

# NATIVE ORCHID SOCIETY

*of*

## SOUTH AUSTRALIA

### JOURNAL



*Pterostylis unnamed*



# NATIVE ORCHID SOCIETY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

## JOURNAL

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**PATRON:**

Mr T.R.N. Lothian

**PRESIDENT:**

Mr G.J. Nieuwenhoven  
15 Robin Terrace  
HOPE VALLEY  
S.A. 5090  
Telephone 264 5825

**SECRETARY:**

(Life Member)  
Mr E.R. Hargreaves  
1 Halmon Avenue  
EVERARD PARK  
SA 5035  
Telephone 293 2471  
297 3724

**VICE-PRESIDENT:**

Mr R. Shooter

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Mr R.T. Robjohns

**EDITOR:**

Mr G.J. Nieuwenhoven

**COMMITTEE:**

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Mr R. Bates  
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Mr P. Barnes  
Mr. J. Jacobs

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**NEXT MEETING**

When: Tuesday, 27 March, 8.00 p.m.  
Where: St Matthews Hall, Bridge Street,

Subject: After the Annual General Meeting and the normal monthly meeting business we will have a "Questions and Answers" night. These are always popular and the panel is looking forward to some thorny questions.

**LAST MONTH**

Mr Ken Herring certainly knew what he was doing and talking about when he showed us an impressive array of slides (flower portraits as he prefers to call them), perfect in every detail down to the fine hairs present on many flower segments.

The colours were sometimes vibrant and sometimes subtle and virtually all photographed with natural light. A feast for the eyes with clear and instructive commentary during and after how to go about doing it yourself.

A night difficult to emulate.

Many thanks Ken.

## COMMITTEE NOMINATIONS

The following nominations for the Committee have been received:

President: Mr G.J. Nieuwenhoven  
 Vice President; Mr R. Shooter  
 Secretary: Mr W.K. Harris  
 Treasurer; Mr R.T. Robjohns  
 Committee: Mr P. Barnes  
               Mrs M. Fuller  
               Mr R. Hargreaves  
               Mr J. Jacobs  
               Mr K. Western

Mr R. Bates still has one year left to run, and as only three positions need to be filled for Committee, a ballot will be necessary.

## ORCHIDS ON DISPLAY

## Epiphytes

Cadetia taylori	Den. torresae
Cymbidium madidum	Liparis coelogynoides
Bulbophyllum aurantiacum	Luisia teretifolia
B. baileyii	Sarcochilus cecilae
Dendrobium insigne (N.G.)	

Those benched for the first time were *Bulbophyllum baileyii*, a north Queensland species with large leathery leaves and a 3-4 cm diameter green and brown flower with a mobile labellum and a delicate perfume. *Dendrobium insigne* with its short-lived greenish flowers, could hardly be described as attractive. It was growing well in pure sphagnum and had not been fertilised.

## Terrestrials

Chiloglottis reflexa	P. striatum (in bud)
Cryptostylis leptochila	Pterostylis baptistii
Malaxis latifolia	Pt. coccinea (3)
Prosopphyllum archerii	Pt. daintreana (in bud)
P. nichollsianum	Pt. decurva
P. nigricans (in bud)	Pt. fischii
P. rufum (in bud)	Pt. revoluta

For most of us it was the first time we had seen *Chiloglottis reflexa* and that curious insect-like mass of calli on the labellum was a talking point. The usual comment was made about *Malaxis latifolia*, i.e. "What a ridiculously small raceme of flowers for such a leafy plant". It was interesting to note that the pot of *Pt. decurva* was benched with flowers in November, repotted in December and benched again this month - once more in flower.

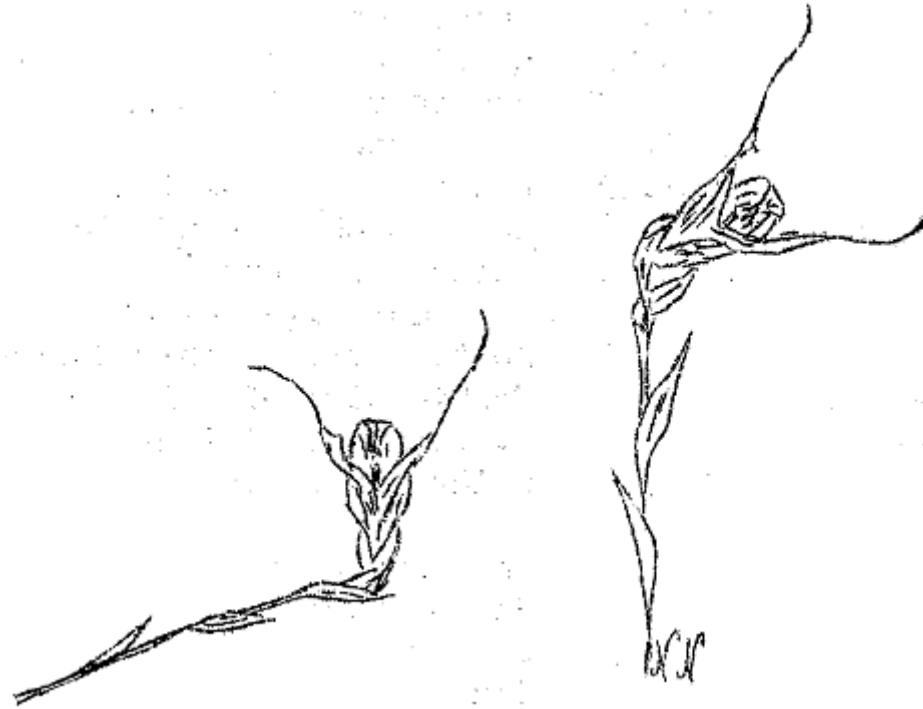
## Popular Vote:

Terrestrial: Pt. coccinea -- D. Wells.  
 Epiphytes: Sarcochilus cecilae -- D. Wells.

## TERRESTRIAL CULTURE NOTES

There is not much to do just now among the terrestrials this month. One thing that should be done without delay is to top up pots with chopped up pine or sheoak needles. This will minimise rain splash and provide a seedbed for any seed you should be sowing during late April early May.

It also pays to check daily if you have *Pterostylis* species for any windblown plants. They tend to topple over if too lanky or grown in too much shade. A small stake and a twisty will put things right. Flowers on windblown stems tend to get themselves upright within a few days leaving you with odd-looking plants indeed when the stems are straightened out.



## TUBER BANK REPORT 1983-84      D. Wells

This season's tuber bank has been completed with the last tubers planted in anticipation for next season.

Surplus common tubers have been supplied to plant in pots for all the selling functions in 1984: i.e. shows, trading tables, raffles, etc., as well as supplying interstate clubs fostering terrestrial orchids.

This has been made possible by members assisting in many ways: donors (many interstate members), customers, assistance when rescuing and growing on, as well as the seeding programme. To these helpers my grateful thanks. Please keep it up.

The success of this season is shown in the amount of \$273.65 being paid into the club funds.

## NATIVE ORCHID SOCIETY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Statement of Receipts and Payments for year ended 31 December 1983.

## RECEIPTS

Subscriptions			
	1983	961.00	
	1984	172.00	1133.00
Donations			
	Peats Soil	100.00	
	N.E.D.O.S.	20.00	
	Sundry	17.99	137.99
Badges			40.00
Publications			360.70
Tuber and Seed Bank			129.05
Raffle Proceeds			459.22
Trading - Sales and			
Commission		2348.25	
Show Admission		538.59	
Aust. Orchid Foundation -			
Shadehouse		1000.00	
Bank Interest		205.20	
Bushfire Appeal		51.00	
Bushfire Appeal donation			
from A.N.O.S. Newcastle			
branch		250.00	

## PAYMENTS

Library - Books		12.00	
	Prints	143.06.	155.06
Postage			470.15
Stationery			957.66
Typing Journal - Honorarium			150.00
Publications			105.00
Plants, etc. Trading			1023.71
Badges			314.22
Rent of Hall			100.00
Insurance			239.50
Raffle Permit			5.00
Shadehouse at Botanic			
Garden			1012.58
Prints for Herbarium			98.21
Aust. Orchid Foundation			500.00
Society for Growing			
Australian Plants			25.00
Aust. Native Orchid Society			12.50
Orchid Club of S.A.			10.00
A.N.O.S. Medallions			21.00
Print envelopes			105.36.
Repairs			18.00
Show Expenses			51.00
Social Expenses			16.78
Sundry			21.39
Tax			7.95
Bushfire Appeal			51.00
Bushfire Appeal donation			
from A.N.O.S. Newcastle			
branch			250.00
			5721.07
Excess Receipts over			
Payments			931.93
			\$6653.00

\$6653.00

\$6653.00

## Cash Statement

Cash at Bank 1.1.83	2648.05
ADD Excess Receipts	931.93
Cash at Bank 31.12.83	\$3579.98

(signed) R.T. Robjohns

Honorary Treasurer

I have examined the books and records of the NATIVE ORCHID SOCIETY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA and certify that the above Statement of Receipts and Payments is in accordance with the books and vouchers produced.

11 February, 1984

(signed) N. Christoph A.A.S.A.  
Honorary Auditor

This month can be one of the hottest of the year so continue to take precautions against sunburn and dehydration of the plants.

In well-drained pots (which all pots should be), almost unlimited water can be given during hot weather. It is a good idea to mist the plants in the evenings after a hot day to reduce their temperature. This emulates the conditions experienced in their natural habitat when cooling evening mists rise through the trees on which the epiphyte is growing. It is this cooling effect which is believed to induce flower bud formation. Plants kept at high temperatures often fail to bloom, or at the very best, only bloom poorly. Use rainwater at this time of the year if you possibly can, as tap water becomes very high in salt content, which, if allowed to build up in the compost, quickly sends it toxic, killing emerging roots and turning leaves prematurely brown. If you cannot use rainwater all the time, it is a good idea to flush the pots out thoroughly once a week to remove harmful salts. Do not use water that has been passed through a water purifier as this water contains harmful dissolved salts used in the purifying process.

Growths on many species and hybrids should be maturing now. Harden them off by exposing them to as much light as possible without burning. You will find this produces hard, firm canes, resistant to pest and diseases and capable of carrying a large head of flowers. Make this move gradually over a couple of weeks rather than taking them from a relatively shady area to a bright, sunny spot which could result in burning of the leaves.

Some species and their hybrids (*Den. kingianum* for instance) have a tendency to produce new growths in late summer to early autumn while some well grown plants will produce both in the spring and autumn. If yours didn't throw new growths in the spring don't despair but keep an eye open from now taking the precaution of keeping water away from the emerging growths. These late growths seem to catch up with those produced in spring and flower at the same time.

If you find the green root tips are disappearing from your epiphytes and cannot find the culprit, suspect the cockroach. These insects are on the increase in the metropolitan area and I believe a contributing factor for this increase is the use of pinebark as a mulch on gardens. This is an ideal place for cockroaches to live and breed. They require warm, dark and humid areas -- pinebark offers all these -- and when they want a special feed they eat your root tips. They feed at night and during the day hide in the compost in your pots so you may never see them -- only where they have been.

I have 'found an effective control against these pests in the glasshouse is "Protector" cockroach baits. The 'roach eats the bait then crawls away to die. I have found them on their backs in the morning when it is an easy job to get rid of the body.

While on the subject of pests it is appropriate to remember that it is at this time of the year that both insects and fungal diseases are looking for a place to over-winter so make it as difficult as possible for them by keeping the growing area clear of weeds and fallen leaves which provide ideal winter quarters. These precautions not only save your plants from attack but save you the trouble and expense of spraying later on.

## FIELD TRIP TO CRAFTERS

AND CLELAND CONSERVATION PARK - 6 November, 1983

R. Markwick

On Sunday afternoon, 6 November 1983, a dozen or so members and visitors gathered at the site of the burnt-out "Eagle-on-the-Hill" Hotel near Crafters. Despite the clean-up operations still in progress, the remains of this former landmark presented a stark reminder of the ferocity of the "Ash Wednesday" bushfires.

It was nice to see long-absent friends again, namely Tony and Helen Lower, and Peter Hornsby who was later to guide us to choice locations for *Lyperanthus nigricans*, *Prasophyllum elatum* and *Caladenia menziesii*.

Roy Hargreaves had done some early scouting around, and, on an adjacent ridge which had suffered an intense burn, he uncovered quite dense colonies of *Caladenia dilatata* and *Microtis unifolia*. Since the severity of the fire at this location had left patches of ground in an apparently sterile state, the survival of orchids in such numbers was rather surprising. No plant regeneration was visible in these areas (the soils being exceedingly dry and hard-baked) yet the orchids had somehow managed to survive in depressions in rocky outcrops which had apparently provided sufficient shelter from the heat.

About a kilometre further on we stopped at a point to the north of the highway, on a rather steep fire-track (1) which caused minor problems for one or two cars. These difficulties were transitory however, and it was not long before we were sniffing the scent of *Prasophyllum patens*, and closely examining the greenish-tinted flowers of its co-genitor *Pr. fuscum* found growing nearby. Here, we were able to compare this colour form of *Pr. fuscum* with plants carrying similar but darker purplish coloured flowers lying within the same population, which would seem to key-out as the eastern states *Pr. frenchii*. Other notable orchids found here included the first specimens of *Thelymitra fusco-lutea* seen for the day, and, in particular, delightful flower spikes of *Thelymitra aristata*, one carrying unusually deep-blue flowers.

Although the weather could have been more pleasant, the gusty northerly winds with temperatures up to 34.5°C couldn't stifle the enthusiasm, apparently latent in all native-orchid lovers, for clambering around hillsides in search of an often elusive quarry.

It was in this area that Bob Bates drew our attention to a fire-induced phenomenon, also observed by the author to have occurred in other fire-ravaged areas where heat had been intense. Here, the extreme heat had caused surface layers of rock to peel off, thus accelerating the normal breakdown caused by weathering. A similar effect caused by a naturally occurring process (called exfoliation) is most clearly observed in the arid out-back, where it is caused by alternate expansion and contraction as a result of heating by day and cooling by night. The corners of rock masses are especially prone to breaking off, thus accounting for the rounded rock formations often seen there. Exfoliation is often assisted by chemical weathering of the outer layers, and by the expansion on freezing of water which has penetrated cracks.

Our final destination was Cleland Conservation Park (2), where Peter Hornsby led us to an area literally carpeted with flowers of *L. nigricans*, and where only metres away, many stately specimens of both the green and dark colour-forms of *Pr. elatum* stood proudly erect. This massed display of fire-stimulated orchids, possibly the highlight of the day, had the shutter-bugs

## NEW MEMBERS

Mr and Mrs P.F. Green  
 Mr and Mrs W.J. Hamilton  
 Mr B.R. Porter  
 Miss C.J. Smith

## Field Trip to Crafers and Cleland (contd.)

working overtime. After much sniffing on hands and knees, and with opinions as to the nature of the scent varying from "vanilla lilies" to "foxes", a general consensus emerged to the effect that *L. nigricans* was indeed scented, although an exact likeness was hard to define.

A short distance further on, nor far from the roadside, a number of very nice *T. fusco-lutea* flowers displayed their unique combination of colours and unusually bizarre columns for all to see. Needless to say, these relatively uncommon orchids, which seem to favour areas of poor soil, numbered among the most photographed of the plants seen on the day.

A walk around the wild-life compound uncovered some late-flowering *Caladenia leptochila* and *C. dilatata*, several more *T. aristata*, and hundreds of very robust *Microtis unifolia* growing among the grasses. A surprise find was *Thelymitra mucida*, past flowering but still recognisable. To the west of the wild-life compound, a short walk along the fire-track revealed many withered flowers of *Diuris maculata* and *D. longifolia*, and no doubt some unrecognised *D. maculata* x *longifolia*, since this putative hybrid is known to grow in fair numbers here. Late in the day, just to the north of this track, a number of *Calochilus robertsonii* were found to be still flowering. At this juncture, most chose to call it a day and made their way back to the car park and home.

A few stalwarts, led by Peter Hornsby, descended into a gully to the north of the wild-life compound, where some interesting observations were made. It soon became clear that this gully sheltered numerically more orchids than any of the other locations visited on the day, apparently because the effects of the fire were less damaging here. Peter observed that the fire had approached up the southern slopes, where it burnt with a fierce intensity. By the time it reached this part of the park it was much less severe and this sheltered gully consequently suffered a "cooler" burn.

An unexpected find was *Pterostylis pedunculata* still flowering in a moist environment, while almost hidden from view among the grasses, hundreds of flowers of the fire-stimulated *C. menziesii* were uncovered. Flowers of *Caladenia catenata* were also found here, as were flowers of *D. longifolia* and *Glossodia major* (one carrying two blooms). In the bottom creek Bob Bates uncovered a *Microtis* sp., which he speculated might be *Microtis rara* because it was still in early bud.

*Dipodium punctatum* was the last orchid added to our list. Found on the way back to the car park, it was still in early bud and had a long way to go before its flowers would unfold for the benefit of visitors after Christmas.

So, with the ranger patiently waiting to close up the park for the night, the last NOSSA field trip for 1983 came to an end and we went our respective ways, looking forward to meeting again in the new year.



## Field Trip to Crafers and Cleland (contd.)

## ORCHIDS SEEN

Locations: 1 roadside stop near Crafers    2 Cleland Conservation Park

In flower	<i>P. patens</i> , 1	<i>Prasophyllum elatum</i> , 1
<i>Caladenia catenata</i> , 2	<i>Pterostylis pedunculata</i> , 2	<i>P. patens</i> , 1
<i>C. dilatata</i> , 1,2	<i>Thelymitra aristata</i> , 1,2	<i>Thelymitra aristata</i> , 1
<i>C. leptochila</i> , 1,2	<i>T. fusco-lutea</i> , 1,2	<i>T. fusco-lutea</i> , 1
<i>C. menziesii</i> , 2	<i>T. pauciflora</i> , 2	<i>T. mucida</i> , 2
<i>Calochilus robertsonii</i> , 2	<i>T. rubra</i> , 2	<i>T. rubra</i> , 1,2
<i>Diuris longifolia</i> , 2	Seedpods	<i>T. pauciflora</i> , 1,2
<i>Glossodia major</i> , 2	<i>Caladenia catenata</i> , 2	In bud
<i>Lyperanthus nigricans</i> , 2	<i>C. deformis</i> , 1	<i>Dipodium punctatum</i> , 2
<i>Microtis unifolia</i> , 2	<i>C. pusilla</i> , 1,2	<i>Microtis rara</i> (?), 2
<i>Prasophyllum elatum</i> , 2	<i>Diuris longifolia</i> , 1,2	<i>Prasophyllum frenchii</i> , 2
<i>P. frenchii</i> , 1	<i>D. maculata</i> , 1,2	<i>Thelymitra fusco-lutea</i> , 1

JUST THINKING      Kevin Western

Frequently at NOSSA meetings we hear commentary regarding the remarkable attributes of some species and/or hybrid epiphytic Australian native orchids. Further we hear or know that the species arose as a wild plant or as a hybrid imported from the eastern states. It doesn't take much to guess why this is so:

- (1) Epiphytic orchids (especially those capable of growing cool to cold) essentially occur naturally in the eastern states.
- (2) The climatic conditions of coastal areas of the eastern states are more likely to assure successful seedling raising.
- (3) There are nurseries in the eastern states who have dedicated some time to flasking epiphytic Australian orchids.

Surely I am not alone in asking myself "Why is there this continuing association of epiphytic species and hybrids and the eastern states?" and "Why don't we produce seedling species and hybrid plants here in Adelaide?". Afterall:

A. We have the plants - there are some excellent forms and a wide variety of species already in the hands of NOSSA members - our shows and table shows are clear evidence of this fact.

B. The plants fare well under cultivation, despite the Adelaide climate.

C. There must be a significant proportion of NOSSA members who can pollinate orchid flowers or know someone who can.

D. NOSSA members seem to be a communicative and co-operative group where a little organisation could manage to produce a large number of species and/or hybrid crosses from sound parent material.

BUT

E. The facility of flasking, has been too elusive, too expensive or has gone unconsidered.

Just Thinking (contd.)

I believe that in a club such as NOSSA, With the activity and dedication to the many facets of seeking, observing, studying, conserving and photographing native orchids in the wild and the maintenance, care and exhibition of cultivated specimens, that our one outstanding area of relative inactivity is that of producing orchids from seed in distributable quantity. I would like to attempt to change that aspect if I can.

Personally, I would like to have seedlings of every cool-cold growing epiphytic native orchid in the hope that among the survivors who themselves grow to flower, there will be selected, hardy specimens, some with improved characteristics of form also, who will accept both our local conditions and our artificial cultivation techniques. These plants are more likely to assure the continuation of the species (on the local scene at least) and are likely to enable us to select and improve our flowering forms and thus also improve the potential for the hybridists among us. As well as growers of cool to cold-growing species there are some members who like to propagate warm-growing species and hybrids.

Since I have germinated a few *Dendrobium*, *Sarcochilus* and *Cymbidium* species and hybrids from seed and since I can provide a flasking facility, it occurs to me that NOSSA, NOSSA members and I could be of mutual benefit. Namely, if members are interested and prepared to pollinate some of their flowers to produce species particular or hybrids, I would be happy to provide the flasking facility on a "flask for you", "flask for NOSSA", "flask for me" basis. In this way, the originator(s) will receive seedlings to grow on and possibly obtain better forms, NOSSA will gain financially as well as broadening the distribution of the species/hybrid and I will accumulate a range of species/hybrids more easily than would otherwise be the case. Perhaps we may even reduce the plunder of wild orchids from the eastern states as well as contribute to conservation.

As I see it, two problems remain:

1. we should be selective in choosing parent material for crossing or selfing else we may produce only mediocre quality seedlings.
2. I can only handle a limited amount of work so the seeds flasked should have a high likelihood of producing quality seedlings.

Thus I would ask that if members wish to participate in this venture they produce seed from crosses involving plants which they consider are meritorious compared with similar plants benched at table shows or which are unusually vigorous and hardy for that species/hybrid or which are relatively uncommon or infrequently available as wide specimens or which represent hybrids of some calculated potential.

Currently I have seedlings in flask of:

*Dendrobium speciosum* (Hunters form)  
*Den. beckleri* (rugged free-flowering form)  
 Den. x Hilda Poxon (remake)  
 Den. x delicatum "Wally" x self  
 Den. x delicatum "E.F." x self  
*Sarcochilus hartmanii* (wild seed from five localities)  
*Cymbydium canaliculatum* (two wild forms)

Kevin Western  
 P.O. Box 276  
 BLACKWOOD. S.A. 5051

*Dendrobium cucumerinum* (Cucumber orchid)

An epiphytic plant which is sparsely dispersed throughout a habitat extending from central eastern New South Wales and along the creeks and ridges of the Blue Mountains to a little beyond the MacPherson Ranges in southern Queensland.

It is a small species with creeping branched rhizomes, sometimes growing into large clumps but more usually strung out in long lines. It is tolerant to a fair intensity of light and to winter temperatures below freezing and its most favoured host is the "River Oaks" - *Casuarina cunninghamiana*.

This plant owes its name (both botanical and common) to the form of its leaves which are thick, fleshy, blunt, tuberculate and having longitudinal raised keels and so resembling small prickly cucumbers.

It throws short racemes of usually 1-4 slightly perfumed flowers from the base of the leaf. The flowers, which do not usually open widely are about 2 cm long and 3 cm in diameter. They are cream to greenish-white having the labellum with purple or red markings and with crisped margins.

The flowering period is from November to late summer, however, in cultivation it flowers irregularly and not profusely. One of my plants produced one raceme in early January this year and another a month later in February.

It has gained a reputation of not being easy to grow in cultivation, however, I have it growing on natural cork bark, cork slab and on a piece of a *Melaleuca* limb. While it is in a shadehouse with 50% shadecloth it receives a little extra shade near mid-day from an adjoining tree. Tolerance to light and cold does not mean our full sun nor our frosts. Fertilising is by weak foliar fertiliser in the growing period.

