Disa sagittalis* from the "winter rainfall area" for DM69. Describing the origin of the plants, the website says: "A legal stock of motherplants, controlled by the local authorities exists since many years in the nursery." Beyrle lists masters and doctoral degrees on orchids from the Technical University of Munich among his qualifications. Cape Nature Conservation said the plants, which were battered when Beyrle tried to bury them during his arrest, would probably be planted out in a greenhouse to see which would survive.

This article, which was sent to us by Peter Corkhill, from the Cypripedium Forum run by Michael Weinart in Germany can be read in full at www.news24.co.za (dated 09/11/2001).

Photographic Competition 2001 **Doreen Webster - Show Secretary**

What splendid support from the 29 members who entered this year's Photographic Competition. All in all there were 62 small prints, 61 large prints and 49 slides.

Thanks to Peter Sheasby's professionalism the judging went very smoothly but with such quality exhibits it was a difficult task to perform. Thank you Peter for a job well done. We will look forward to having your own entries again next year.

Not only was there an excellent display of member's skills in the competition but we also had a great show of artistic skills with superb photograph collections and paintings in a non-competitive display.

For those of you who missed the show, the First Prize winning pictures will be displayed on the H.O.S Website www.drover.demon.co.uk/HOS and several of them are included in the central colour pages of this Newsletter. Thanks again to everyone. Please start clicking ready for next year, when we will endeavour to have more space available for even more prints.

Class 1 An orchidaceous landscape – print 6 x 4

- | | | |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| 1 st | Graham Giles | <i>Orchis mascula</i> |
| 2 nd | Tony Hughes | Pyramidal in the Algarve |
| 3 rd | Bill Temple | |

Class 2 A single orchid plant – print 6 x 4

- | | | |
|-----------------|------------------|---|
| 1 st | Patrick Marks | <i>Dactylorhiza pulchella</i> - Wester Ross |
| 2 nd | Richard Laurence | Early Purple Orchid - Clutton, Somerset |
| 3 rd | Gwynne Johnson | Ophrys in Crete |

Class 3 A close-up - print 6 x 4

- 1st Tony Hughes *Ophrys apifera* var. *trollii* - Avon Gorge
2nd Neville Roberts *Anacamptis pyramidalis* - Bradbury Rings, Dorset
3rd Simon Andrew *Corallorhiza trifida* - Cumbria

Class 4 An orchidaceous landscape - print 10 x 8

- 1st DonTait *Cephalanthera rubra* (Red Helleborine)
2nd Richard Laurence Common Spotted Orchid
3rd Tony Hughes *Dactylorhiza fuchsii x praetermissa*
- Ashmore Common, Worcs

Class 5 A single orchid plant - print 10 x 8

- 1st Bill Temple *Orchis purpurea*
2nd Simon Andrew *Orchis coriophora* - Spain
3rd Richard Laurence Marsh Fragrant Orchid - Kenfig Burrows, S. Wales

Class 6 A close-up - print 10 x 8

- 1st Simon Andrew *Gymnadenia conopsea* - Picos de Europa, Spain
2nd Colin Clay
3rd Richard Laurence Lady Orchid - Yockletts, Kent

Class 7 An orchidaceous landscape - 35mm colour slide

- 1st Kath Tait *Dactylorhiza sambucina*
2nd Tony Hughes *Dactylorhiza fuchsii x praetermissa*
3rd Rosemary Webb *Chamorchis alpina* at Silberhorns

Class 8 A single plant - 35mm colour slide

- 1st Graham Giles *Orchis pallens*
2nd Malcolm Brownsword *Cephalanthera longifolia*
3rd Barry Tattersall *Orchis mascula*

Class 9 A close-up - 35mm colour slide

- 1st Nigel Johnson *Orchis sitiaca*
2nd Kath Tate *Orchis simia*
3rd Graham Giles *Ophrys mammosa planimaculata* - Cyprus

Orchid Hunting in the UK

Report of a talk by Brian Laney

Brian described himself as an enthusiastic “twitcher” who, as well as orchids, seeks out vascular plants, grasses, rushes, sedges and fungi. He has travelled 34,000 miles in one year, and as well as recording rare species, collects seed for the Millennium Seed Bank.

He made a special request to members to support County Recorders by sending orchid records to them. Northamptonshire is currently losing a plant species every year, but under-recording may give some ground for a more optimistic view.

His searches in Kent among spoil from the Channel Tunnel have revealed spectacular numbers of *Ophrys sphegodes*, which he believes to have seeded from the cliff above. This year each plant is quite short in stature, but the colony is impressive and compares well with the well-known site in Dorset. He has recently found Early Spider Orchid growing on stable shingle, also in Kent - a type of habitat that he has not noted before. A further site in Kent at the cliff top is about to be lost through cliff erosion, but such falls may open up possibilities for the buried seed bank.

Brian now believes Bee x Fly Orchid to be probably the rarest plant in the country, as it seems to be limited to a single plant in Sussex. It would seem to have been lost from its Avon Gorge site. He noted that a population of Lady Orchid in Kent was particularly good this year, with a population of two to three thousand plants of which 10% were coming into flower. He found the Chiltern site of this beautiful orchid badly overgrown and grazed by deer, leaving the colony struggling. He has seen a colony of Lady Orchid to be overtaken by Twayblade.

He has not seen Lesser Butterfly for a decade, so was pleased to come across two spikes in recently coppiced woodland in Kent. Careful management would also seem to be benefiting Lizard Orchid at its main English site. He has noted 7 - 9 new colonies recently and wonders whether this spread is another indicator of climate change. This theory would appear to be borne out by his observations of *Poa infirma*, Early Meadow Grass, which is spreading from its South Western stronghold at approximately the same rate.

Brian's talk was reported by Moira Tarrant.

In the Bog **Report of a talk by Tony Hughes**

Tony introduced his talk by describing a television news snippet, which reported the theft of the sole remaining Bog Orchid from a site in East Anglia. The reporter's final comment was that the Bog Orchid was now extinct. Tony knew that this was not true, but also realised that he knew little about the Bog Orchid, so went straight to the reference books. He shared his recently acquired but fascinating knowledge with members.

From distribution diagrams in the Atlas of the British Flora 1962, it is obvious that many ancient sites are now lost, presumably due to land drainage. Interestingly, the only site that Tony has visited, which is in the Elan Valley, is not on this map.

His slides, taken at about 1000ft, show flora typical of wet acid conditions among the beautiful Welsh scenery. These include Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*) and Round-leaved Sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*). Hidden in this terrain, the tiny Bog Orchid plants are very well camouflaged among sphagnum moss and sedges. The sloping site ensures a continuous gentle flow of water.

The plant is a strong contender for the smallest British orchid, growing only 1 - 4 ins tall, with two or three tiny leaves. The minute flowers, only $\frac{1}{8}$ th inch across, unusually have the lip at the top. However, this is not because, as in Fen and Ghost Orchid and *Nigritella* species, there is no twist in the flower stalk and seedpod. The Bog Orchid, uniquely in Europe, twists through a full 360°.

Most European orchids store food in swollen roots - either tubers or rhizomes. But the Bog Orchid (like the Fen Orchid) has a “pseudo-bulb” i.e. a swollen stem, sheathed in the bases of the leaves - a common feature of tropical orchids. Underground, the root system is very simple - a short vertical rhizome with the remains of last year’s pseudo-bulb, carrying the new pseudo-bulb at the top. The roots are reduced to mere hairs, which are strongly infested with fungus throughout the life cycle.

The Bog Orchid adopts a “belt and braces” approach to propagation. As with most other orchids, it produces copious quantities of seed. But its final unique characteristic is that it also propagates itself vegetatively through “bulbils” produced in large numbers on the edges of the leaves. These fall off later in the season and are dispersed on the water. They rapidly become infested with fungus and reach flowering size far sooner than seedlings. What is more, non-flowering plants can produce bulbils, thus speeding up the reproductive process still further.

Tony concluded by remarking that, with over 100 plants in three separate patches, the status of the Bog Orchid at this particular site looks quite good and a long way from extinction.

Tony’s talk was reported by Moira Tarrant.

Stylish, sophisticated....
Hardy Orchid Society Membership badges are £4.00 each from
the Membership Secretary

Response to John Haggard on Orchid Media Svante Malmgren

My own experiences with pineapple juice in orchid media are rather easily summarised.

The 5% pineapple juice - ammonia (5% p-NH₃) medium is very good for sowing most (but not all) *Dactylorhizas*, *Gymnadenias* and European *Platantheras*, also for several *Ophrys* and *Orchis* and some *Cypripediums*.

It seems very likely, however, that although many different species and hybrids can be grown on to produce extremely large plants on the 5% p-NH₃ medium, the same factor (possibly a hormone?) in the medium that produces the extra large size can also retard or even completely inhibit further growth in soil the following spring.

Dactylorhiza sambucina, for example, germinates and grows “like carrots” on 5% p-NH₃ but the seedlings produced almost never recommence growth when weaned into soil. Sometimes they start to grow a full year later!

This inhibitory effect, however, varies very much between different species and can vary greatly even between different clones of the same species or hybrid. *Gymnadenia conopsea* x *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*, for example, usually grows normally when weaned into soil from culture on 5% p-NH₃, whereas *G. conopsea* x *D. fuchsii alba* (from Estonia) never starts into new growth in the spring. *Gymnadenia densiflora* starts to grow much more readily than *G. conopsea*.

Cypripediums behave similarly. *Cypripedium guttatum* and some *C. parviflorum* hybrids can be raised without problem on the 5% p-NH₃ medium. Other forms grow very vigorously on it but never recommence growth in soil.

In my opinion there is no doubt that it is the pineapple juice concentration that is responsible for these effects.

Nowadays, I sow on 5% p-NH₃ but in some cases have returned to my original 1.5 to 2.5% pineapple - Vaminolac medium for further growth.

Most red-flowered *Cypripediums* don't like pineapple juice at all. Other organic complexes need to be used for these.

As far as *Dactylorhizas* are concerned, my recommendation would be to sow the seed on the 5% p-NH₃ medium but for further growth try them also on different media. 2.5% p-NH₃ is not as good as 2.5% pineapple juice - Vaminolac.

In addition, the 5% medium does seem to be somewhat stressful to many plants. I have had flowering plants of *Ophrys in vitro on medium* just ten months after sowing! I have had specimens of *Orchis* species grown on 5% p-NH₃ flower their first year on soil. These plants, however, do seem abnormal in other respects too.

Response to Carl Hardwick on Growing Ophrys **Bill Havers**

One sentence in Carl Hardwick's article (Newsletter 22) raises an interesting question.

I am the Voluntary Reserve Manager for the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust's Homefield Wood reserve where the Military Orchid thrives. Dormancy, defined as a plant not appearing one year, to return the next, is a regular feature, varying between 1.9 and 10.1 percent of the population of visible flowers. Normally dormancy lasts only one year, but a second year's dormancy is not unknown. We have made an arbitrary decision that, if a plant 'reappears' after three years it must be considered a new plant. There is no way of telling, without digging up every plant that does not reappear in any year (and that is not an option on a SSSI and with a scheduled species!) whether it is truly the same plant: however, we locate each plant by triangulation from a fixed ten metre matrix and, provided the reappearance is within a couple of centimetres of the original, assume dormancy.

We had always assumed, and I believe this is general throughout field workers involved in monitoring individual plants of rare native orchids, that this was true dormancy. That is to say that the tuber failed to respond to the environmental stimuli to start into growth in the autumn, but did do so the following year. Carl's observations that his plants created a new tuber throw doubt on this.

Of course, tubers going through a growing cycle underground without putting up leafy growth are not unusual: we regularly discover new plants of flowering size where no plant has shown before. This is not because we missed them the previous year, the area is meticulously searched.

A number of papers have recorded the likelihood of an individual plant becoming dormant and of it flowering, remaining vegetative or spending a further year in dormancy. This seems to be more prevalent in *Ophrys* than *Orchis*, possibly half one population of the Early Spider are below ground during the flowering season and few show above ground for more than three years and most emerge for only one year before becoming dormant or dying (Hutchings, M.J. The Population Biology of the Early Spider Orchid *Ophrys sphegodes* MILL. A demographic study from 1975 to 1984. Journal of Ecology 75, 1987, pp711-727).

I would be very interested to hear from anybody who has recorded dormancy amongst pot-grown *Orchis*, especially *O. militaris*, as to whether dormant plants do indeed produce a new tuber that year.

Bill can be contacted at: billhavers@care4free.net.

Response to Using GPS

Pam Scraton

I was interested in Simon Tarrant's article Using Satellite Technology to Locate Orchids. I am a fellow 'cataloguer and classifier', and keep a database of sites and sightings, for which I use GPS readings in UTM format. I record these at two levels; two letters and ten figures give me a precise record of the location which I can share with trusted colleagues, while two letters and four figures give an accurate enough location for general recording purposes, without exposing orchids to the tramping of many feet!

Detailed information of this kind can be used for many purposes, conservation particularly springing to mind. The first step in preserving any population is to document it thoroughly. I am currently investigating extending the information with the use of a mapping program, which will give a visual record of occurrence, frequency and change.

I am particularly interested in the orchids of Cyprus (where I live) and Algarve, Portugal, which I visit frequently. I have a considerable amount of data gathered over the last few years, so if any members are particularly interested in either of those areas, or if a HOS field trip should be contemplated to either, I should be happy to co-operate.

Fabulous Apulia, Land Of The Ophrys

Simon Andrew

I have been in pursuit of the European orchid flora for some 25 years now, and have visited many areas, but none has been more consistently rewarding than Apulia - and most of all the unique and beautiful Gargano peninsula. The area first came to our attention with the appearance of Hans Sundermann's excellent book Europäische und mediterrane Orchideen: Eine Bestimmungsflora the first comprehensive book on Europe-wide orchids we had come across, and dotted among the numerous colour plates were a number of references to 'Apulien' and 'Monte Gargano', often accompanying the most attractive pictures. We couldn't resist this, and went there for the first time in the cold Easter holidays of 1977 with nothing but Sundermann's book as our guide, and had no difficulty in finding most

of the species he mentioned. Since then I have had four more visits, one in the company of a group of Italian experts and the most recent in April/May 2000, and the interest of the place has not palled! But the taxonomy of the species local to the area has changed a lot (as Sundermann has been succeeded by Buttler and Delforge), so some old friends have had different names on successive visits.

Apulia (Italian Puglia) is the south-eastern extremity of Italy, stretching from the 'spur' which is the Gargano peninsula in the north (province of Foggia) to the 'heel' in the south-east (province of Lecce), with in between the beautiful stony area of the 'Trulli' which reaches through to the 'instep' of Italy in the Gulf of Taranto. Each of these three areas has its own special orchid interest which I shall say something about separately, and the commonest of the typical Mediterranean species are to be found in all of them. The abundance of these commoner species combined with the wide variety of local specialities gives the whole area a special fascination. And as the 'heel' is only a short distance away from the Balkan mainland it is perhaps not surprising that a number of species are found here whose centre of distribution is further east and are found nowhere else in Italy.



Ophrys promontorii
Photo by Simon Andrew

Starting with the Gargano, this is both a mountain and a peninsula, a limestone massif sticking out into the Adriatic, reaching a maximum height of just over 1000 metres and separated from the rest of upland Italy by a large, flat intensely cultivated plain with Foggia at its centre. So the flora is influenced by its eastern and maritime position, and also by a degree of separation from the rest of Italy. I tend to think of the Gargano orchids as in three 'zones': the lower parts close to the coast, accessible from the main coastal road; the plateau area in the middle which is 500-600 metres up and is served by roads that cross the peninsula; and a more mountainous bit overlooking the north coast where one road gets close to the 1000 metre mark. The first area is best in the early spring, and the commoner Mediterranean *Ophrys* species are abundant there; the second is at its best a bit later (mid- to latish- April) and is richest in the specialised Gargano varieties; and the third is distinctly montane-looking with wonderful mass-displays of *Orchis* species.

Looking at the *Ophrys* species first, *Ophrys bombyliflora* and *O. tenthredinifera* are both common, as they are in most Mediterranean 'orchid areas'. *Ophrys lutea* varieties also abound and show great variety, ranging from tall stately wide-fringed



Ophrys biscutella
Photo by Simon Andrew

flowers of a western type to much smaller ones with the characteristic v-marking of the type which has had the names *minor*, *murbeckii* and *galilaea* attached to it at various times. There are also a lot with blotchy and complex lip-patterns which seem to merge with *O. fusca*, of which the pure form seems relatively uncommon on the Gargano. Moving now to the more local species, the most dominant general type of *Ophrys* is that related to our Early Spider, *O. sphegodes*. This is quite common here in a form similar to (though usually bigger than) our native one, but more frequent, and often forming large groups which are quite a landmark, are two much bigger types: ‘*garganica*’ and ‘*atrata*’, both classified by Sundermann as subspecies of *sphegodes* but now given species status: *O. sphegodes* ssp *atrata* has become *O. incubacea*. *O. garganica*

has specially large flowers with notably broad petals; *O. atrata* has a very dark lip with small horns which have a white patch on the inside. Between them they are the commonest ‘orchid sight’ on the Gargano. Another *sphegodes* type is *O. sipontensis*, local to the vicinity of Siponto on the south of the Gargano, which has large flowers usually with reddish sepals and is now rather rare, while the very heterogeneous and confusedly described species *Ophrys arachnitiformis* may account for some of the other *sphegodes*-like plants to be found there.

The ‘family’ of our Late Spider Orchid also has at least three representatives on the Gargano. I have seen a few plants there which look like the ‘ordinary’, more northern *O. fuciflora* (or should it be *holoserica*?), but the dominant variety, and certainly one of the most beautiful and spectacular of European orchids, is *O. apulica*, which has very big, bright flowers which vary widely in shape, and often forms large clumps; with *Orchis italica* it is the most spectacular of the Apulian orchids. *Ophrys apulica* sometimes has fairly prominent humps and horns on the lip, and resembles a large *O. scolopax* (which Sundermann runs in with *fuciflora*), but the real ‘horned’ *Ophrys* also occurs on the Gargano. This is *O. scolopax* ssp *cornuta* (now *O. cornuta*, or is it *oestrifera*?), a distinctly eastern plant common in Greece and Crete, here in its only Italian location. It is no coincidence that the plants we saw in the Gargano were all close to the eastern coastline. The third ‘*fuciflora*’ type is the strangely named *Ophrys parvimaculata*. This seems quite abundant in the north-westerly part of the peninsula, and generally resembles our Late Spider Orchid, but with petals and sepals that are green rather than pink and a somewhat variable lip-shape.

Perhaps the most intriguing of the Gargano *Ophrys* are what I can loosely call the 'bertolonii group' - these are the ones with shiny patches or reflective bits, though the real 'mirror orchid' *Ophrys speculum* hardly occurs here - or anywhere else on the Italian mainland. *O. bertolonii* is very much an Italian plant, and is characterised by a dark, velvety lip with a prominent reflective patch in the middle. The sepals may be pink or green, and the species has suffered from a good deal of 'splitting' by recent taxonomists who have identified an alternative *O. bertoloniformis*, which differs from the original in rather generalised characteristics being, for example, somewhat smaller, with a more convex lip which curves upwards rather less. Both are abundant in the 'plateau' part of the Gargano, and seem to me to form a continuum with every intermediate form between the two 'pure' species. It was very important to my Italian friends however to determine each plant we saw into the right 'species', and we had endless discussions on the subject. But whether it's one species or two, *bertolonii* is a most attractive plant, and it may also be credited with ultimate parenthood of two more of the most interesting and characteristic Gargano *Ophrys*: *O. promontorii* (taking its name from the peninsula) and *O. biscutella*, which used to go by the more poetic name of *O. fuciflora ssp exaltata*. *O. promontorii* is thought to have originated as a hybrid between *bertolonii* and one of the *sphegodes* types, but it now seems well stabilised and is quite common in the mid-altitude parts of the peninsula. In stature it is like *bertolonii*, but has a very dark *sphegodes*-type lip with two shiny spots on it which look rather like eyes. *O. biscutella* occurs in the same places, but has a more colourful brownish lip, also with two 'eyes'. Parentage involving *fuciflora* (*Apulica*?) and *bertolonii* types seems plausible, but like *promontorii* it is now clearly established.. To me these curious and attractive plants are the archetypal Gargano *Ophrys*, and I have happy memories of seemingly thousands of them carpeting a forest glade on the plateau across the valley from Monte Sant'Angelo - with numerous other orchids to set them off of course.

Ophrys is thus the real joy of the Gargano, but there are other species there as well. The queen among these must be *Orchis italica*, more splendid and abundant here than I've seen it anywhere else; it's everywhere except in the highest parts. In some places it hybridises with Man Orchid, producing some spectacular individual plants that stand much higher than the parents. However, more abundant is *Anacamptis morio* (*Orchis morio*), similar to our own plants of the species, followed closely by *A. papilionacea*

Ophrys candica

Photo by Simon Andrew



(*O. papilionacea*). These two often grow together, and hybridise freely. *Neotinia tridentata* (*Orchis tridentata*) is scattered round most parts of the peninsula, accompanied on the plateau by *N. ustulata* (*O. ustulata*) - which I don't usually think of as a Mediterranean plant, and we have seen fine plants of *Orchis purpurea* on the northern slopes. But two other *Orchis* require special mention. *O. quadripunctata* is essentially a Greek plant, but it has its own stronghold on Italian territory in the Gargano. It is quite frequent on the southern slopes, the plateau and the highest parts, where its purple spikes are often accompanied by the yellow *Orchis pauciflora*, which I think is the most beautiful of the *Orchis* species growing there. I shall never forget the scene last year at the summit of the road that crosses the highest part of the peninsula: a bare, rocky alpine meadow carpeted with purple *Anacamptis morio*, differently purple *O. quadripunctata*, and bright yellow *O. pauciflora* - with a sprinkling of *Dactylorhiza romana* adding a contrasting shade of creamy yellow.

Other species in the Gargano? Plenty of *Serapias* of course, with *S. lingua* and *S. parviflora* the most clearly identifiable, and a range of *S. vomeracea* and *S. cordigera* types. I found the local pride-and-joy *S. vomeracea* ssp *orientalis* very difficult to distinguish from a good plain *S. vomeracea* - and so did my Italian friends. The *Serapias* are like that! We have also seen *Cephalanthera longifolia* scattered in the woods - 'Foresta Umbra' - accompanied by *Dactylorhiza romana*, always in its yellow form. *Orchis anthropophora* (*Aceras anthropophorum*) and *Anacamptis pyramidalis* are also generally common, and we saw *Himantoglossum hircinum* just beginning to expand its spikes on the plateau. I think that's all!

There's nothing like the Gargano, but the two other two areas of Apulia I mentioned also deserve some comment. There is a very attractive region round Martina Franca some miles inland about half way between Bari and Brindisi. It is a series of stepped limestone plateaus, very stony, partly wooded and only intermittently cultivated, with plenty of good spots for orchids. Many of the Gargano species also grow here (*Orchis italica*, *Ophrys bertolonii*, *O. apulica*, *O. tenthredinifera*, *O. lutea* for example), but among the many splendid displays are a few local species. *Ophrys tarentina*, named after the port of Taranto just to the south, is a particularly grand form of the *O. sphegodes* type with big flowers sporting an opulently shaggy lip. I have a clear image of this plant growing with at least sixteen other orchid species in a flat, windswept stony wasteland just north of Taranto - a most unpromising spot until you looked at it closely. At the same place was the other local speciality *Ophrys celiensis*, common in this area but unknown outside it. This is a 'fuciflora' type, with attractive chocolate, purple and white flowers, very similar to the Sicilian *O. oxyrrhynchos*, and some authorities say the two are really the same. A roadside verge we saw near Martina Franca with dozens of these *O. celiensis* was quite a stunning sight. Every plant had a different lip-design, though a common feature seemed to be a circular element in the pattern.



Ophrys tardans
Photo by Simon Andrew

And, not far away, something we had not seen before: hybrids between *Orchis italica* and *Neotinea tridentata* (*O. tridentata*). These hybrids were visible from a distance, and it was not at first clear what they were. Then closer inspection showed both parents close by, overshadowed by their supposed progeny.

Now down to the south-east extremity, the region of Lecce and Otranto. A much less attractive area scenically, largely flat and well cultivated, with a coastline in the process of being ruined by holiday development - though the presence of the magnificent baroque town of Lecce and mediaeval Otranto is some compensation. The Orchid interest, however, is considerable, though a bit specialised and somewhat elusive. Our main goal was *Ophrys candica*, a grand *fuciflora* type with white markings; an eastern plant, best known from Crete, it just has a toehold in south-east Apulia

where most of its sites seem to be threatened with development. We spent some time looking for it along the coastal area north of Otranto, and found quite a lot of plants rather like it, but apparently tainted by hybridisation with *O. tenthredinifera*, which was growing particularly splendidly in this area as late as the end of April. This 'hybrid', however, has now apparently achieved species status in some eyes and has been named *Ophrys tardans*. We saw it in several places in the Lecce/Otranto area, and it is a very attractive plant that combines the intricate patterning of *candica* with the characteristic yellow fringe of *tenthredinifera*. There were also quite a number of other *Ophrys* hybrids in the area, most apparently with a touch of *O bertolonii* in them, but none as consistent or as frequent as these *O. tardans*. As for *O. candica* proper, we did eventually find some near the west coast of the 'heel'. Impressively large flowers, the lips intricately patterned and with distinctive white markings. They were growing in a patch of waste land dangerously close to the edge of a quarry in an area otherwise densely cultivated. This was in 1992. I visited the same area again on exactly the same date last year (2 May) and could find no trace of them, nor of most of the other orchids that were growing with them - and the quarry did not appear to have advanced much. The only orchids visible were *Anacamptis pyramidalis* and *Serapias parviflora* - the late flowering ones. The season seemed to be at least two weeks more advanced than the previous time.

What else in this extreme south-east? Most of the typical Apulian orchids were there, and there were some interesting connoisseurs' spots along the coast where there were several marshy areas. There were many varieties of *Serapias* there, some of which have been determined as new local species, but to the non-expert eye it was difficult to see what was special about them. More interesting, to me at least, were two species we had not seen elsewhere: *Anacamptis laxiflora* (*Orchis laxiflora*) and *A. palustris* (*O. palustris*), the latter growing, as its name suggests, in the very wettest places.

That's the end of my tour of Apulia, and I've gone on about it a bit. But I think there's nowhere else quite like it for the 'Hardy Orchid' enthusiast - and there's a lot of wonderful architecture there too!

Guide des Orchidees d'Europe, d'Afrique du Nord et du Proche-Orient

2nd Edition 'entirely revised and corrected'. Pierre Delforge Delachaux et Niestle.

2001

reviewed by Richard Manuel

This is a new edition of the well known but still controversial 'Delforge'. True to form he has managed to stuff in a load of new 'species' variously exhumed from the past, newly described, or uprated from different varieties and forms, increasing his page count from 482 in the first edition to 594 in this one. So you get a lot more orchids for your money!

As some examples of the species proliferation, compared with the first edition there are 27 (19 in first edition) *Serapias*; 221 (130) *Ophrys*; 58 (50) *Dactylorhiza*; and 56 (35) *Epipactis*. Whatever their true status, the different entities are mostly recognisable and the names form useful handles to describe them. The 'genus' *Orchis* as here defined by Delforge, is somewhat disastrous: unlike the modern thinking of Bateman *et al*, who have laboured long and hard to redefine the various entities hitherto included in the heterogeneous assemblage *Orchis*, Delforge has lumped them all together again and in addition, included some previously separate genera, such as *Neotinea* and *Stenisiella*. The production standard is pretty much the same as before but the printing of some of the plates has lost quality compared to the first edition. Many of the plates have been replaced with new images, which makes a pleasant change from seeing the same old pictures for every species.

This edition is only available in French, which will probably discourage some potential buyers. I cannot say whether, in view of the fuss Delforge made about the appalling translation of the first edition, an English version is in the pipeline, but it seems unlikely.

The book is available from Summerfield Books at around £25.00.

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