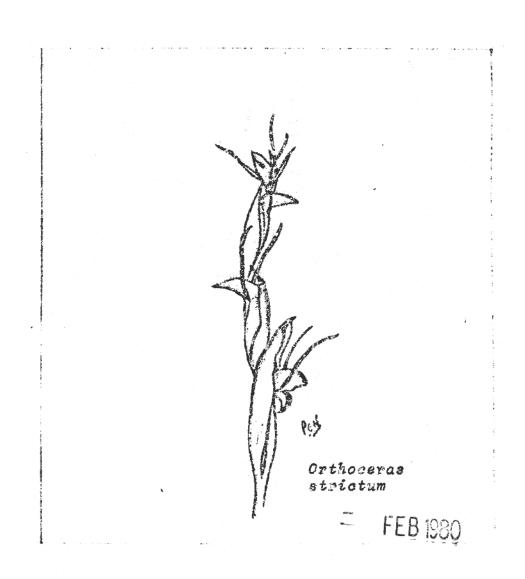
NATIVE ORCHID SOCIETY

of SOUTH AUSTRALIA





NATIVE ORCHID SOCIETY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

JOURNAL

Volume 4, No. 1, February, 1980

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NEXT MEETING

TREASURER:

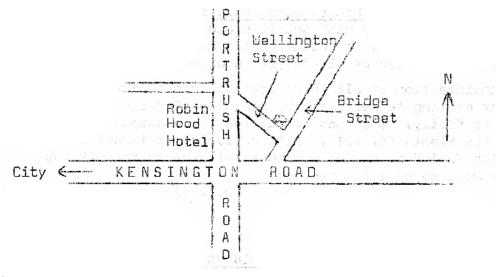
When: Tuesday, 26 February 1980, at 8.00 p.m.

Where: St. Matthews Hall, Bridge Street, Kensington.

Why: Mr Alwin Clements will speak on the orchids of Queensland, illustrated with

slides,

Trading Table, plant display and commentary, library, raffle and popular vote,



NEW MEMBERS

Mr P.K. Mackay, Toowoomba, Old.

Mr D. Murley, Valley View

Mr and Mrs A.F. Till, St Agnes

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

At the monthly meeting on 27th November, a member raised the question of policy recently laid down by the Committee in respect to the "Trading Table". As a Committee member involved in drawing up the guidelines, it is perhaps pertinent to comment on the reasons for the policy change made at the September Committee Meeting of the Society.

Firstly, it should be appreciated that as a Society we have only three regular sources of income. These are the Membership dues of \$4, profit from the raffle and profit from the Trading Table. It is simple to calculate what with rent on the hall, typing costs, stencils, ink, paper and mailing costs to produce 11 issues of the Journal per year, there is no change left from Membership dues. The only income to keep the Society solvent is the profit from the other two sources.

The current Committee members have adopted a philosophy that as much profit as practical should be made from the Trading Table for Society funds where it can benefit all members. It should not be regarded as a profit centre for a few individual members of the club.

Early in 1979 the Committee adopted a policy of regular purchase of flasks of cool-growing species and primary hybrids to supply members with quality established seedlings at modest prices. The first of these seedlings were available at \$1.50 each at the November meeting and it is anticipated that a regular supply will be available through 1980.

In contrast, the August monthly meeting of the Society saw the Trading Table overwhelmed with a quantity of plants which were in excess of the capacity of our handling facilities and well beyond the financial resources of the members to purchase. Many of the plants submitted had either recently been dug up or mounted and the risk of survival must be considered poor.

During the past two years there have been large shipments of native orchids being sent to Victoria and South Australia from both New South Wales and Queensland. Many have been illegally collected and cannot be sold in those states which prohibit the sale of native orchids not grown in cultivation. The risk of introducing Phytophthora cinnamonii into local orchid collections from this source is very high and it would be a poor reflection of our constitutional objectives to encourage the wanton destruction of native flora by the purchase of plants from dubious unknown sources.

It was after consideration of all these factors that the Committee resolved at the September meeting to restrict the benching of "Plants for Sale" to six per member or family. This was considered to he adequate scope for members with a few plants for sale. Alternatively, it is not intended that the "Trading Table" be run as a commercial venture to suit the personal profit motives of a few members.

J.T. Simmons, Vice President

SEED BANK TUBER BANK

As it is seed time, any surplus Grateful thanks to all members who seed will be gratefully accepted donated tubers to the bank. Those for distribution to other members. have now been distributed. Those members interested in either the Seed Bank or the Tuber Bank can contact Don Wells to arrange collection. Telephone 261 6030

SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S RAREST ORCHIDS No.15

R. Bates

Corybas fordhamii (Rupp) is the rarest of the five helmet orchids known to occur in South Australia. It is restricted to three or four swamps near Myponga and Mt. Compass. In the swamps it grows on moss on the tussocks of sedge and fern which jut above the black ooze of the bogs. This micro-environment is damp twelve months of the year.

The plant has a single heart-shaped leaf about 1 cm. across. In September the tiny purple and white flower is produced on a thin stem 1 cm. tall. The flowers are usually completely hidden in the sedges and can only be found by parting the grass-like stems and peering closely at the mossy surface below.

In total volume of all of its parts, *C. fordhamii* is the tiniest of all our orchids. It is not suitable for cultivation.

Unfortunately it is not known from any of the State's conservation parks.

Though only recently recorded from South Australia, it was in fact collected by Professor Cleland some fifty years ago but recorded then as *C. unquiculatus*.

C. fordhamii also occurs in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and recently has been recognised from Tasmania. It is quite likely it also occurs in the Albany area of Western Australia and is possibly synonymous with the New Zealand Corybas carsei.

PLANT OF THE MONTH Spiranthes sinensis

G. Nieuwenhoven

This is a swamp-dwelling plant which occurs in the Adelaide Hills and the southeast of South Australia, Queensland, New South Wales Victoria and Tasmania (Black's Flora of South Australia, Part I). It flowers from January to February in the wild, but in cultivation will flower as early as December. It is an easily grown species and does not make very great demands upon its owner. Its main requirement is to be kept damp the whole year round. This can be achieved by watering daily by hand, particularly in summer, or by placing the pot in a shallow tray with water kept topped up, Both methods appear quite successful,

S. sinensis will grow quite happily in the original swamp soil, or a mix may be made up. I have some plants growing very well in 50% swamp soil and 50% Yates seed-raising mixture (a commercially prepared soil). This mix drains extremely well, yet retains enough moisture to suit the plants. The roots grow fairly long (more than 75 mm) in cultivation, so a deep pot should be used, They have a very short dormant period, if at all. New growths will appear before the old ones have died off.

If repotting becomes necessary, it is suggested to gently wash the old soil away from the tubers with a hose as the brittle roots will easily break if the soil is broken up by hand, Plants should be available from several members — there is no harm in asking.

PLANTS FOR MEMBERS

Just prior to Christmas the Australian Orchid Foundation kindly sent the Society a parcel of ex-flask seedlings, some of which are the result of collections made on the Cape York Expeditions funded by the A.O.F. Some are rare and some may he considered "endangered species" because of their very confined habitat.

The seedlings are now being grown on in community pots and some will be available to members via the trading table during 1980.

They include:

Vanda whiteana - Cape York.

Vanda tricolor - this is the Java variety, not the very

rare Northern Territory species.

Dendrobium bairdianum - Atherton Tableland.

Den. bigibbum var. superbum sub var. compactum - this

usually occurs lithophytic around Cooktown,

Den. finnisterrae - from Papua New Guinea,

Phalaenopsis amabilis — from Cape York and the only species of Phalaenopsis known to occur in Australia.

Drymoanthus minutus - North Queensland.

Rodriquizia dressleriana - a Mexican species.

In November the Society purchased two more flasks of seedlings of "cool- growing" species from Phill Spence of Sydney.

These were:

Dendrobium guttatum this is a species from the highlands of Papua New Guinea and will grow cool in Adelaide.

Dendrobium x suffusum x D. falcorostrum — you will be aware that D. x suffusum is the natural hybrid between D. gracilicaule and D. kingianum. The cross with D. falcorostrum will ensure vigorous free flowering plants. Some seedlings ex this flask will be available at the trading table in February, together with stocks of our previous purchases of D. Hilda Poxon (D. tetragonum x D. speciosum) and the D. speciosum x (fleckeri x kingianum x ruppianum) cross purchased earlier last year.

These seedlings are a bargain at 1.50 each so don't forget to bring along the necessary

ORCHID WORKSHOP

The Australian Orchid Foundation, in co-operation with the Orchid Club of South Australia, will hold a one-day Orchid Workshop at the Australian Funeral Foundation Auditorium, Conyngham Street, Glenside on Sunday, 18 May, 1980. A series of papers will be delivered on all aspects of orchid cultivation in South Australia. A registration fee of \$12.50 per person or \$22 (husband and wife) will be levied. This covers a copy of the proceedings, morning and afternoon tea and a hot/cold lunch. Intending registrants should contact Mr Roy Hargreaves, 1 Halmon Avenue, Everard Pork, S.A. 5035.

ON THE RE-DISCOVERY OF THELYMITRA MACKIBBINII (the Brilliant Sun Orchid) IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

R.J. Markwick

On Saturday, 3 November 1979, the Native Orchid Society of South Australia planned an excursion to the Knott Hill area of Kuitpo State Forest to examine a floristically rich area which had been subjected to a controlled burn the previous summer. Prominent member of the Society and noted amateur orchidologist, Bob Bates, agreed to join me for an early start, his four—wheel—drive Subaru being "laid up" with engine trouble.

The day promised to be conducive to Thelymitras opening, the forecast maximum temperature being $34\,^{\circ}\text{C}$, with a relatively high humidity (it eventually reached $35\,^{\circ}\text{C}$).

The pleasant drive through the Adelaide Hills brought us to a patch of scrub at Hahndorf, where I have been noting orchid species for some 18 months. On this occasion $Thelymitra\ pauciflora$, $T.\ longifolia$, $T.\ ixioides$, an interesting $T.\ pauciflora$ x longifolia cross, $Caladenia\ carnea$, and $Glossodia\ major$ were recorded.

Continuing on our way via Echunga and Meadows, we visited a patch of natural scrub bordering a pine plantation where Bob hoped to locate the relatively rare *Diuris sulphurea* var. *brevifolia*. On the northern perimeter, along a fire track, we found *Thelymitra pauciflora* and *T. ixioides* of many hues, some a very attractive bluepink. On entering the scrub, superb specimens of *Calochilus robertsonii* were found, and *Thelymitra antennifera* flowered in reasonable abundance. In a swampy area the objective of the search, the *Diuris*, was located and photographed. There were only a few flowering since we were a little too early — they were to reach the peak of their development about a fortnight later.

Moving back towards the car we were within metres of the edge of the scrub next to where pines had been felled and the ground disturbed by bulldozing, when Bob found an unusual *Thelymitra*. The flowers, about 2.5 cm in diameter, were bright pink and carried two on a stem approximately 20 cm high. The leaf was narrow linear, first wide above the sheathing base then sharply narrowed.

Bob observed that they had affinities with *T. carnea* var. *rubra* and *T. antennifera*, and speculated that it might be a hybrid between the two. I observed that they looked like a pale form of *T. macmillanii* "gone wrong"! — at the same time noting that *T. carnea* var. *rubra* was conspicuous by its absence. After we had photographed this beautiful and rather puzzling "hybrid" we moved about 3 km south—westerly to a patch of scrub adjacent to Peters Creek Road. This was the second site visited by the NOSSA group on its Peters Creek Field Trip and reported on in the Journal for December 1979. Here, Bob was again the first to locate another unusual *Thelymitra*, a variety of *T. pauciflora* with dark blue—purple post—anther lobes. This time, however, it was my good fortune to find the second occurrence of the strange pink "hybrid". We again noted that, of the supposed parents, only *T. antennifera* appeared to be represented in the vicinity. We then joined the NOSSA group at Knott Hill, and later led them back to display our "Finds".

It occurred to me that it would be freakish for two such unusual and identical "accidents of nature" to arise kilometres apart, and postulated that this "hybrid" might self—propagate in the vicinity. I wondered if it should not enjoy species status. I passed these thoughts on to Bob, who, at the time, was not inclined to share this view. However, he collected specimens for pressing and further study.

Re-discovery of T. mackibbinii in S.A. (contd.)

Later reference to J.M. Black's 'Flora of South Australia', Part 1, 3rd Edition, caused me to ponder whether the plant may not be Thelymitra mackibbinii, last recorded on the basis of a single specimen collected near Port Elliot in September 1896, but the reference to purplish and violet striped perianth segments and deep violet column did not agree with our specimens. However, references to W.H. Nicholls "Orchids of Australia', Part II, describes the colour Of the South Australian specimen, collected by a Miss J.L. Hussy as "bright pink".

Nicholls commented that "Superficially this orchid may be mistaken for Thelymitra aristata, but its affinities are with the pink flowered T. rubra and T. macmillanii, differing from the former in its freely-expanding larger flowers and much longer papillate column appendages, and from the latter species in having shorter appendages that bear crowded finger-like papillae (not obtuse crenulations). T. mackibbinii is typically violet-flowered, striated, and broader in leaf than T. macmillanii which never seams to have purplish forms, but both vary considerably in colour."

These references I passed on to Bob, who later took his pressed specimens to the State Herbarium, and discovered that the column of the supposed "hybrid" agreed in every detail with the column of the Thelymitra mackibbinii collected in 1896. The leaf shape also conforms to type. Bob has how lodged his specimens with the Herbarium.

Thus, after 83 years, Thelymitra mackibbinii has again been recorded in South Australia.

Thelymitra mackibbinii is very localised and rare in Victoria, Nicholls recording it from Maryborough and near Smythesdale.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General fleeting of NOSSA will be held on Tuesday, 25 March, at 8.00 p.m., prior to the ordinary monthly meeting.

Nominations for Committee

Nominations are required for

President (one position)

Vice-President (one position)

Honorary Secretory (one position) Honorary Treasurer (one position)

Committee (two positions)

All sitting members can be re-elected. Mrs Audrey Howe and Mr Kevin Western have one year still to serve on Committee. Nomination forms are available from the Secretary or at the February meeting. Completed forms must be lodged with the Secretary twenty one days prior to the Annual General fleeting,

TRADING TABLE

Committee have decided that the trading table rules will remain unchanged.

CULTURE NOTES C. Nieuwenhoven

This is the first part of a series of articles on the cultivation of native terrestrial orchids. It is intended to try and cover the main aspect of cultivation in general and also deal with individual species. Each month members will be asked to bring the species under discussion along to the meeting, whether in flower or not. Comparison can then be made of plants grown by individual members. The following notes apply to Hope Valley, South Australia, and should be adapted for local conditions in other areas, particularly for interstate members, since local conditions can vary a lot.

The orchid grower who is serious about his hobby will of course need, first of all, a shadehouse. This may be constructed of either a timber frame or galvanised tubing frame covered with shadecloth of 50% density. If timber is the choice, it is suggested treated pine be used, as untreated, or even painted timber has a limited life span and requires a lot of maintenance. The ideal is a frame made from galvanised tubing, either welded together or by using clips made for this purpose. The shadecloth may extend to ground level, however, I prefer the bottom 75 cm to be closed in with asbestos or iron — this will help to keep out draughts. A well—constructed shadehouse should be completely closed in, this keeps out man's second favourite pet (but not the terrestrial grower's) — the neighbourhood tomcat. These seem to have a knack of finding holes in your shadehouse, particularly when your prize plant is in flower, just before a meeting, and run across the pots with disastrous results.

Your shadehouse should be situated in such a way that it receives the maximum amount of sunshine each day, especially during the growing season. My own has one end covered with corrugated fibreglass to keep out the hot northerly winds in summertime, since it also houses my collection of epiphytes. This helps to prevent them drying out too quickly in summer. For maximum comfort to the grower and better hygiene for the plants, benches may be constructed. These should be approximately 60 cm high. This means you do not need to bend down too far when inspecting your plants, (this can be quite frequent) thereby saving your back from developing a permanent arch. It also makes it harder for all sorts of wildlife (slugs, snails, etc.) to climb into your pots and feast on your favourite plants. My benches are made with treated pinus cover, with 7½ cm wide slots with 1½ cm gaps between them. However steel frames covered with 2 cm galvanised mesh are equally as good. It just depends on the kind of material you prefer to work with as long as it will last. The pots used for growing terrestrials are plastic in most cases, although many species prefer clay pots. These will be mentioned in the future,

Soils: These vary a lot, but a good mixture for many plants is the one devised by Les Nesbitt, i.e. 40% Hills loam, 40 sand and 20% peatmoss. This mix may be varied to suit different plants, but it needs to be well drained for nearly all plants. Many plants in my collection do not seem to like sandy mixes however, and I use a straight hills loam for these. This needs to be a crumbly, loose, well—drained type of soil, A bit of experimenting will soon pay dividends.

Plants suited to sandy soil mixes are generally the *Pterostylis* (particularly the multiplying types), *Corybas*, *Acianthus*, *Diuris*, *Eriochilus* and *Microtis*, Those needing a straight soil are *Caladenia*, *Glossodia*, *Thelymitra* and the *Pterostylis* which reproduce only one tuber each season, i.e. *Pt. plumosa*, *Pt. vittata*, *Pt. longifolia*, and those of the rufa group,

It must be stressed, however, that these are not hard and fast rules, since

Culture Notes (contd.)

what is right for one grower is not necessarily so for another and some experimenting needs to be carried out by the individual grower. I am now trying some of the other species in this straight soil and expect to know the result by the end of this year. I believe the results will be positive. It has been found the <code>Caladenia</code> and <code>Glossodia</code> will not survive for many years in sandy soils which stay wet and soggy. Tuber rot will soon wipe out your collection of plants and give them a bad name as being too hard to grow when all they ask for is the right conditions.

WEEKEND TRIP TO YORKE PENINSULA - September 1979

Continued from December Journal,

Although generally widespread, Pterostylis pedunculata is by no means common on Yorke Peninsula. We also found Pt. plumosa in bud, Acianthus reniformis, and a mere two examples of Diuris longifolia in flower. Other greenhoods included Pt. vittata and Pt. longifolia in flower, and an unnamed Pt. alata—type in seed. Also in seed at the same spot were A. exsertus and Corybas despectans. There were three "spiders" in flower, a beautiful long—sepaled form of Caladenia filamentosa; big examples of C. carnea and a few late flowering C. deformis, though by then most of them had finished and several had fat seed pods. There were some robust examples of Thelymitra longifolia in bud, but the real finds were Prasophyllums, including P. nigricans in seed, but no less than three species in flower — P. goldsackii, a solitary example of fitzgeraldii, and an unnamed species.

The area was so absorbing that we made it our lunch stop. The more fanatical members disdain stopping to eat at orchid spots and some of the best orchids were found by such non-stop sandwich touters! At this point, the biggest non-plant surprise was a fox that, with total disregard for the gathering, nonchalantly crossed the road near the middle of the line of cars, and trotted away in the undergrowth.

From there we moved off to Stenhouse Bay for a petrol and refreshments stop, then around the corner for our first look in he Innes Conservation Park. This was in a patch of mallee scrub close to the coast, but protected from the sea influences. There again we found Pterostylis longifolia and Caladenia filamentosa in flower, plus C. filamentosa var. bicalliata in seed, as well as C. dilatata in flower. We found yet another Prasophyllum (this time P. patens) in flower, as well as M. unifolia in bud. While this stop may not have added a great deal by way of species, it more than made up for it by the quality of the examples we found, with the most of them being splendid specimens of the species they represented.

At this juncture, the group cohesiveness showed signs of weakness, with one part progressing to Cape Spencer while the others went elsewhere. At Cape Spencer we found *P. patens* flowering, quite oblivious of the harshness of their surroundings. On the other hand, *C. dilatata* specimens were much smaller and stockier, while here for the first time we found *M. unifolia* in flower, and another new species in a solitary *C. tessellata*. By far the most impressive find though was another non-orchid species, in the guise of the root parasite *Oboranche australiana* not a common plant by any means, but quite plentiful in that locality — one of few places where it is found in South Australia.

Weekend Trip to Yorke Peninsula (contd.)

From there we trundled back towards Warooka via Foul Bay. After a long drive we eventually pulled in at some more wayside scrub where we found numerous examples of *C. filamentosa* and *C. tessellata*, as well as an occasional *P. patens* in flower, and *M. unifolia* in bud.

Our final stop for the day was just around the corner at another patch of scrub, where we found numerous examples of the giant form of *C. patersonii*, and dozens of *Diuris palustrus*, plus *P. fuscum* var. *occidentale* and an occasional *C. latifolia*, all in flower. By this time daylight was deserting us and we sped the last 12 km back to Warooka. A quick change and liquid refreshment at the hotel, and the observant ones made it successfully through to join the rest of the group at the barbeque at Point Turton. To round off the day a few of the foolhardy had a go at fishing from the jetty, but after such a surfeit of orchids there was not much drive behind the rods, so in the end we gave it away, and the fish lived to see another day.

Discretion prevailed the following morning when the "meet" was retimed from 8 to 9 a.m. Even so, three car loads failed to make it, and so missed the early orchids, including *Pterostylis cycnocephala*, as well as seeing some giant yaccas, *Xanthorrhoea semplana*, with flower spikes up to 8 metres long.

By now vehicles were tending to point in the direction back towards Adelaide, but there was still a day of orchids to be found. Without a doubt one of the richest areas we have visited is the private land at Stansbury scrub. It was almost as if a new chapter of orchids had to be written. We started with *C. dilatata* and the "standard" *C. patersonii*, from the previous day, as well as *Pterostylis nana* and *P. vittata* in seed, but then we started adding to the already impressive list with *P. mutica* in flower. Then we started on the Thelymitras, with *T. longifolia* and *T. luteocilium* in flower. Three "repeats" included *P. unifolia* in flower, and *C. cucullatus* and *Prasophyllum nigricans* in seed. All these we found in the "flat" top elevation in the mallee. From there we moved down the hill to the bottom. At the top we had found *Lyperanthus nigricans* basal leaves, but below they were found in flower — the best record being ten flowers in one patch of basal leaves, The interesting feature is the way these were flowering in scrub that showed no sign of burning in recent years,

At this point orchids were flowering in abundance, including Pterostylis mutica, P. plumosa, C. dilatata, C. patersonii, C. latifolia and C. carnea T. antennifera, T. canaliculata, T. longifolia, T. luteocilium (together with their natural hybrids T. macmillanii and T. chasmogama); L. nigricans, Prasophyllum patens, P. fitzgeraldii and the unnamed Prasophyllum. C. filamentosa var. bicalliata and Pterostylis rufa were both found as solitary examples in flower, while nearby we saw Pterostylis alata var. robusta in seed, as well as A. reniformis, A. exsertus and C. deformis at a similar stage. We also found a majestic hybrid of C. patersonii and C. dilatata.

From there we moved to our final stopping point at the Mulburra National Trust Reserve near Point Julia, where we found basal leaves of *A. reniformis* and *C. cucullatus*, *T. longifolia* in bud and four species in flower. These included the previously seen *C. dilatata*, *P. unifolia* and *T. antennifera*, but the last to be located was our last (and biggest!) first in the form of *Prasophyllum elatum* in flower — big tall specimens with brownish green stems, and dozens of white flowers.

The orchid highlights were pinpointed for us by Bob Bates as follows: Caladenia dilatata were found as polymorphic swarms of two main forms, with hybrids of both of these forms with C. patersonii recorded. We

Weekend Trip to Yorke Peninsula (contd.)

also saw a form of C. latifolia at Stansbury Scrub that had conjoined lateral sepals and no yellow labellum calli, which may be a distinct variety. Secondly: Prasophyllum goldsackii was in full bloom in three widely separate localities, showing it to be a fairly common species and safe - at least in Warrenben Conservation Park. Then there was Prasophyllum unnamed affin. P. attennuatum, one of the smallest of all the spring-flowered Prasophyllums.

All in all, Kevin can congratulate himself on the organisation of our most extensive (in terms of numbers of species recorded) field trip so far. Our thanks go to him and also to the Yorke Peninsula personalities, Les Quinn and Ian Brown, without whose local knowledge and quidance this trip would have been far less successful, quite apart from their valuable non-orchid knowledge - a feature often understated on our orchid trips.

Ultimately we listed 41 species, varieties and hybrids of orchids including 35 seen in flower. In fact, there were so many altogether that some minor omissions per locality have occurred in the above, The author's only excuse is succumbing to orchid mesmerisation as a consequence of system overload - a kind of mental metamorphosis whereby orchid species are seen to merge into one another once too many have been seen. (The ultimate stage of this disease is very different; a chronic maniac phase wherein nearly every orchid seen in flower possesses characteristics differentiating it from its conspecies leading to an overwhelming desire to pick every one for deposition in the State Herbarium as a type specimen for a new species. Fortunately, nobody in the Society has quite reached this stage yet.)

Orchids seen;

In flower

Acianthus reniformis

Caladenia carnea

C. dilatata

C. deformis

C. filamentosa var. bicalliata

C. filamentosa var. filamentosa

C. latifolia

C. patersonii

C. tessellata

C. dilatata x C. patersonii

Diuris longifolia

D. palustris

Lyperanthus nigricans

Microtis unifolia

Prasophyllum elatum

P. fitzgeraldii

P. fuscum var. occidentale

P. goldsackii

P. patens

Pterostylis cycnocephala

P. longifolia P. mutica

P. nana

P. pedunculata

P. rufa

P. vittata

Thelymitra antennifera

T. canaliculata

T. longifolia

T. luteocilium

T. x chasmogama

T. x macmillanii

Past flowering or in seed Acianthus exsertus Corybas despectans Eriochilus cucullatus Prasophyllum nigricans P. affin. fuscum (Stansbury scrub) Pterostylis alata var. robusta P. affin. attenuatum (Warrenben C.P.) P. affin. alata