

The Orchidaceous Review

Volume 44 No.1

January 2009

The Official Publication of
The South Australian Orchidaceous Society Inc.



Affiliated with
Australian Orchid Council
South Australian Regional Orchid Council
American Orchid Society



Web Site www.geocities.com/saorchidaceous

<mailto:saorchidaceous@yahoo.com.au>

PRESIDENT
Mrs. Jane Higgs
8558 6247

SECRETARY
Dr Tony Bourne
8356 9523
PO Box 161 Brooklyn Park SA 5032

TREASURER
Mr Robert Gunn
8298 1809



Paph rothschildianum winner of last year's Autumn Show for Johnston Orchids

January 2009 meeting to be held on the **THIRD** Wednesday of the Month, at the Adelaide
West Uniting Church Hall,
312 Sir Donald Bradman Drive Brooklyn Park.

Next Meeting WEDNESDAY January 21st 2009.

The Executive Committee of the S.A. Orchidaceous Society Inc.

PRESIDENT	Mrs. J Higgs	☎	8558 6247
VICE PRESIDENTS	Mr. A. Davies		
	Ms. Jill Taylor		
Im PAST PRESIDENT	Mr P French		
SECRETARY	Dr. Tony Bourne	☎	8356 9523
			P.O. Box 161 Brooklyn Park S.A. 5032
Asst. Secretary	Mrs. Lesley Gunn		
TREASURER	Mr R Gunn		
COMMITTEE	Mr. J. Nicholls		
	Mr. K Trevan		
	Mr. R. McNamee		
	Mr. P. Speer		
REGISTRAR of JUDGES	Mr. Don Higgs		
SHOW MARSHAL	Dr. A. Bourne		
REVIEW EDITOR	Mr. T. Jacob	☎	8346 6155
ASSISTANT EDITOR	Mr. R. McNamee	☎	8322 8344
		Email	robba20@yahoo.com.au

Articles in this Review
may be reprinted with
permission from the S.A.
Orchidaceous Society Inc.

LIFE MEMBERS

Alan & Iris Davies, Kevin Gurney, Trevor Jacob, Deane Johnston, Harold Luckhurst, Nancy Neighbour, Noel Oliver, Elva Shawyer, Kel Staples, and Peter Speer.

**2009 PROGRAMME
January 21st 2009.**

Review of 2008 flowering results throughout last year. This presentation will be conducted by our Judging Registrar, Mr Don Higgs.

We are finalising our guest list of speakers for 2009. A number of speakers have indicated their willingness to address our meetings, but the timetable is not yet finalised. We will announce the completed list when it is available.

BIRTHDAYS FOR JANUARY

Happy Birthday to these members who are celebrating their birthdays this month..

Anton Drew	John Dunn	Helen Gurney	Jane Higgs	Murray Page
Mavis Phillips		John Seidel	Alan Sim	Lucy Spear

Next Committee Meeting:	Pultenev Grammar School	2 nd Feb. 2009	7.30pm
Next Judges Meeting	Pultenev Grammar School	.	8:00pm
Next SA Regional Judging Panel Meeting:		Monday 16 th March	7:30pm
	Pultenev Grammar School South Tce. Adelaide		

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Happy New Year to all members.

I trust that everyone had an enjoyable and relaxing Christmas time and New Year – the weather was certainly very pleasant. I was hoping that it would prove to continue to be a mild summer, but with 41degrees already it doesn't look like it will be.

Last year was a strange one for orchids, with the plants not knowing what season it was. I still have about 10 cym. in flower, and one of them has a flower spike yet to open – most peculiar.

The native terrestrial orchids were also an enigma. When I tipped out pots that didn't have leaves or flowers last season. I was expecting there to be no tubers, but some of the pots had really big, healthy tubers in them and others that performed well had few, if any, tubers.

There seems to be no rhyme or reason to it all so I guess we just have to leave it in the lap of the Gods. The interesting thing is, that we always seem to have some flowers on our benches and in the shows.

I look forward to seeing you all at the next meeting where Don, our Registrar will show us a review of last year's winning orchids.

See you then. . Jane.

LAST MEETING

Our Christmas social evening was a very pleasant and social evening. Commencing with a meal subsidised by our Society, it gave members the opportunity to mix and enjoy the company of other members in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. The tables were beautifully decorated with appropriate Christmas items, and the meal was well received and sufficient for all. The raffle provided lots of prizes for those who wanted to take part, and we thank all those members who donated prizes, and also to those who enthusiastically bought tickets. Your support is greatly appreciated....

Father Christmas took out time from his busy schedule to pay us a visit, and to check out who'd been naughty or nice. I think most of us were on the 'nice' list.

It was good to see Gwen Staples back with us for the Christmas meeting, and Gwen and

Nancy Neighbour, another of our long-serving stalwarts, cut our Christmas cake, iced this year by Iris Davies. Mrs Elva Shawyer, foundation member and long-serving Secretary/treasurer, missed her first Christmas social ever, having recently recovered from a stay in hospital.. We missed a number of other regular attendees this year, and hope you will be able to join us next time.

Following the meal, our regular Social end of year meeting was chaired by president, Jane Higgs.

Our new Registrar, Don Higgs announced the winners of the Perpetual trophy award winners for 2008, and the winners of the aggregate plant competitions in the various exhibition classes were announced and received their accolades and rewards in the form of seedlings. The recording of the winners of the various categories each month and at our Shows is an onerous task, and we are grateful to members of our judging panel who cheerfully do this for us each month.



Nancy Neighbour & Gwen Staples cut the Christmas cake.



Father Christmas hands out presents.



Pleasant company and fine food.

THIS MEETING

Wednesday 21st January 2009.

We look forward to seeing many of our members at our first meeting for the year on Jan. 21st, and to seeing a number of our summer flowering orchids on display.

January is traditionally the month when we look at pictures and discuss the merits of seedlings and selected plants shown during the previous year. Don Higgs, our Judging Registrar, will present pictures of these outstanding plants which you had brought along.

As well as showing you some fine plants, you have the opportunity to ask about the culture and availability of quality plants which you might like to try in your collections, too.

Our plant competition for this year gets under way. The judging categories in each of Open, First, and Second Divisions have some changes for this year.

Firstly, the different groupings within the cattleya alliance, technically known as the 'Laeliinae' have been changed. The flat, round types with the overlapping petals, which we judged previously as the 'Standard cattleyas', now combine with the Cocktail cattleya group, and all these are divided into two sections depending only on the size of the blooms. Our Society has deemed the dividing point to be 8 cm across the widest part of the bloom (other Societies may use other dividing points, such as 10 cm.)

The 'non-standard' group now includes all the more starry types which we previously called the novelty types

Each of these two groupings, Standard and Non-standard, are further divided for judging purposes, according to the number of blooms on the stems.

The cluster cattleyas are those types which naturally carry a high number of blooms on the stem. For Award purposes, a cluster cattleya type should have a minimum of 8 blooms per raceme, but our judging at meetings and shows can allow some deficiency here, providing the bloom quality is acceptable.

The 'Cattleya and Allied Genera' section now disappears and the plants previously in this class are judged within the new categories depending only on their size, shape and numbers of blooms on the stems, (judges must still consider the parentage of the plant when adjudicating on its worth.).

The other change is really only a change of name, whereby the Odont/miltonia/ocnidium class is now changed to 'Oncidiinae' to encompass all the man-made combinations being produced within this Tribe of orchids.

If you are confused by any of these changes, any of our judges will put you right. The changes have been made only to help simplify the groupings, and minimise confusion, brought about by recent name changes of many of our orchids.

We have been able to secure space for a cupboard at the hall, and will re-establish our LIBRARY as soon as we can - hooray!.

VALE

Members will be saddened to hear of the passing of Ray Lonsdale earlier this month. Ray was a man who loved his orchids and had grown them for many years. He was active in a number of orchid clubs, including ours, and was always available to help whenever he could.

We extend our sincere condolences to Ray's wife Florence and her family

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Would members please note that subs. for 2009 are now due..

The good news is we AGAIN haven't had to raise subscriptions this year due to good member support at our Shows providing revenue from plant sales, and members' support through raffles and 'lucky square' competitions at our monthly meetings..

The last time we increased subs was in 2005, and even then it was only a \$2 raise, so we haven't done badly in recent times.

They remain at \$20 for single membership, and \$30 per couple, which we believe is excellent value for 12 meetings, monthly Review, opportunities to show your plants with a competent AOC judging panel, some subsidised activities and together with organised social outings.

2008 TROPHY WINNERS

Our Perpetual Trophies were presented to the winners for 2008 at the Christmas social.

Firstly, the **Driffied Cup**, awarded to the exhibitor who gained most points throughout the year for the Cattleya Alliance was won again this year by **Richard and Beryl Wilson**.

The **Cybidium Cup** was won yet again this year by **John and Sandra Nicholls**.

The **Mem. Melva Oliver Trophy** for the highest aggregate points for Australian Native Orchids was won by **Jane & Don Higgs**.

Our newest Perpetual Trophy, the **Merv. And Shirley Steele Trophy** for highest aggregate points in the Popular vote section throughout the year was won by **Richard & Beryl Wilson**.

The **Edite Nicholls Memorial Tray** awarded for the highest pointing seedling orchid exhibited in 2008 (from Shows and monthly meetings) was a again a very close contest, and was won by **Dr Tony Bourne**.

We'll have the opportunity to view the seedlings among the slides show at our coming meeting.

In addition to the Perpetual Trophy awards, the following exhibitors gained the most aggregate points in their separate Judging Divisions at the meetings :-

Open Division Richard & Beryl Wilson

First Division Kevin Trevan

Second Div. Anton Drew.

ORCHIDS ROUND THE YEAR - AND EASY TO GROW, TOO.

Orchids are found right round the world except for the very coldest regions. Even within the hot Tropical Zone we find a great climatic range under which orchids thrive, because in the higher elevations, (like the Himalayan mountains or South American Andes, for example), there are many orchids to be found which prefer cooler conditions, and these suit our local conditions.

WHICH TO GROW?

With judicious selection of species and hybrids, there are a great many orchids for which we can provide suitable growing conditions. This range of orchids is even further increased when we realise that hybridists are always producing new combinations of heat requiring plants with those from more temperate climates. Their efforts are aimed at giving us even more beauties less reliant on expensive heating in our flowering houses.

OVERCOMING EXTREMES

A controlled atmosphere greenhouse can supply conditions to suit almost any of the most exotic orchids we may like to try. Our efforts are directed to provide some heating in winter to temper the cold, and to supply evaporative air conditioning in summer to maintain humidity and keep our plants cool.

Many orchids like conditions under which we are comfortable, and even when we eliminate those types which require temperature extremes, we still have a great range of orchids we can grow easily

THE RIGHT CONDITIONS.

When we provide temperature protection, we must ensure that we do not adversely affect the other very important conditions which our plants need in order to thrive and flower. For example, air movement is a prime requirement of many orchids, and fans and evaporative coolers are used to help provide a buoyant atmosphere.

Closely allied is the humidity factor, requiring us to provide the same humidity conditions enjoyed by the plants in their natural environment. The higher the temperature, the more moisture is required to maintain humidity..

The other factor which is important is the light factor. Orchids kept too dark will become 'leggy' and their bulbs and growths will not become strong and sturdy enough to support flowering. We all know the results from providing too much sunlight, thus burning the leaves, dehydrating the plants and cooking the roots.

Orchid clubs and libraries are handy resources to help choose suitable plants, as there we can see each month what can be grown locally, and be able to ask about their needs.

This will enable us to gather together those which need similar conditions. They can even be grown together in the same structure, ranging from cooler growers at one end to those which need the warmer end of the house to do their best.

Some of these include, starting with those which flower in summer, and progressing through the seasons:_-

1. Reed-stem epidendrums. These are amongst the easiest to obtain and grow, and come in a large colour range. Some of the latest breeding give bigger and rounder flowers than those we have been used to seeing. These are scarcer, and probably need cool glasshouse conditions in winter. Don't buy too small pieces, which will take a long time to grow to a decent flowering size plant. Buy sturdy well developed plants.

2 Bulbous Encyclias, such as *Enc. cochleata*, the cockleshell orchid. Grows easily, and even the smallish made up bulbs will flower over summer. Not spectacular, but

interesting – this one flowers with its lips upside down compared to many orchids.



3. Stanhopeas and Gongoras. Real wierdos of the orchid world. Stanhopeas flower from the bottom of their container, through the moss or bark which lines their basket. They are short-lived blooms highly perfumed, and make a good talking point to impress your non orchid growing friends. They grow cool, needing only shadehouse conditions and dappled light to do well. Summer flowering, they are devilishly difficult to transport to meetings. Gongoras need to be planted high in the pots, too, as many have flower spikes which come horizontally from the bubs..

4 Novelty type Paphiopedilums For the connoisseurs,. and not even they could claim that many of these are pretty, That didn't stop this group becoming very popular some 30 or so years ago when a great deal of breeding was done using the slipper orchid species. Lots of them grow in reasonably cool winter conditions. They last ages in bloom, over a long flowering season, and don't take up much space on the benches. Their main purpose is to allow judges to air how much knowledge they've gained about the slipper species and their characteristics. Lots of experienced growers love them.

5. Oncidiums Lots of these are hardy, autumn flowering plants which can be grown mounted, needing only cymbidium conditions to flower well.

(Small plants need sheltered conditions until they mature, which is common to many orchids, even cyms.) Yellow dancing ladies on a long branched spray are charming, and well worthwhile.

Some have been intercrossed with other genera to make Wilsonaras, McLellanaras and other exotic sorts which require winter

warmth and summer cooling, but growers who have graduated to these more exotic types reckon they're great, and love to bring them in to meetings to show them off. Some of them are weirdos too, like the butterfly orchid *Oncid* (now *Psychopsis*) *papilio* which needs heat in winter.



6. Cattleyas Strange looking plants with gorgeous flowers – the chocolate box orchids, which large bosomed ladies used to wear on their bodice. Lots of the autumn flowered types look a little more like normal plants, having two leaves stuck on top of their long, skinny pseudobulbs, rather than having one thick, leathery leaf, which many of the later flowering ones have. They make up for their smaller flower size by producing more on a stem.

Even cymbidium growers admit they're prettier than their cymbidiums.

The bifoliate cattleyas (two leaves) are generally the more hardy types, like C Valentine's Day, for example.

Most of the later unifoliate ones which flower in winter and spring, need winter warmth to mature their growths and give their best flowers. BUT there are some of the large flowering types which bloom in autumn and these can be overwintered successfully if they are kept relatively dry at that time..

They come in all plant and flower in a really wide colour range. Mericlones of superior types are available.

Be canny when purchasing non-flowering divisions. Ask! You may be buying someone's substandard cast-offs.

7. Zygopetalums A recently expanded group of orchids made popular due to extensive local hybridisation currently being acknowledged worldwide. Cheers to Stephen Monkhouse who stood apart from his father's

breeding efforts with mini-cyms and slippers, and carved his own niche in orchid breeding. Zygopetalums. and their hybrids flower much more easily, have compact plants, and a wider range of colours, than those previously available although most are still predominantly green and brown, with purple lips. Many are perfumed, and are now much more readily available and very popular.

They all used to flower only in winter and spring, but their times of flowering have been widely extended, as you can see on the show benches each month.

8. Lycastes. Large leaved orchids, most of which drop their leaves over winter, which is great for space conservation in the glasshouse. When the leaves drop, be wary of sharp spines which can remain at the top of the pseudobulbs. Be careful not to give them too much light on their large leaves or they will burn. A well flowered plant is something to behold, but many we see don't have enough blooms per mature bulb, although this is to some extent hereditary. The blooms look most unlike traditional orchid shapes, and most flower over the cooler months into spring, although there are summer flowering species and hybrids, too. Good ones are highly regarded – the Grand Champion at the Port Macquarie AOC Conference was a richly coloured red-purple Lycaste Kiama 'Margaret'. Unfortunately, breeding in this genus has gone off the boil with the passing of the great hybridist, Fred Alcorn, which is a pity...Many of his crosses went to the USA, but goodness knows what has happened in recent years.



9 Standard bred Paphiopedilums. These are coming back into favour, especially in the Eastern States. Once considered the pinnacle of the orchid breeders art, they were bred, mainly in the UK at first, then in America, and later here in Australia to produce large, saucer shaped blooms in strong, distinct colours. Being slow growing, and not amenable to mericlone culture, they remain high priced and scarce.

Nicky Zurcher was involved in the hybridisation of many of the world's top crossings at Ratcliffe's England, before he came out to Australia. Eastern States growers are making a number of crossings which should produce good results, and Stan Johnston brought in a number of good slippers, including seedlings from John Hanes in USA. Top clones are still expensive, but a number of experienced growers number them amongst their favourite plants. Some winter warmth is necessary to keep them growing at their best.

10. Phalaenopsis This genus is currently at the pointy tip of hybridising around the world – just watch the new hybrids lists to see the activity. Massive breeding and developments in Asia are showing up results in prizewinners here and overseas. Perhaps the most dramatic changes are in the novelty types with highly coloured clones with blotches and markings in contrasting tones. Awards made at the Port Macquarie Conference brought these developments into focus, and many new colour combinations are on display in the photos of new awards in Orchids Australia, many bred by Dr Graham McKay in Qld..



There are improvements in the whites as well. The most recent award, a high Award of

Merit was given to a very shapely white with a stem length of 1.3 metres long shown in Western Australia. It had 25 flowers and two buds on the stem and the blooms were large, 11.7 cm across. Perhaps almost too large for commercial purposes, but certainly not for exhibition hobbyists.

You'll need heating for these tropical lowland orchids, but they grow quickly and are a terrific commercial proposition if you can develop a market. No good for me – I'd want to keep them all to admire.

11. Australian Natives. The native dendrobium hybrids are still massively popular, and good crossings are always in the pipeline. These are easily grown once they reach flowering size, but I must say my culture doesn't completely come to terms with their possibilities, as I seem to have trouble keeping them growing larger whilst they are still in the immature stage. Still, that's my problem, not the plant's. *Den. speciosum* seedling plants can take a long time to build to flowering size.

Breeding and great results are being achieved with the production of new Sarcocylus hybrids. A number of new colour types are continually coming to light, and the vigour and bloom size are becoming bigger and more spectacular. I get best results in a shady bushhouse, with humidity being maintained around the plants over summer months. They prefer rainwater, too, in my opinion. Again, to see some of the spectacular results coming to light, check the photos of the latest awards in newer copies of Orchids Australia. Sarcocylus orchids tend to flower at the end of the year, which just about rounds out our annual progression of hybrids.



!

Trevor Jacob-

