



NOSSA Journal – September 2017
Volume 41 No. 8

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The Native Orchid Society of South Australia promotes the conservation of orchids through preservation of natural habitat and cultivation.

Except with the documented official representation of the management committee, no person may represent the Society on any matter. All native orchids are protected in the wild; their collection without written Government permit is illegal.

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Front cover – Celebrating 40 years - Lorraine Badger with the help of Adrian Ward, using the NOSSA logo.

On 22 March 1977 at an inaugural meeting NOSSA was formed and the committee called for members to "submit designs for consideration of a logo for letterheads, badges, signs, car stickers, etc." The winning entry, Chris Butler's *Caladenia menziesii* (*Leptoceras menziesii*) commonly known as Rabbit Orchid was announced in the June journal 1977 Vol 1 No 5. This distinctive and attractive design in colours of red and white on a green background has changed very little and is still in use today.

Bulletin Board

The Native Orchid Society of South Australia meets every 4th Tuesday of the months February to November at St Matthew's Hall, Bridge Street, Kensington. Meeting starts at 8:00 p.m. Doors to the hall open from 7:15 pm to allow Members access to the Library, Trading Table.

Date	Event
Sept 9 th & 10 th	NOSSA SPRING SHOW St Bernadette's School South Rd St Mary's
Sept 12 th Tues	Committee meeting Les Nesbitt's 18 Cambridge St., Vale Park
Sept 13 th Wed	Weeding at Grange Golf course
Sep 26 nd Tues	General Meeting – Orchid Growers' session
Oct 5 th Thur	Journal articles due – late entries not published
Oct 7 th	



TO NEW MEMBERS

H & C Froehlingsdorf of PROSPECT

FIELD TRIPS

- 23rd Sept Electronet nr Mt Bold
- 14th & 15th Oct – South East *

*Refer to page 90 for information on October SE Field Trip

REMEMBER: Field trips must be booked through Michael Clark our field trip co-ordinator - nossa.fieldtrips@gmail.com

COMMITTEE MEETING SEPT 12TH

Next committee meeting is on Tuesday 12th Sept
Les Nesbitt's 18 Cambridge St., Vale Park

NOTE: Committee meetings now on 2nd Tuesday of each month. Onlookers welcome.

NEXT GENERAL MEETING TUESDAY SEPT 22

Orchid Growers' meeting

FOR THE 2017 DIARY

***NOSSA Christmas BBQ** Dec 2 at the Higgs place

ANOS VIC ANNUAL SPRING SHOW

23rd & 24th Sept Mt Waverley Community Centre, Vic.

APS SPRING FLOWER SHOW & PLANT SALE

7th & 8th October 2017



Adelaide Showgrounds

Sat 10am – 5pm

Sun 10am – 4pm,

Volunteers needed – contact secretary

Email: nossa.enquiries@gmail.com

ARTICLES FOR NEXT JOURNAL

Articles / Reports must reach the Editor **no later than Thursday 5th October**, Thank you.

NOTE: Please send all articles directly to nossa.editor@gmail.com



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We discovered these beautiful orchids at Little Sahara on Kangaroo Island recently, when we were kindly taken behind the scenes to see their orchid hotspots. In addition to the huge dune area this property has plenty of woodland with approximately 75% of the orchids found on the island appearing throughout. Little Sahara is well worth a visit when on KI



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From the President

Robert Lawrence

Change to committee meetings

There has been no committee meeting since the last NOSSA Journal as they have been rescheduled to the second Tuesday of each month from September. I will be able to provide an update next month.

Orchid growing laboratory

The first practical steps have been taken towards setting up of a laboratory for growing orchids at a shed on the property of our Treasurer, Christine Robinson. We appreciate her willingness for making this available and for those who helped with making space. More help is welcome so please contact Christine if you would like to help. We look forward to making further progress in the coming months and to the exciting prospect of learning to grow orchids from seed ourselves.

Committee Vacancies

With the news that Lorraine Badger will not continue as Editor of the Journal in the coming year, we need another to step into the role. Christine has indicated an interest, if somebody else is prepared to be Treasurer. The role of Secretary is still vacant. I would be prepared to take on either the Treasurer or Secretary role if somebody is prepared to be President. These are all rewarding and interesting roles, so if you can take on one of them, please talk to one of the members of the committee.



Thanks for chairing meetings

I want to thank John Eaton and Rosalie Lawrence for chairing the last two general meetings while I have been recovering from surgery. Both seem to have managed well and their efforts have been much appreciated. Hopefully I will be back to normal for the next meeting.

Survey opportunities

There are opportunities for members to become involved with surveys to monitor threatened orchids in the Southern Lofty area and to record the orchids in forestry land of the South East. These are wonderful opportunities to learn about some orchids that we are unlikely to see otherwise. It is a real privilege to be involved. If interested contact Thelma Bridle our Conservation Officer.

Ph: 8557 6553

Suggestions for speakers

John Eaton is organising next year's speakers so if you have any suggestions please contact him.

Wild Orchid Watch

I would like to report that things have certainly not stalled towards setting up Wild Orchid Watch. A team is currently working with the three South Australian universities and we expect things to continue behind the scenes in setting up innovative orchid identification tools.

oooOOooo

Can you help?

Over the last couple of years, John Badger has been checking, correcting and retyping old journals that have been scanned so that they can be added to the NOSSA website. He is missing a few journals and has the following request:

Does anyone have the 2004 NOSSA Journals for September and/or October? I also need the orchid picture on the front cover of the 2002 and also 2003 journals. If I could borrow any of these copies I can scan them and return them. Please contact me on 8278 5265 or via Editor Email: nossa.editor@gmail.com

Thank you

Report on 22nd August, 2017 Meeting

John Eaton, Speaker Coordinator, NOSSA

While attendance at the August meeting was somewhat disappointing, those members who did attend were in for a treat. Our speaker, Greg Steenbeeke (pron. *Stain-baker*), had driven all the way from NSW to speak to us at our meeting on the *Epiphytic* and *Lithophytic* species of NSW.

Greg, a BSc (Hons) (Sydney) and a Masters in Environmental Management (UNE) graduate, is, since April 2011, the Senior Threatened Species Officer, NSW Office of Environment and Heritage. Greg's current work involves him in working on threatened species throughout the greater Sydney Region, providing expertise and technical advice on vegetation and threatened species and undertaking fieldwork for ecological assessments including a market-based scheme similar to carbon credits - where developers are encouraged to offset the ecological costs of their development by supporting the natural environment through biodiversity credits under the NSW *Threatened Species Conservation Act, 1995*.

Greg previously worked as:

- Senior Project Officer, Catchment Management Authority (CMA), Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water, with responsibility for the Border Rivers – Gwydir Catchment (2008–2010)
- Wildlife Data and Project Officer, NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water with responsibility for managing and updating the NSW Vegetation Survey Database ('Yeti') which provided data for the NSW Wildlife Atlas.

With this CV and the many opportunities his job has provided for him to linger in and observe diverse orchid habitats, Greg was eminently qualified to speak on the *Epiphytic* and *Lithophytic* orchid species of NSW. illustrated by many Power-point slides revealing the associations found with habitat, aspect, and symbiotically, with specific mycorrhizal fungi. e.g:- Catertee Valley cliff line near Clandulla, Great Dividing Range – habitat of *Dendrobium speciosum*; Blue Mountains cliff line – habitat of

Dendrobium striolatum and Blue Mountains rain forest - host to *Cymbidium suave*; Wedderburn, SW Sydney - habitat of *Cestichus reflexa* and *Sarcochilus australis* and seasonally drier habitats such as the Watagan mountains near Newcastle - yielding terrestrials such as the Nodding Greenhood (*Pterostylis nutans*) and a small Nodding Greenhood (*Pterostylis hispidula*), *Diuris maculata* and epiphytes such as *Dendrobium speciosum* (rock lily).

Other habitats covered by Greg, included seasonally-damp gullies near Dungog, Barrington Range, sheltered gullies and grey myrtle dry rainforest in the Kowmung Valley west of Sydney, Riparian river oak forest near Sydney, Box Gum Grassy woodland near Inverell, Northern NSW, Hunter River - *Dendrobium* species such as *D. speciosum* subsp. *speciosum* (on rocks – very rarely on trees), and *D. kingianum* - Northern Hunter, three forms of *Dendrobium aemulum* - always found on trees and in association with ironbark, rainforest and brush box and *D. falcorostrum* - found in at higher altitudes between the Hunter Valley and southern Queensland in association with *nothofagus* (southern beech) forest.

For those members seeking to know more about the interrelationships between NSW regional habitats and native orchids, Greg, like Andrew Brown our July speaker, has kindly donated the Power-point he used in the talk. It is my intention to add Greg's recorded comments on each Power-point slide so that members can study the associations between orchids and habitats at their leisure. Copyright issues will need to be resolved with the presenters before this can occur. It is my opinion that the funds raised from the production of a DVD of these power-points should be donated back to the speakers for the advancement of their orchid conservation work in their respective States.

And for NOSSA – there is the opportunity for us to ponder over the habitats and microclimates that have produced so many of the terrestrial and epiphytic orchids species that our members seek to grow better.

40th Re-enactment of Kyeema & Cox Scrub field trip

Rosalie and Robert Lawrence

In August 1977, NOSSA's inaugural year, members visited Kyeema and Cox Scrub. On 5 August 2017, members visited the same parks but as the original reports did not specify which area of the parks they visited, we had to guess. With today's GPS we can leave a record for future generations to know where we have been. Armed with the 1977 species list, we set out from the carpark on Woodgate Hill Road (about 300 metres from Brookman Road). The forecast was for cold, blustery and wet weather, so it was not surprising that the group consisted of 5 intrepid orchid hunters. In contrast to 1977 which was a sunny day and in a dry year.

The area immediately north of the carpark was planted with Cup Gums in straight rows. We travelled about 350 metres NNE and then headed SE for about 500 metres until we reached Woodgate Hill Road. Much of this section was remnant stringy-bark woodland.

We didn't have to go far to find orchids like *Pterostylis nutans* in flower, leaves of *Thelymitra* species and *Nemacianthus caudatus* still in bud.

Though the wind was cold and blustery, we were spared the rain but the ground, nevertheless, was wet underfoot and we needed to step carefully when fording some of the creek-lets that intersected the tracks from time to time.

We found all the species on the original list (many of which have new names), plus another five species. The difference may be because we may not have been in the same location as the original trip.

After lunch, we visited Cox Scrub. Again not knowing which section was visited we parked at the northern end near the swamp. Russell pointed out that the swamp level was the same as this time last year before the storms came. Orchid were not abundant, although we did see some colonies of *Leporella fimbriata* leaves. Our visit was brief as rain was threatening and we still wanted to visit Nixon Skinner Conservation Park. In our brief visit we walked around the swamp and found only five species of orchid. The weedy *Disa bracteata* was new to the species lists of both sites.

We had decided to visit Nixon Skinner to hopefully show Russell and our Canadian visitor, David, *Anzybas unguiculatus*. Even though the flowering time is June to July we still found flowers. We had previously visited the site on 19th July when we found about 100 flowering plants (based on 20 Waypoints and an average of 5 flowers per Waypoint), in the northern section of the park. There were none in the southern section where we normally find them.

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Kyeema Species

Code: (B) bud; (F) Flower (L) Leaves (P) Pod (R) Rosettes

1977	2017
<i>Corybas dilatatus</i>	<i>Corysanthes diemenicus</i>
<i>Pterostylis nutans</i>	<i>Pterostylis nutans</i> (F, L, P)
<i>Acianthus caudatus</i>	<i>Nemacianthus caudatus</i> (B)
<i>Pterostylis pedunculata</i>	<i>P. pedunculata</i> (B, F, L)
<i>Thelymitra</i> sp	<i>Thelymitra</i> sp. (L)
<i>Lyperanthus nigricans</i>	<i>Pyrorchis nigricans</i> (L)
<i>Pterostylis vittata</i>	<i>Urochilus sanguineus</i> (F, R)
	<i>Linguella nana</i> (B, F, L)
	<i>Arachnorchis leptochila</i> (L)
	<i>Arachnorchis tentaculata</i> (L)
	<i>Glossodia major</i> (L)
	<i>Eriochilus cucullatus</i> (L)

NOTE: Rosettes of *Disa bracteata* or South African weed orchid were found at both locations.

Cox Scrub Species

1977	2017
<i>Caladenia menziesii</i>	
<i>Acianthus exertus</i> (A. pusillus)	
A reniformis - <i>Cyrtostylis reniformis</i>	
<i>Corybas dilatatus</i>	
<i>Corybas diemenicus</i>	
<i>Leporella fimbriata</i>	<i>Leporella fimbriata</i> (L)
C. deformis- <i>Pheladenia deformis</i>	
Buds of other <i>Caladenia</i> sp.	
<i>Thelymitra antennifera</i>	
Pt plumosa <i>Plumatichilos plumosum</i>	
<i>Pterostylis nana</i>	<i>Linguella nana</i> (F, L)
<i>Prasophyllum rufum</i> - <i>Corunastylis rufus</i>	
<i>Microtis</i> sp.	
	<i>Glossodia major</i> (L)
	<i>Pyrorchis nigricans</i> (L)
	<i>Thelymitra</i> sp. Leaves

NOSSA YP Field Trips

Sat 25th August – Agery, Victoria Park Moonta

AM of Sat 25th August, Agery Field Trip (Robert Lawrence)

Nine of us met at the old railway station at Moonta and set off with the benefit of detailed instructions from John and Lorraine Badger, who had visited the site earlier in the week but were unable to accompany us on the day. We found the site easily and found a circular area of about 110 metres across. The most common orchid to be seen was clearly *Cyrtostylis robusta*; a small proportion of which were in flower. There were many rosettes of *Oligochaetochilus* species, some of which were starting to show evidence that they would flower this year. It is tempting to plan another trip or two to see what species they are. There were colonies of *Diplodium* leaves; these alerted us to look for flowers and we found a small proportion of flowers proving to be *Diplodium robustum*. Some of the flowers were already spent, but others were still in their prime. Only one patch of *Linguella* species was found. The leaves were quite similar to the rosettes of *Diplodium robustum* growing nearby. It would have been easy to miss non-flowering rosettes if they occurred with rosettes of *Diplodium robustum*.

Eriochilus leaves were scattered across the site. Some had flowered and released seed. The leaves

were quite variable. Most were smooth, but some were scabrid [meaning having a rough or scaly surface] on the upper surface. Presumably the species would be classified as *Eriochilus* sp. Smooth-leaf plains. Some leaves were surprisingly large, being up to 4 cm long.

We were delighted to find and photograph flowers of *Jonesiopsis capillata* and *Pheladenia deformis*. The *Jonesiopsis* were scattered within the southern half of the site and the *Pheladenia* were in groups throughout the site and were mostly a deep blue with a few paler flowers. We also saw leaves of *Microtis* and *Thelymitra* plants that were a long way from flowering. There were at least two species of *Thelymitra* with some ribbed (with a bud forming) and others that were channelled.

There were old cages within the site, at least one of which has a spider orchid in bud. These are understood to have once protected *Arachnorchis macroclavia*, but this species is thought to have disappeared from the site. We did see spider orchid leaves but these were thought to be *Arachnorchis tensa* (or going by the more recent name of *Arachnorchis campestris*).

Editor' Note : Never having seen much in the cages on previous visits we too assumed that *A. macroclavia* was no longer existent in the park. However, earlier in the week Lib and a friend took us to the Mona Railway Reserve near Bute; also listed as one of the 5 known locations for *A. macroclavia*. On the way we were shown a photograph of *A. macroclavia*, which had flowered in the reserve last year. It was dated almost to the day of our visit but sadly we found only cages empty of orchids.



Species Sighted at Victoria Park Moonta

<i>Acianthus pusillus</i>	<i>Diuris palustris</i>
<i>Arachnorchis brumalis</i>	<i>Eriochilus</i> sp
<i>Arachnorchis tensa</i> ?	<i>Hymenochilus pisinnus</i>
<i>Caladenia latifolia</i>	<i>Microtis</i> sp.
<i>Corunastylis</i> sp	<i>Oligochaetochilus</i> sp.
<i>Cyrtostylis robusta</i>	<i>Oligochaetochilus arenicola</i> pos
<i>Diplodium dolichochilus</i>	<i>Oligochaetochilus exallus</i> poss

Species Sighted at the two Halbury reserves

<i>Arachnorchis tensa</i>	<i>Jonesiopsis capillata</i>
<i>Caladenia carnea</i>	<i>Linguella nana</i>
<i>Cyrtostylis robusta</i>	<i>Oligochaetochilus exallus</i>
<i>Corunastylis tepperi</i>	<i>Oligochaetochilus lepidus</i>
<i>Diplodium robustum</i>	<i>Pheladenia deformis</i>

NOSSA YP Field Trips cont.

Sat 25th August – Agery, Victoria Park Moonta

Sun 26th August - Halbury

PM of Sat 25th August Victoria Park Moonta Lib Bartholomeusz

Having finished lunch and itching to check out more orchids, the group of nine eager NOSSA members searched a previously unexplored section of Victoria Park and were rewarded with sitings of *Oligochaetochilus pusillus* sp.? before Lib, a local NOSSA member who spends a lot of time in the park, arrived and acted as the guide.

Lib explained that in the early mining days the whole area was completely denuded except for tussocks and other grasses. In the 1880's the townspeople set up a Tree Planting Committee and replanted the area with local and exotic tree species to create the park. The orchids must have been hiding amongst the tussocks and when the park was established people were soon enjoying the pink fairies and spiders. It took several generations for people to realise they should be appreciating the plants on-site rather than making posies and pressing them.

Back to the present and the group decided to look for 'spiders' first. Up to the southern side of the dune top path with plenty of chatting and searching, finding leaves and (spent flowers) of *Acianthus pusillus* and *Diplodium robustum*. It took some time to find the first *Arachnorchis brumalis* then even more time for the keen photographers to find the right angle for the perfect shot.

Lorraine and John Badger who weren't able to attend had visited a couple of days earlier and had given directions on where to find a different

Arachnorchis in bud. They'd given the GPS of where *Diuris palustris* could be found nearby and Robert Lawrence used his hi tech gadget to locate the patch of *Diuris* but the *Arachnorchis* stayed hidden. In the meantime the searchers found more *Oligochaetochilus*, *Hymenochilus pisinnus* and *Diuris palustris* in flower along with leaves of *Caladenia*, *Eriochilus*, *Microtis* and *Prasophyllum* spp.

Some members had to return to Adelaide but those who stayed soon found another *Arachnorchis*, possibly a *brumalis*, maybe a hybrid, just on the edge of the main path. The group headed east, still on the southern slope checking the mossy spots and saw several *Caladenia latifolia* in a couple of small patches. *Oligochaetochilus* spp. and *Hymenochilus pisinnus* in flower were spread thinly along the walk, enough to keep people spotting them. This part of the walk ended with a lovely swathe of *Acianthus pusillus* with a few late bloomers. On the stroll back to the cars, a patch of *Diplodium dolichochilum* and then a patch of *Cyrtostylis robusta* were observed. The last 'ah' was Rosalie Lawrence seeing the one *Corunostylis* ssp. standing alone on the edge above occasional *Hymenochilus pisinnus*.

The spotters were now exhausted and ready for coffee. Over the next couple of months Lib will keep watching for more *Arachnorchis*, including the elusive *stricta*, *Caladenia*, *Microtis* and *Prasophyllum* emerge from their leaves and buds.

Sun 26th August HALBURY - Lib Bartholomeusz

On Sunday several NOSSA members met up with eleven enthusiasts from Australian Plant Society Northern Yorke Peninsula and visited two sites on the edge of this little hamlet east of Balaklava.

We first visited the Halbury Parklands, a site that Robert Lawrence helped survey some years ago. Getting into the park was a comic adventure as we had to climb a very tall stile to get over the metre high fence.

It was interesting to learn about the recording methods of past surveys, including numbered blocks and metal markers. Plastic



strips were also indicators that helped with the search. Several NOSSA members were using more modern recording techniques, taking GPS readings of the many and varied orchids.

The main purpose for the orchid experts was to locate the endangered *Pterostylis lepida* 'Halbury' syn. *Oligochaetochilus lepidus*. It wasn't long before one was found, then several more. Also encountered and duly photographed and GPS'd were *Corunastylis tepperi* and *Cyrtostylis robusta*. We came across a 1m by 0.5m clump of *Diplodinium robustum* which our Canadian visitor, David Toop, photographed at length. He said that while they don't have the variety of orchids in Manitoba, they usually grow in clumps like the *Diplodinium*. Just as we were leaving the site we came across a single *Caladenia carnea* in an open spot not 20 metres from where we had started our search.



Then off to the other reserve on the other side of town where we met up with Malcolm and Cathy Houston and a local family, the Kirklands, who are orchid novices.

Here we saw the species from the first site and many others including *Arachnorchis tensa*, *Linguella nana*

Oligochaetochilus exallus, *Pheladenia deformis* and *Jonesiopsis capillata*.



It was good to have Malcolm and Cathy present because they know the Yorke species so well. Malcolm pointed out the distinguishing features of the *Oligochaetochilus*. It is much easier to understand things when they are explained rather than reading text.

Everyone relaxed over the late lunch and cuppas in the Kirklands' farm shed with lots of discussion about what we'd seen and learnt.

'Hey, look at this!'

APSNYP had arranged to visit the Kirklands' scrub to see what was growing, and the NOSSA members joined them. We enjoyed a relaxing stroll in the open woodland, with several kangaroos bounding through and a rather snappy sleepy lizard. But no orchids. The scrub is much drier than just 20 kms east at Halbury, with fewer understorey plants so not the right environment for orchids.

Being new to keeping records of what we've seen on our walks it would be interesting to know what different people plan to do with the countless photos and GPS records they took over the fascinating weekend of orchid spotting and admiring.



Keith/ South East Field Trip October 14th & 15th

It sounds as though everyone who went to YP had a wonderful time. Now it is time to think of our

special SE weekend. Just 2.5 hours (225km) from Adelaide, Keith has been selected as our base for this weekend away, being central to various orchid hot spots. Places like Jip Jip CP, Christmas Rocks, Mt Monster, Desert Camp CP and Padthaway CP (good for spider orchids) will be pre-checked for best orchid sites. On the Sunday

return journey we will probably visit Mt Boothby and Boothby Rocks. We should have a great time.

Please refer to last month's journal for accommodation information at Keith caravan park. Remember the weekend is at the end of the school holidays and should be booked early.

Remember Field Trip Booking: Coordinator Michael Clark
nossa.fieldtrips@gmail.com

August 2017 Photographic Competition

Theme: Blotched or striped Orchids

Rosalie Lawrence

Blotches or stripes, which one? An interesting collection was entered. Representing the stripes were John Fennell's *Dipodium pardalinum*, Shane Grave's *Cyrtostylis robusta* labellum, Helen Lawrence's *Thelymitra cyanea*, Robert Lawrence's *Dipodium dolichochilum* and Lorraine Badger's *T. campanulata*. There were less blotches; John Fennell's *T. benthamiana* and Ricky Egel's *Diuris pardina*.

T. benthamiana is a popular orchid to photograph and it is not surprising that it is again (see April 2016) a winner in our competition. It was named after the Englishman George Bentham (1800 - 1884) one of the foremost and influential systemic botanists of the 19th century. At about the age of 16 or 17 years he was introduced to botany, and despite training as a lawyer, he devoted his life to the study of botany.

Though never visiting Australia, he produced the world's first completed continental flora, *Flora Australiensis*, a seven volume work produced over 15 years (1863 – 1878). He also co-authored, with Joseph D. Hooker the Bentham & Hooker system of plant classification, still used by many herbaria around the world. He always maintained the practice of citing only primary sources. Having a good command of Latin plus being able to read 14 modern European languages helped him access original material, never using secondary sources.

A shy and unassuming man, Bentham had the respect of the botanical world as reflected in the numerous awards he received. Described as a genius, [a man of] indefatigable industry, the premier systematic botanist, he considered himself



an amateur botanist even though he donated his extensive collection of more than 1,000 specimens to Kew Gardens in 1854 where he worked full time until his death in 1884.

He was responsible for introducing into orchid taxonomy, a new classification recognising subtribes in 1881, which precedes Genus in the classification system; introduced the word 'orchidologist' to the world in his *Notes on Orchideae* (1881). Although there is only one Australian orchid named after Bentham, he has a whole genus of 29 species named after him: *Benthamia*. Worldwide, Bentham was directly involved in naming over 200 orchid taxa.

Thanks Greg Steenbeeke for critiquing this article.

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Theme for September: Hybrid Orchids

NOTE: Orchid photos from **any** Australian state **are** acceptable

THE BURREN: WILD ORCHID GARDEN OF IRELAND

Bob Bates in England June 2002

Reprinted from JULY 2002, Vol. 26, No. 6

In June 2002, I flew to Dublin from Luton, ostensibly for a holiday but with the added intention of tracing my Irish (McGough and Kennedy) roots. Orchids were not on the agenda especially since I thought they would be as rare as hens teeth in the cleared and overgrazed Emerald Isle. In my fire-truck red Opel hire-car I skirted Dublin's fair city (where the girls are not so pretty) and headed to the land of my ancestors west of Ennis, County Clare on the west coast. Ireland being rather small, I was there in 3 hours thanks to the super highway system. You can't get lost in Ireland.

I made one stop on the way; at a limestone pavement in the centre of the island, to admire the patches of purple flowered shamrock; which turned out to be shamrocks and 'Orchis'! A lucky fluke I thought.

I noted the name McGough in the phonebook near Ennis and rang on the off chance that we might be related. The sweet 82 year old said that as her husband Patrick's great-great grandpa had the same name as mine it would be a good idea if I visited for lunch the next day. I took up the offer and was amazed as I walked down the hallway to see a portrait of my great grandpa who they knew only as the great uncle who went to Australia in the 1860's. After some great reminiscing over an Irish whisky or two, lunch and watching (with 84 year old Patrick) Ireland live from Japan in the World Cup football I went my way with much improved knowledge of my Irish ancestors.

The McGough cousins also told me the best tourist spots in the area, namely the Cliffs of Mohr and the Burren and as dusk would be at 10 pm I had plenty of time to see both. The Cliffs of Mohr, with a 200m drop into the Atlantic and obligatory castle I shared with 3 busloads of American tourists, a family from Adelaide and more orchids!

The Burren was a different story altogether, amazing limestone domes, no trees, shallow soil pockets and no people... but the greatest surprise was the orchids. For 3 hours I was never out of sight of them as I circled

lakes and climbed the white domes. And to think my own great grandpa had walked these hills as a young man 150 years before. I counted a dozen different orchids, mostly in full flower. The most common were the *Orchis* species like lollipops on sticks. I apologise if the names I got from a brochure are out of date but the species seemed to be *O. morio* and *O. mascula* with massed purple or pink flowers, the twayblades, *Listera ovata*, with green flowers; the fragrant pink *Dactylorhiza kerryensis* in 2 forms and the very dense headed *Neotinia intacta* which had also been at the Cliffs of Mohr. Less common was the bee orchid, *Ophrys* and the miniature fly orchid *O. aff. insectifera*, a small white *Gymnadenia*, an unidentified *Orchis* and in peaty bogs grazed low, the leaves and buds of a *Spiranthes*, probably *S. romanzoffiana*.

According to the brochure at the park headquarters there are also 3 endemic wildflowers. On the way back to Ennis I actually found orchids in a paddock where peat was being cut. For the next two days I explored the adjacent County Kerry which has some of the best scenery in the British Isles. Killarney has island filled lakes to rival the Lake district of England, mountains to rival Ben Nevis in Scotland (and if you want an exciting ride go on the one lane, cliff hanging roads thru the mountain passes).

I recommend the coast hugging tourist route the 'Ring of Kerry' and do take the car ferry to the island of Valentia and the boat ride to the Arran Isles. All this scenery with castles, wonderful guesthouses, horse-rides and the museums of Tralee all within 25km of Killarney. And yes you will spot orchids on the roadside in many places.

Western Ireland is a magical place! There seems to be a rule that adjacent houses must be different colours. so if you build between a pink house and a blue house you will need to paint yours yellow. Needless to say wherever you drive these fairy-tale two-storied houses with attics can be seen clinging to mountainsides where they are very visible indeed. ...

No results for August 2017 Benched Orchids

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Photos by David Hirst

Diuris palustris



Glossodia majora



Dendrobium Brolga Autumn



Corysanthus



Dendrobium aemulum



Den Donovan Opelesence



Caladenia Fairy Floss



Den Star of Riverdene

