

May 2023



Cymbidium devonianum

Noel Cope - Hinckley and District Orchid Society
Central Orchid Society Show.



Each month seems to get more and more hectic, but this one has been especially chaotic! Dave and I seem to have been travelling from one end of the country and back again every weekend.

There have been some wonderful shows and some unusual species and fabulous hybrids on display. I am always amazed at the variety of orchids that people grow and how successful they are, and all this in spite of the ongoing difficulties with plant importing and rising costs that everyone is now face with.

More and more people seem to be growing miniatures in terrariums of all shapes and sizes. Some are very simple and some are very elaborate electronically controlled set-ups. Their ingenuity is amazing!



All change at BOC

At the recent AGM, having completed my three year term of office, I stood down as Chairman and Keith Bates from Hinckley and District OS has now taken over.

For the moment, I am continuing in the capacity of Vice-chairman in order to support Keith until he choses his own Vice chair.

I am planning to continue the newsletter for as long as possible.

There were no other changes to the committee.

Keith has sent out a letter to all the Societies, he will be asking you all what you think and want in the future. So if you haven't sent an answer by email yet, look out for him at Malvern and have a talk to him.

Which brings me to the subject of Malvern, which is nearly upon us again.

It is the orchid event of the year for a lot of people. Often the only chance we get to catch up with friends from other parts of the country. Everyone looks forward to this show each year and would not like to see it finish. Unfortunately this may be the case if there is no-one to take over the running of the show next year.

I hope everyone has read the email that Chris Barker recently sent round about Malvern.

Following his appeal last year for help, there were a sufficient number of people to help out in the running of the show this year. However, he has said that this year will be the last for him. For Malvern to continue it needs someone to come forward who can take over from Chris, which not an easy job to say the least.

In case you haven't read it, here is a section from his letter that was sent out to everyone. Please study it carefully, I'm sure that Chris will appreciate any practical input on this matter.



Malvern Hills, from the showground 2019

Finally, I indicated last year that it is my intention to step down after this show. I started in 2006 working with the planning group for the first Peterborough Show, took it over in 2011 and then worked on transferring it to Malvern for the first show in 2013. If the show is to continue it needs a young, enthusiastic leader willing to take the job on, liaise with the showground staff and coordinate the work of a team of helpers. I hope such a person is not a figment of my imagination. People willing to help should not be a problem and it would include me to advise. The only thing definite is that sadly, I will step down.

Chris Barker

Chelsea Flower Show 2023,

there were two important orchid exhibits, the first from the OSGB and the second from an international team raising awareness of the extremely rare Ghost Orchid



The Orchid Society of Great Britain's Gold medal exhibit at Chelsea this year. Congratulations to everyone who took part - well done guys!



Ghost Orchid -
Dendrophylax lindenii

Finding the Florida Ghost Orchid

The Ghost Orchid gets its name from its almost non-existent stem and lack of leaves. When not in flower the Ghost Orchid is almost invisible to the naked eye, and extremely difficult to find.

It occurs on the Fakahatchee Strand, a protected swamp region habitat in North America, now a biodiversity 'hotspot'.

On the display were a number of orchids and other plant genera commonly found in the Ghost's Orchid's habit in South Florida and Cuba. *Thanks to Stuart Meeson for these pictures*

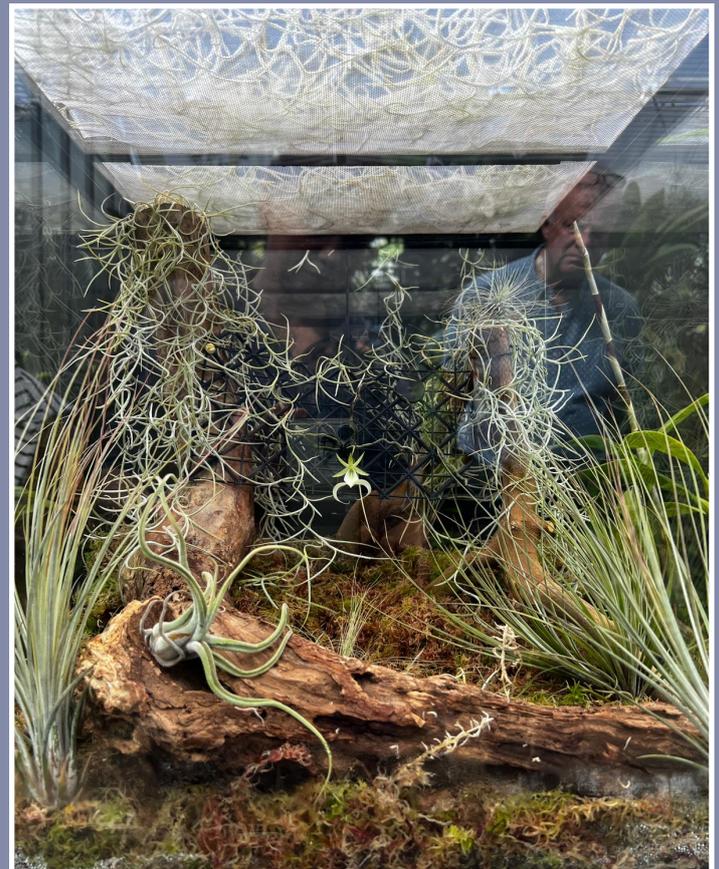




Ghost orchids seedlings at Chelsea
Photo: Stuart Meeson

After the Chelsea Flower show the Ghost orchid plant and seedlings were donated to the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew. Unfortunately only the bud had been visible during the show, but a few days ago the bud opened at Kew, as the picture above show.

They are intending to pollinate it and hopefully eventually obtain seedlings of this Endangered species. Which will help in its conservation.



Ghost orchid flowering at Kew, a couple of days ago
Photo: Galina Boyse

Congratulations!!

Monday 6th March 2023

Paul Phillips was awarded the Victoria Medal of Honour at the recent RHS Awards Ceremony, in recognition of his career in orchid horticulture.



Very well done and well deserved Paul, I know how proud you are of this, even if, (as you said) it has taken more than 50 years!



Enlarged from the photograph, so you can see them better.

VMH lapel badge

VHM medal

So what is the Victoria Medal of Honour?

The Victoria Medal of Honour (VMH) is awarded to British horticulturists resident in the United Kingdom whom the Royal Horticultural Society Council considers deserving of special honour by the Society.

The VMH was established in 1897, "in perpetual remembrance of Her Majesty's glorious reign", and with the assent of Her Majesty Queen Victoria. It was intended to enable the RHS Council to confer conspicuous honour on those British horticulturists deserving of special honour by the society. In recognition of the duration of Queen Victoria's reign, only 63 medals may be held at any one time. Therefore, the honour is not awarded every year, but may be made to multiple recipients in other years.

Ref: Wikipedia article "Victoria Medal of Honour".

If you want to look up all the past and present holder of this honour, they are included at the end of the Wikipedia article. They make very interesting reading and include all sorts of famous and not so famous names from the past.

Talking about famous or well known names, Paul joins these very familiar ones:

Charles III, - I was surprised at that one!

Carol Klein, Monty Don and Alan Titchmarsh

The orchid world is not left out as I also discovered that both Henry Oakley and Johan Hermans are also current holders of this award.

For any of you who are interested in Paphs, here are some pictures of a few of the awarded plants that were all bred at Ratcliffes' orchids. This includes the P. Moquettianum which was a line bred plant.

You will find images of some famous names in Paph breeding, especially the renowned line of breeding that included 'Miller's Daughter'. This hybrid was bred from the famous Dusty Miller, with the intention of producing a clear round white flower.

Many thanks to Paul for providing the pictures and some of the details.

I hope you all remember the issue about the botanical artist Nelly Roberts? Just for interest I looked up the botanical artists for the images. The details are below the pictures.



Botanical artist Mary Iris Humphreys (MIH) who produced one 500 original paintings for the RHS



Paphiopedilum Daybreak 'Nouvelle'
Award of Merit, R. H. S., 29th January, 1991



Paphiopedilum glaucophyllum var. mequillianum 'Winchester'
Award of Merit, R. H. S., 28th August, 2004



Paphiopedilum Pink Enchantress 'Passionale'
Award of Merit, R. H. S., 15th August, 1989



Paphiopedilum Keightoniae 'Hazel'
Award of Merit, R. H. S., 20th June, 1995

The botanical artist for these four pictures was Cherry-Anne Lavrih (1946-2012). She produced over 750 original paintings for the RHS, which is the highest number next to Nelly Roberts. She was the main artist for the RHS for 17 years, again only Nelly Roberts served longer than this.