

AUG 1981

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OFFICIAL BULLETIN



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OFFICE BEARERS 1981

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Mr. Barry Duff

Peter Watson

Advisory Editor Andrew Brown

Reserve Wardens Dave Emery

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Objects of the Group

- *To promote interest in, and preserve, Western Australian indigenous orchids.
- *To learn the best means of cultivation and to do all things possible for the conservation of native orchids in their natural environment.
- *To learn their habitats and keep records.
- *To have field days and learn to recognise the different genera and species.
- *To hold meetings for the exchanging of knowledge and furthering of interest in Western Australian native orchids.

August General Meeting

Third Wednesday of the month.
19th August 1981 at 8.00 p.m.
Film Room, Department of Agriculture,
Jarrah Road, South Perth.

Display table - bring your pots of orchids for display and discussion.

Raffle and Trading Stall as usual.

Don't forget to wear your badges.

Congratulations!

A little bird has whispered that Sue and Barry Duff are the proud parents of a new daughter (maybe a future orchidologist).

The group extends their congratulations and hope to see the new arrival before too long.

September Meeting

Please make a special note of the change of date to WEDNESDAY
SEPTEMBER 2ND.

The change will be for September only as Mr. George Fuller and party from New Zealand will be in Perth and will give a talk on the native orchids of his country.

Committee Meeting - September

1st Wednesday of the month. As this coincides with the general meeting, the committee meeting will be held prior to the general meeting at 7 p.m. in the Film Room, Jarrah Road.

August Topic

The Orchids of South Australia

This programme which came from the South Australian group should be of great interest as many of our species, although classified as being the same, have slight variations. We would like to thank the group for the loan of the programme.

Field Trip

Don't forget to set aside the long weekend on the 3rd, 4th, 5th October for the field trip to Orchid Valley and Bakers Junction. A fire has been through the Bakers Junction area and so you can be assured that a huge number of orchids will be in flower. It is intended that members will meet at Kojonup at the first Roadhouse on the left at 11 a.m. Saturday morning and spend the afternoon at Orchid Valley near Kojonup where accommodation has been arranged in shearing quarters. On Sunday we will head down to Bakers Junction, meeting at the Bakers Junction roadhouse at 10 a.m. then back to Kojonup for the night. Monday morning can be spent at Orchid Valley and then home.

Final details will be placed in the September Bulletin.

For further information contact Sid.

Picnic Day

Thursday the 3rd September has been set aside for the New Zealand party who will take a bus trip to a few of the local orchid spots followed by a barbecue. Everyone is welcome to come along. B.Y.O. everything. Contact Sid Gibbings if you can make it.

Report on July Meeting

A very enthusiastic talk on conservation was given by Mr. Norm Lockyer who, incidentally, is a direct descendant of Major Lockyer. The talk was backed by statistics and emphasized the major problem caused by over clearing and the increase in salinity.

Once again we are indebted to Ron Heberle for a slide programme. This month's talk emphasized the diverse nature of Diuris longifolia. So great was the range of colour and form, it is possible that further research could lead to at least some new varietal names.

The programme engendered quite a deal of lively discussion.

Raffle

Congratulations Steve - we too would like to have won Harry's orchid.

Peter, we are not jealous but don't you think it is time you stopped buying tickets. On second thoughts just give us the money. Thanks also to Alison for her donation.

Rare and Endangered Species

Over recent years our group has rediscovered a number of orchids which were either limited in their distribution or were thought to be extinct. This is a proud record but three orchids remain a mystery and so the notes below have been included in this issue of the Bulletin in the hope that someone may come up with a current location.

Pterostylis pusilla R.S. Rogers

This species appears to be a small form of *P. rufa* the tips of the sepals being short and blunt. Herbarium records indicate that it grows in the Cranbrook district and flowers in October, November.

Thelymitra psammophila C. Andrews

This is a yellow Sun Orchid, similar in size and stature to *T. antennifera*. Records indicate that it grows on the sandplains near the Stirling Ranges however in 1973 it was found at the rubbish tip at Borden in sandy clay soil and amongst low wiry ground cover. There is a brown stip over and down the front edge of the column.

Flowering period: Early September.

Caladenia lavandulacea R.S. Rogers

Descriptions indicate that this orchid has allabellum like that of *C. roei* but the sepals and petals are more like the typical "spider-like" caladenias. This could prove to be one of the variable group of orchids to which *C. ericksonae* belongs. To date no one has come up with an orchid which matches the descriptions and is lavender in colour.

Flowering period: late September.

Popular Names by B. Stoner

There is a lot to be said in favour of giving our orchids popular names and of course there are a few drawbacks. Perhaps the majority of people who are interested in the plants have no wish to be involved in difficult botanical names, but must obviously call them by some name, so an assortment of popular names is in general use. We all use these names, even the most technically minded have been known to refer to "Spiders" and "Donkeys". A check list of popular names would be very interesting, but hardly possible. So many plants have different names in different areas. How many people, for instance, would recognise "Grandmothers Bonnets" as another name for the Jug orchid. It might be helpful if all newly named orchids could be given a popular name as well as the botanical one.

There are a few odd names, too. How did the Leek Orchid come by its name? It could not be called the onion orchid since this name is used in some States for the genus Microtes.

The explanation sometimes given is that the leaf is like that of a leek. Now the leek has a number of broad, strap shaped leaves as any Welshman will tell you.

There is also the possibility of other plants being mistaken for orchids and named by some enthusiast with no botanical knowledge. I have been involved in a lengthy argument with someone who insisted that there was a flower known as The Blue Enamel Orchid. I have not seen the flower but it seems probable that it is, in fact, a species of Orthrosanthus, a member of the Iris family.

Someone else insisted that there was no such flower as The Cowslip orchid, I never discovered what they called this one.

Several species also have different names in different States, but in spite of the drawbacks popular names are really indispensable.

Common Donkey Orchid R.L. HEBERLE

DIURIS LONGIFOLIA R. BROWN PROD 316 1810

Diuris longifolia shares with two other orchids the distinction of being the first terrestrials collected, named and described in W.A.

Archibald Menzies - surgeon and botanist on Vancouver's exploratory expedition to New Holland in 1791 made the collection at or near Frenchmans Bay, King Georges Sound, Albany in August. It is reasonable to assume that the orchids still flowering there in abundance in August are very close to the "TYPE".

We are indebted to Fay Gordon for a beautiful and factual description of Di. longifolia in the July 1980 Bulletin. To me the common donkey is one of our most attractive and beautiful terrestrials, as the common name implies it is commonly known, widely distributed and super abundant. My own recordings extend from just north of the Murchison River to Israelite Bay in the east and inland through the wheatbelt to the Goldfields areas of Coolgardie to Norseman. Perhaps making longifolia the most widely distributed terrestrial.

Under the influence of this tremendous range of geographic climatic and environmental habitats there is a spectacular variation of form and colour, this being particularly so in the two most dominant varieties that are so quaintly referred to by our Herbarium as the "large" and "small" forms. The Pansy donkey "LARGE FORM" is the most dominant (possibly at its best in Medina) growing mostly in the coastal strip it shows considerable variation from North to South and East. The "SMALL" flowered variety (it once had a variety name "parviflora" reduced to synonym NUYTSIA Vol. 1 & 2 - 1971) flowers in the ranges and inland and is not as variable as the former. This variety is able to withstand the rigors of extreme climatic change and flowers in abundance on and around the granite rocks right into the arid inland.

Between the above two there are numerous forms showing a bewildering range of structure and colour and pose an absorbing challenge to any enthusiast prepared to study them. In my experience most colonies are pure in form and colour showing little if any integration and seem to be evolving in isolation. I see no signs of the plant being dependant on fire although the coastal strip colonies flower more abundantly after a summer burn (as with most of our terrestrials). Flowering dates are the longest, from July to December depending on the area. Some years there

are two separate flowerings the second appearing after the first is spent.

This article is written to support a short slide programme in the belief that the slides will speak far more eloquently than the writer. The opinions expressed are the results of considerable field work. Members will be able to add to and enhance this knowledge, agree or disagree as we all have much to learn.

This orchid grows in sandy soil amongst rock in the vicinity of the gorges near Kalbari. It is between 15 and 25 cm in height and the sepals some 25 mm long. The labellum is boldly marked in dark red, brown radiating lines and the margin is entire. The orchid is generally single flowered and, apart from the markings, the flower is creamy pink in colour.

I first collected the orchid on August 30th 1970 at Hawkeshead Lookout and again on September 8th 1975 at the "Z" Bend, near Kalbari. Herbarium records indicate that it has been found on one other occasion elsewhere in the Murchison district. No doubt further research will prove the orchid to be a new species.



