



British Orchid Council

....promoting orchid growing...

I hope this edition finds everyone still well and happy!! Some of you seem to have been having wonderful weather and plenty of sunshine. Here in the Midlands it has been wet (what's new?) but at least it is now warmer. I hope it all balances out for everyone over the summer months so that the orchids will flower well for us all next year and we will be able to meet up in person to show them off.

This bulletin is a special one based around Paphiopedilums or Slipper Orchids. Probably one of the most renowned Paph. growers and hybridisers is Paul Phillips (Ratcliffe's Orchids) who is celebrating both his 80th birthday and 50 years on the RHS Orchid Committee this year. He was also a founder member of BOC, but more of that later.

If you want to check up, just Google 'Miller's Daughter', but add orchid or Paphiopedilum after it or you may get some strange results!

If you come across anything interesting concerning orchids, let me know, so that I can post the link in the bulletin for others to enjoy!

Stay safe and take care . Helen

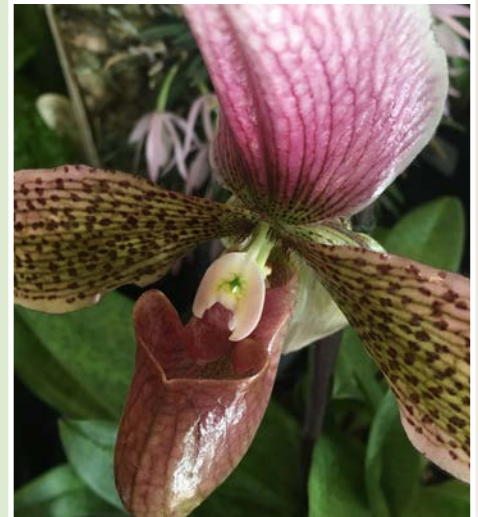
Our traders:

This edition's trader is Elite Orchids, a specialist Paphiopedilum nursery which trades solely online. They have been at Malvern for the last couple of years and the owner, Mark Turner may be contacted through Facebook or through the nursery website -

<https://www.eliteorchids.com/>

"Elite orchids started in 2017 as a small orchid nursery specialising in providing quality, lovingly grown Paphiopedilum and Phragmipedium plants. We source the best flasks, seedlings and plants from all round the world and sell them online to customers and businesses within Europe.

We strive to give the best customer service available, by having outstanding communication with our customers, using the latest technology to show them what plants are available, what plants they will be receiving and what condition the plant and roots are



British Paphiopedilum Society www.paphiopedilum.org.uk The following is an extract from their website -

"The British Paphiopedilum Society was founded in August 1990 and encompasses all slipper orchids - Paphiopedilum, Phragmipedium, Cypripedium, Mexipedium and Selenipedium. It currently has a membership of over 100, drawn from countries throughout the world.

A colourful Society Journal is published three times per year to members by email, reporting on events, talks and forthcoming activities. The latest issue, along with back issues, can also be viewed and downloaded by members along with further information and application forms for society events.

Please use the menu to find out more about the British Paphiopedilum Society and the wonderful world of slipper orchids.

Follow us on **Facebook, Twitter** or **Instagram**.

<http://www.facebook.com/britishpaphiopedilumsociety>

<http://www.twitter.com/@britpaphsociety>

<https://instagram.com/britpaphsociety>

We look forward to welcoming you into the society and meeting you at one of our events."

Further contact details may be found in the BOC Year Book 2020, Members of the British Orchid Council, pg 31

Paul Phillips



Paul ran his nursery Ratcliffe's Orchids for over forty years where he hosted the first BOC judging symposium in 1972

Ratcliffe's Orchids gained over 84 RHS awards which included 27 George Moore Medals and was the premier Paphiopedilum breeder in the world.

He was a regular exhibitor at RHS Shows, gaining numerous Gold Medals, has also been a Director of The Orchid Review and continues to organise the talks at the London Orchid Show.



A while ago (just before the Covid Congress) I received the following article from Paul Phillips, and thought that many of you would find it interesting as it tells about happenings in the orchid world, quite a while ago now.

If you have been in orchids any length of time you may remember some of the people involved in Paul's story and will have fun trying to identify some of the people in the photographs.

So please, if anyone has early memories of BOC, do send me details and especially any photos so that they can be included in the bulletin. There are lots of people out there who will be interested.

Many thanks to Clare and Johan Hermans for permission to reproduce the images here.

Over to Paul and his memoirs —

I've just been looking at the latest BOC Newsletter via Thames Valley where I am the sole founding member left!

I had not realised next year is BOC's 50th anniversary and I can remember John Blowers' hard work getting everyone together. I used to attend as a Thames Valley OS (TVOS) rep and of course BOGA (British Orchid Growers' Association) -the good old days!??

This year in June I will have been on the Orchid Committee for 50 years. Longest serving member! I am 80 in May too!

A sad part of these 50 years has been to see the gradual demise of the British orchid scene.

We have a wonderful orchid history in the UK.

- The amazing beginnings in the late 1800's.
- The wonderful explorers who brought the plants that were to become the mainstay of so many breeding programmes.
- Those with the foresight to start making hybrids.
- Companies whose names are fixed in our history, the like of Charlesworth, Mansell and Hatcher, Sander, Stonehurst, Stuart Low, McBeans and ourselves,, Ratcliffe.

Paul receiving the Westonbirt medal from Sir Nicholas Bacon, two years ago. He is due to receive the real Long Service Medal post Covid-19 lockdown.

My invitation arrived to join the RHS Orchid Committee in June 1970. I understand it was felt that I should be invited considering Ratcliffe's Orchids standing in the orchid world, even though at 30 I would be the youngest person present. Looking around at that time the average age was 60! Hard to believe it has been 50 years!

Maurice Mason was Chairman. His welcome came with the remark "Boy! keep quite for a couple of years!" I remember in later years I was often told "Shut up boy and listen!!!"

I was privileged to have known many of the orchid greats during this period

- Eric Young was to become a great friend and mentor. Over the years he guided me at shows and meetings around the world.
- David Sander, David Sander Orchids in Selsfield,
- Peter Black, of Black and Flory in Slough. Famous for Cattleyas and Paphiopedilum.
- Professor Herklots, who I can visualise now sitting with his trumpet hearing aid!
- Peter Taylor, who was the Kew botanist.
- Leonard Brummit, who was a superb Paph. grower and breeder. He lived near Banbury and also bred iris. Maurice Lecoufle, the famous firm of Vacherot and Lecoufle.
- Lionel Dunning who was Chair of the North of England Orchid Society and grew mainly *Odontoglossum*
- Laurie Humphries owner of Armstrong and Brown in Tunbridge Wells.
- Miss Low owner of the famous Stuart Low

Then there were the great growers like Ken Norris from Charlesworth and Syd Rothwell of McBeans.

Hobbyists such as Commander Collet, Colonel Griggs and K.D Morganstern together with owners of large collections like Strauss, which was later know as Stonehurst in Ardingly.

Lady members were few in those early days. I have mentioned Miss Low, Lady Hothfield was another and Iris Humphries was the, then, artist. Later there was Betty Cooke (Garton) who turned Sir William Cooks collection into Wyld Court Orchids. A Mrs McKenzie joined to be followed by Mrs Margaret Mason and then Gloria Cotton of Stripes Hill, Solihull who grew many things but specialised in *Lycaste*. Wilma Rittershausen was the Editor of the *Orchid Review* in later years then became a Committee member. Somewhere, early on, Jeanne Holgate took over as artist.

In those days all the meetings took place at Westminster, apart from the Chelsea Show meeting. Access to London was much easier and parking was not a problem. Therefore, we had far more plants to judge; I should think, on average, 25 plants per meeting. The Chelsea flower show was the only time we left the comfort of RHS Halls and I think back to the many international growers who visited - all icons of orchids.

Rod McLellan, Ernest Hetherington and Robert Scully from the US. While from Europe came Hans Wichman, Artur Elle, Hans Koch, Fritz Hark and Jan Post. To name a few!

During these 50 years I have sat with 5 different Chairpersons. Each had their own way of running meetings, each having a different view of putting the RHS Orchid Committee onto the world stage.

Alistair Morrison, I think, was the first to attend the Tokyo Grand Prix. As I was normally showing there he and I were often together as guests of JGP organisers. He was followed by Henry Oakeley, then Johan and Clare Hermans.

As an RHS Orchid Judge I had the honour of being a guest of at many judging groups around the world. I was frequently showing in Germany, so therefore joined the DOG (German Orchid Growers) in their deliberations. Japan of course at the JGP. For my frequent visits to South Africa, the SAOC (South African Orchid Committee) awarded me their Great Gold Medal for services to South African orchids, the first non South African to receive it. Finally while we were running the nursery in Florida I joined the AOS (American Orchid Society) as a student judge! All these bodies had different attitudes and opinions but all added to the experience of appreciation!

So it is now 2020, and in my mind it seems only yesterday when I first walked into the Orchid Committee Room and made many, many friends. Sitting at a meeting recently I looked across the room at the Chairman and Secretary checking that day's plants for Judging. I realised then a major difference to the early days!!! They were working with a computer, whilst when I joined, Jack Greatwood would arrive with a little trolley on which he had all 12 volumes of Sanders Lists of Orchid Hybrids which were his bible for checking entries.....manually!!

So here I am, in retirement from commercial growing, but still an honorary member of the Royal Horticultural orchid Committee.

2020 was always to be a landmark year for me - my 80th birthday and 50 years on the Orchid Committee.

Looking forward to seeing you all soon

Paul

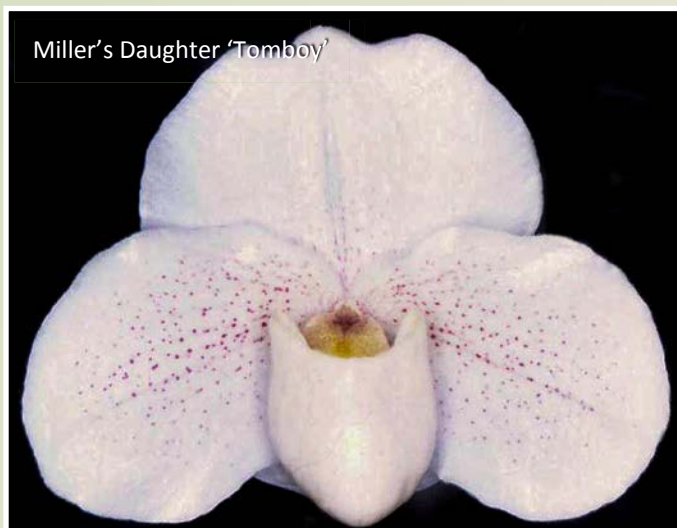
Here are a few of the awards gained by Ratcliffe's Orchids. You may want to look a few of these up online to find more pictures, Paul has provided a few below. You will be surprised at just how many you will find.

Paphiopedilum Millers Daughter 'Ballerina' (Chantal x Dusty Miller) registered 1971 AM 1977

Paphiopedilum Copper Spice 'Fresco' (*spicerianum* x Copperware) registered 1980 AM 1996

Paphiopedilum Psyche 'Claudia' (*bellatulum* x *niveum*) originally registered by Winn in 1893 and remade by Paul, AM 1983

Paphiopedilum moquetteanum 'Winchester' AM 2004 a species from SW Jawa



Photos: Paul Phillips



**Orchid Committee Meeting
Chelsea 2000**

**Henry Oakeley Chairman (1997-
2008)**

Can you find any of these?

Janet Plested

Ray Bilton

Brian Rittershausen

John Blowers

Photo: J Hermans

**Orchid Committee Meeting
Chelsea 2011**

**Johan Hermans Chairman
(2008-2015)**

Familiar faces you may be able
to spot -

John Gay

Peter White

Liz Johnson

Allan Burdis

Roy Barrow

Roy White

Photo: J Hermans



*Many of you will recognise familiar faces on these two
photographs, so I do hope you will enjoy looking for all the
people you know. Paul is in both pictures by the way.*

*Perhaps you will also be reminded of some good orchid
friends who we don't see over here very often, and others
who have now passed.*



**MINUTES OF "THE BRITISH ORCHID COUNCIL" INAUGURAL MEETING
HELD IN BIRMINGHAM, 20th. JUNE 1971.**

PRESENT.

Cambridge O.S.
Bristol O.S.
East Anglia O.S.
Thames Valley O.S.
Central O.S.
Birmingham O.S.
O.S.C.B.
B.O.G.A.

and J.R. Blowers.

J.C. Swainland.
B.R. Farr.
Dr. A.C. Maxwell.
B. Williams.
J.A. Steele.
Mjr. E.R.S. Fiddian.
J.R. Oddy.
R. Bilton.

B. Cox.
P.D. Ballif
J.S. Stevens.
M. Wadsworth.
D. Steele.
C. Hands.
L.R. Bowen.
P. Phillips.

The above is part of a fascinating document sent to me by Ian Parsons.

I am not going to include the rest of it here, as this shows the most relevant detail - i.e. that the inaugural meeting of the BOC was held in Birmingham, on the 20th June 1971. So the 20th June next year we will be celebrating our 50th Anniversary!! So let us all hope that the Congress planned for next July can go ahead as a celebration of this and is the huge success it deserves to be.

But back to the picture and one fascinating part of this snippet is looking at the names on there.

One that springs out is John Steele, who represented Central Orchid Society. He is now living in Australia, still active in orchids and always attends the Malvern show if he is over here at the time. FYI he entered plants in our COVID Congress, (he STILL is a member of Central Orchid Society) and won two HC's. Well done John!

The BOGA representatives were Ray Bilton and Paul Phillips, who were both, therefore, founder members of BOC.

I have been a member of Birmingham OS for ages, but I have only just found out who Mjr. Fiddian was, other than the name on a very old society cup. He became the first BOC Chairman at this meeting and was instrumental in setting up BOC. You live and learn!

I keep asking, but if anyone has any memories or anecdotes about any of the others, please send them to me so that we can record them and tell others who may just find them interesting as well.

**Aims of the
Council.**

1. To distribute information and foster interest in Orchids.
2. To promote events, Shows, functions etc.
3. To assist all Societies and Associations in every way possible.

Proposed by M. Wadsworth. and seconded by P. Phillips.
carried unanimously.

These were the aims of the BOC that were drawn up at the time.

Some things never change indeed!! These are just as relevant now as they were then. And yes, I would still put number 1 as the most important! We have phrased it slightly differently, but in essence it is exactly the samepromoting orchid growing!!

Also, notice the Paul Phillips seconded these aims.

Also set up at the time was a working group to look at judging. The first judging symposium then then duly held at Ratcliffe's Orchids.

BOC Judging Symposium 1972



Paul hosted the first BOC Judging Symposium at his nursery.

How many people can you identify in the photo?

The ones I have been able to track down are shown on the back page, but I thought you might like to see who you could recognise first.

People in the Midlands may spot a few very familiar faces! But they were considerably younger and a lot are, unfortunately, no longer with us.

Photo: Paul Phillips

Ratcliffe's Orchids

Interior of greenhouse c. April 1984





All these photographs were taken around various shows in the UK.

They are just a few of the beautiful Paphiopedilums I have managed to photograph at local shows and at Congresses.

The interest in them is still strong, due to their long lasting and sometimes very strange flowers.

Many of the hybrids we see today have descended from plants bred and raised by Ratcliffe Orchids over the past 50 years or so.



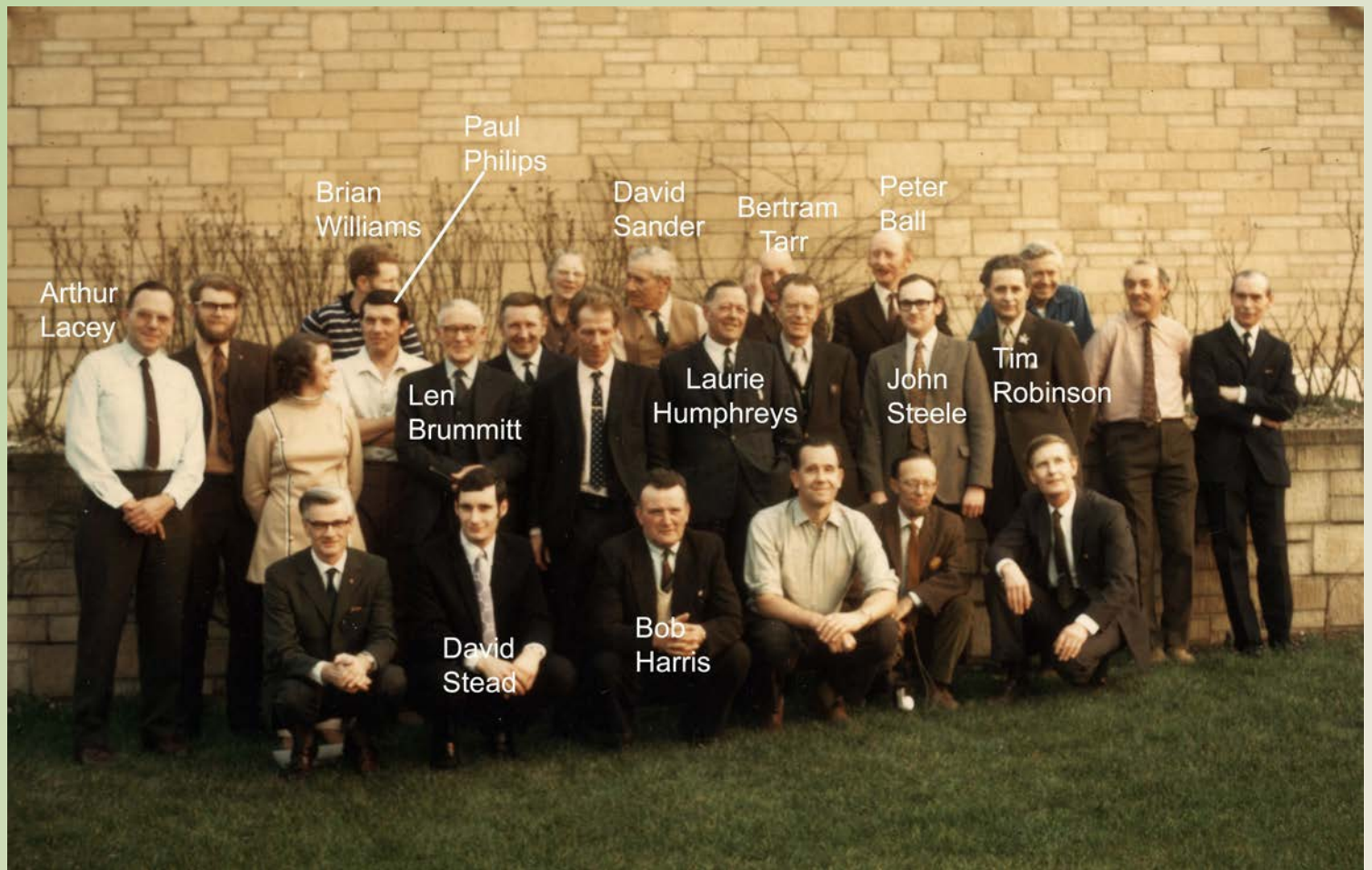
Phrag. humboldtii

Mike Bull Central Orchid Society, Covid Congress, 2020



Phrag. Schroderae Wyldcourt

Paul Upward, Thames Valley Orchid Society, Covid Congress, 2020



It would really be nice to identify everyone in this group.

I am not sure if I have some of the above named correctly, so if any of the names are in the wrong place or you can help out, please do so. Contact me at:

chairman@british-orchid-council.info

BOC seems to have come a long way in the past 50 years, and just as Paul talked about changes in the orchid world, so we have seen changes too.

Today, societies are struggling and the current pandemic has not helped this situation. But having talked to a lot of people around the country I am convinced that the interest in orchids and in keeping them is still very much alive. But they are now grown differently and many people today simply do not have the time to commit to a society. Perhaps the lockdown has shown us that we can still keep in touch, still show off our blooms and still belong to an active orchid community.

Finally—

Congratulations to Paul on his many achievements in the world of orchids and in the part he has played in fostering the orchid community and spirit over the years.

Paul is regularly found on Facebook if anyone wants to look him up.