



October 2023

Scottish Orchid Society

Newsletter

Meetings

Edinburgh

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 26th October at 7 pm

Orchids of Fraser Island – South Australia

to be given by
Owen Sengstock

Future meetings
Sun 19th November at 2 pm
Followed by a 3-month
Winter break

Glasgow

The next meeting will be held on Sunday 12th November at 2 pm

All things Phalaenopsis

Zoom sessions

Thursday 16th November
at 7.30 pm

Our Facebook page

For information, visit
www.facebook.com/scottishorchidsociety/



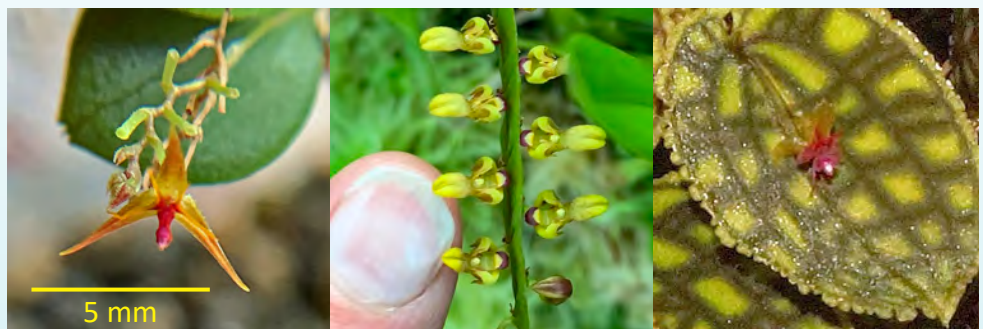
SCAN ME

FROM THE EDITOR

'They're having it rough in the West' had been the comment on watching the BBC weather forecasts over the past few weeks. Then a slater of senior years was *just passing by*: "Mornin' young sir" – leak at the chimney base – quick shimmy along the narrow eaves space – diagnosis of a blown flashing – expertly remedied. So far the repair appears to be coping with a vengeful Storm Babet.

At the Edinburgh meeting, David Menzies gave a very interesting talk on the wide range of Cattleyas he had encountered over the years. He had successfully converted some of his vintage colour slides into JPG files suitable for a PowerPoint presentation. At the Glasgow meeting, Alan Mackenzie's passion for growing orchids shone through as he described his choices of greenhouse, heating and shading modes, humidification systems and electrical supplies, with asides to the state of his bank balance – an ode to 'you can't take it with you'.

This month's pictorial contrast involves the size of things: '**Little and Large**' were a popular comedy duo of stage and screen. Eddie Large, birth name Edward Hugh McGinnis, hailed from Glasgow and died in 2020, while Syd Little (Cyril John Mead) is still with us at 80. But what do we mean by '**little**' in the orchid world? Looking at the photos below, small plant overall or tiny flowers either in their own right or within a raceme are all options. See how the minute flowers of *Bulbophyllum falcatum* var. *velutinum* are arranged alternately on short pedicels on a central axis. As for '**large**', we may have large overall or in a particular dimension: *Vanilla imperialis* can travel 20 m from its original rooting site. In relation to flowers, large in its own right (*V. imperialis* again) and contributing to an enormous raceme (e.g. *Grammatophyllum speciosum*) both qualify.



From top-left clockwise:

Lepanthes tipulifera and
Bulbophyllum falcatum
var. ***velutinum***: Christine
Nicholson, 2023, Glasgow
Botanic Gardens

Lepanthes calodictyon:
Chris Barker 2023, grown
by Jean Barker

Vanilla imperialis: Rob
Jones, 2018, Royal Botanic
Garden Edinburgh



FROM THE PRESIDENT

With Rob mentioning Storm Babet in his editorial, I hope none of you suffered any damage, but this is a reminder that with winter approaching we will experience shorter days and colder nights. Greenhouse growers need to ensure that they have adequate heating and insulation and if you grow your orchids indoors, check that your night-time temperatures do not fall too low and that plants are not trapped on window-ledges between curtains and the glass.

In case you are wondering, Babet was named by the Dutch weather agency after a woman who visited an open day at its headquarters and put her own name forward, with the additional reason "because I was born during a storm". Continuing with orchid trivia, there is also *Paphiopedilum* Babet (*Paph.* Garland x *Paph.* Lucifer) registered in 1939, but I have not been able to find a photo.

The reorganisation of the Society is making good progress and I am pleased to say that we had our first committee meeting since 2020 at the end of September. I had intended to update you all in this month's newsletter but as space is at a premium, I will write separately in the very near future. All changes, including the elected officers of the Society, will have to be approved by the membership at a forthcoming EGM, date to be confirmed.

Ending on a positive note, we continue to attract new members and I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Anastasia Nicholas to the Society. She is our 22nd new member this year and if you know of anyone who is interested in growing orchids, why not ask them if they too would like to join us.

Repotting session at the Glasgow meeting

As mentioned in the last issue, Alan Mackenzie (along with other members) had recently snapped up a range of miniature *Odontoglossums* at Morrisons. Trish had then photographed them in full bloom – see the pair below. Over a hot brew and a slice of Trish's delicious cake, Alan conducted a hands-on repotting session. From left to right, the model pupils included Sarah Fyfe, Caroline Chinn and Makiko Ozawa and Stratos Koukouvinis and Alex Gilchrist.



Edinburgh Table Show



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1. *Stenoglottis fimbriata* – David Menzies
2. *Holcoglossum kimbalianum* – Milan Lysak
3. *Phragmipedium* Fritz Schomberg – Milan Lysak
4. *Oncidium incurvum* 'Coloratum' – Milan Lysak - **1st equal**



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5. ***Cattleya* NoID**: Alison Lothian



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6. ***Habenaria medusa***: Alan Mackenzie. This visual feast is found in Indonesia and mainland southeast Asia. The lip has a radially-arranged fringe reminiscent of the head of snakes of the Greek goddess Medusa; its function may be to attract pollinating moths



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7. ***Scaphosepalum breve***: David Menzies





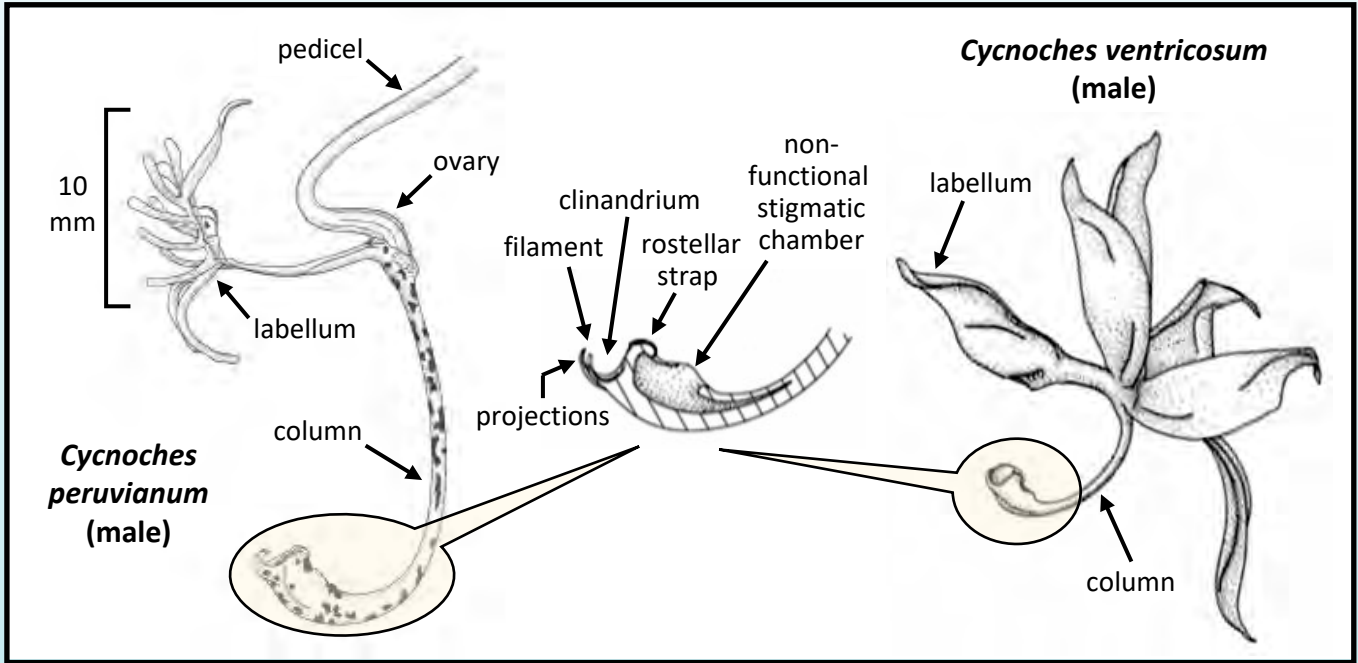
8. *Cycnoches pentadactylon*: Milan Lysac - 1st equal. Its many flowers all have the male form

Further commentary on *Cycnoches pentadactylon*

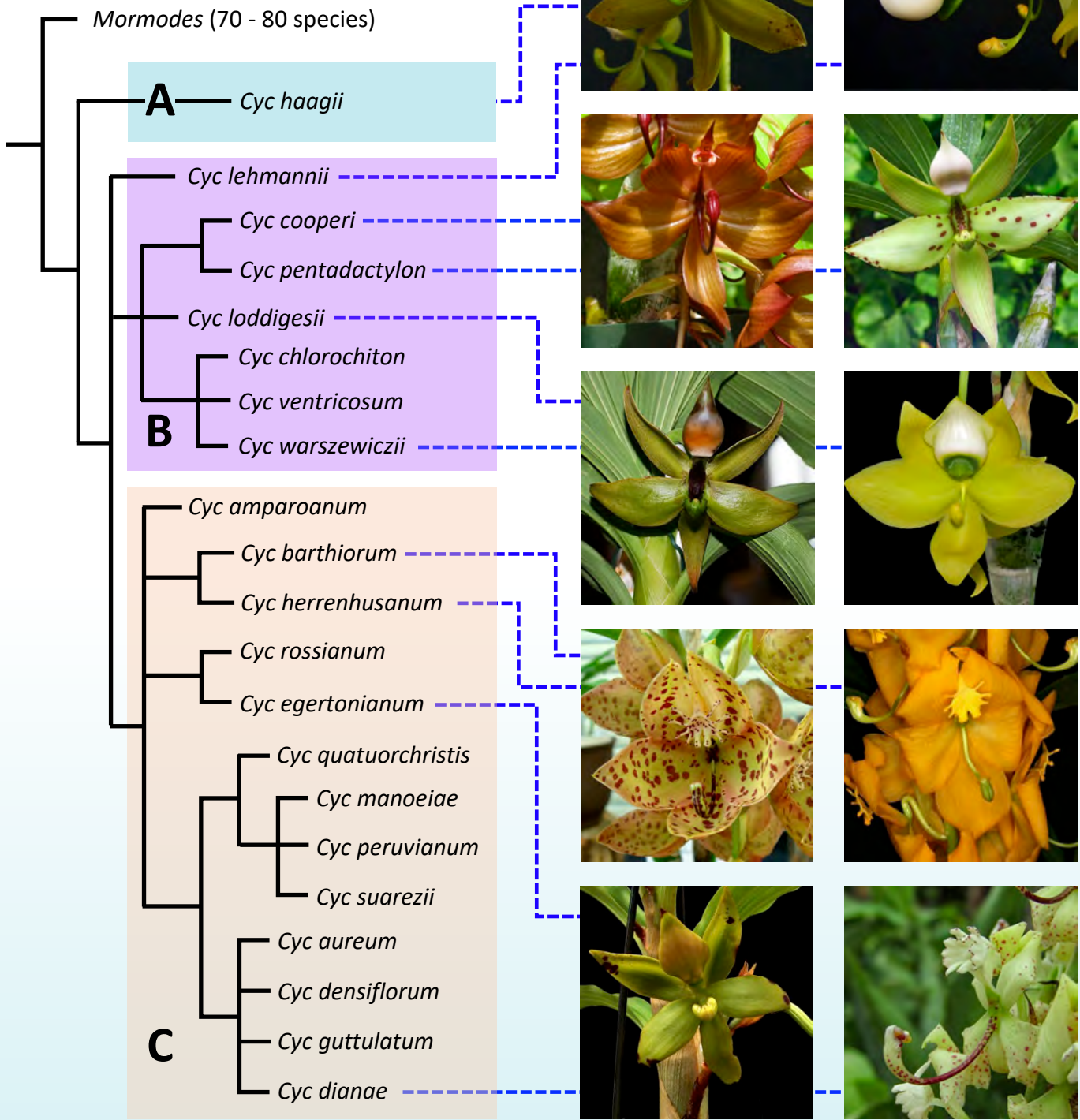
Typical of *Cycnoches* species, the flowers on Milan’s **Swan Orchid** are resupinate (upside-down to most orchids). It belongs to the Heteranthae section of *Cycnoches*, in which the male and female flowers are quite different and the male flowers have a division of the lip into small finger-like processes. I could not find a line-drawing of the (dissected) male flower of *Cycnoches pentadactylon*, so I have presented one for another Heteranthae species, *Cycnoches peruvianum* (lower-left), modified from a 2016 Master’s thesis on the scent glands of *Cycnoches* species by Camilla Uribe-Holguin. From the same source (I have a PDF of the thesis), a male flower of *Cycnoches ventricosum* in the other *Cycnoches* section is also shown (lower-right). The column structures of both are quite similar; the *clinandrium* is shown devoid of its anther mass.



The photo above shows the female flower of a *Cycnoches ventricosum* growing in the Glasgow Botanic in 2018 – courtesy of David Menzies.



Recent genetic studies indicate that the 34 species in the *Cycnoches* genus may be formulated into 3 clades (Epub: Pérez-Escobar *et al.* Mol Phylogenet Evol **220** Mar 106672).



Clade A comprises *Cycnoches haagii* only
Clade B includes most species of the *Cycnoches* section, **but also *Cyc. pentadactylon* and *Cyc. cooperi*, both previously assigned to the Heteranthae section.**
Clade C includes the majority of species of the Heteranthae section.
Again, our progress to a meaningful taxonomy makes life challenging for the amateur grower.

Photos above: So stop swanning around – deal yourself in – Find-the-Lady’s on the table – Glasgow Rules – all implements must be in a holster and left with Chief Curator. My thanks go to David Menzies for watching my back. Variations in the structures of the labellum deserve further investigation – I’m working on it.

Rob Jones

Glasgow Table Show

EXPERIENCED

1. *Perreiraara Rapeepath* 'Pink': Milan Lysak
2. *Masdevallia limax*: Milan Lysak – 2nd Place
3. *Pleione Confirmation*: David Menzies – 1st Place
4. *Pleurothallis restrepioides* 'Dragonstone': Milan Lysak
5. *Vanda* NoID: Alan Mackenzie





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6. *Dendrobium milaniae*: Milan Lysak

7. *Angraecum germinyanum*: Milan Lysak



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NOVICE

8. *Coelogyne ovalis*: Ian Spellacy – **1st Place**

9. *Restrepia brachypus*: Rob Jones – flowering from a planted keiki from Rasa Lewis – **2nd Place**

10. *Phalaenopsis* NOLD: Rob Jones



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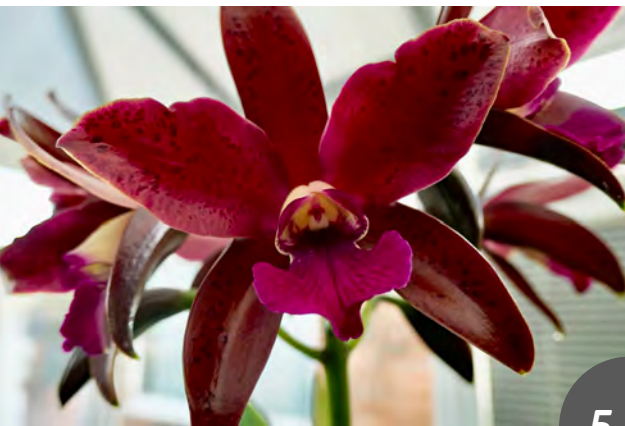
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Members' Photos



All photos are from Tony Britton:

1. *Phalaenopsis* Hybrid NoID
2. *Miltonidium* Melissa Brianne
3. *Rhyncholaeliocattleya* Hawaiian Wedding Song
4. *Rhyncholaeliocattleya* Greenwich 'Elmhurst'
5. *Cattlianthe* Sagarik Wax 'Fragrant Sky': with ten blooms!





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6. *Phragmipedium besseae*: John Elverson

7. *Cattleya* Little Jongheana x *Cattleya longipes*: John Elverson – not registered

8. *Phalaenopsis Sweetheart*: Rob Jones

9. *Miltonia* 'Sunset': Owen Sengstock – there are two registrations under this name – the other is *Milmitonia* 'Sunset'

10. *Phalaenopsis Nold*: Ruth Daynes – a winner at the Mauchline Show, originally set up by farmers and local villagers



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11. *Rhyncholaeliocattleya* Samantha Duncan: Jim McKay

12. *Beallara* Renaissance White: Helen McKay

13. *Dendrobium* Hibiki: Rasa Lewis

14. *Oncidium* Jungle Monarch: Rasa Lewis – the result of a severe viral infection – the full image is too distressing to show

15. *Cattleya harrisoniana*: Rasa Lewis – a more positive outcome – the first ever bloom of this seedling



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ISOLATION
ROOM

This Month at the Glasgow Botanic Gardens

Christine Nicholson writes:

1. *Lycaste schilleriana*: native to Colombia and Panama – growing in intermediate conditions, potted in a mix of perlite, chopped sphagnum and a small amount of bark
2. *Paphiopedilum sukhakulii* hybrid
3. *Ida* (syn. *Lycaste*) *linguella*: native to Ecuador and Peru. Growing info. as for *Lyc. schilleriana*
4. *Phragmipedium longifolium*
5. **Orchid in a cage**: just as this *Thelymitra rubra* started to grow something (squirrel? mouse?) knocked over the pot and rummaged around. Luckily the plant was not damaged and is now behind bars for its own protection



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Repotting a large vandaceous orchid: *Ascocenda* l-senaghai x *Vanda* Adisak



Tony Britton writes: top-left clockwise

This morning I was at a garden sale and bought a nice glass vessel to repot / reglass my big *Ascocenda*; see a previous year's flowering on the left. It had developed a good keiki over a few years, which had sufficient roots to sustain its own growth. However, the vessel's shape meant that the root mass would not fit the upper part. Some of the roots were also stuck to the glass. So I filled it with water and left it for half-an-hour to consider my next move.

Top-left clockwise: A large long screwdriver seemed to be the best bet - slid down the glass to reach the root ball and loosen it, working carefully all the way round. After gentle manipulation, it came away easily. My next move was to untangle the root mass and here my experience of a lifetime unfankling fishing lines came in handy. The roots were cleared away to get at the keiki, which I carefully pulled off the main plant.

After tidying new and old root systems and placing both plants in their respective glasses, I was quite pleased with my efforts. The new vessel is more open at the top, so in 20 years' time the plant should lift out again, easily!



Round and about

Not to be outdone by Tony, my buys at the recent Autumn Plant Sale of the Colinton Garden Club are shown on the left. The large vase and the pristine book by Anna Pavord were bargains at £4 and £2 each.

The author is best known for *The Tulip* (1999), an epic tale of the *Tulipa* genus; my bulbs on the left are the 'Virichic' variety. In chapter 17 of *The Naming of Names*, she describes the introduction of the study of plants into academic medicine in the mid-16th century and in particular the botanical work of **Felix Platter**.



In 1552, the 15-year old Felix rode a pony from his home in Basel to Montpellier in southern France to enrol in the University under the tutelage of Guillaume Rondelet, the Regius Professor of Medicine. These were dangerous times with followers of the Lutheran code being ruthlessly persecuted for their beliefs. Felix enjoys the student life; he writes to his father asking him to send more lute strings – he is teaching the lute to Rondelet's daughter, Catherine. He collects plants, dries them and rather unusually glues them carefully on paper to create a vast 'domestic thesaurus'. On returning to Basel, he becomes a successful physician and is appointed Professor of Practical Medicine. He builds himself a mansion with a garden containing many exotic plants, including an Indian banyan tree (*Ficus benghalensis*).

Platter formulated a compendium of herbal medicines or 'book of simples'. Surprisingly, only a few orchids are included. Plate 110 shows *Orchis militaris* on the right. David Menzies says that the 'Purple Orchid' is almost certainly *Orchis purpurea* (Lady Orchid). The tubers of both are ground to make salep flour, which is used in desserts and hot drinks mainly in countries with their origins in the Ottoman Empire.

The bottom-left photo below shows a Military Orchid photographed by David in Germany in 2018. The bottom-right photo is a screenshot of the same species growing in the Rex Graham Nature Reserve, a disused chalk pit in Suffolk and Site of Special Scientific Interest. It is the major site of this rare UK orchid, which is highly-protected.

Plate 110



Genetic analysis of the Suffolk orchid has shown it to be distinct from those at two minor English sites, and *may* represent an independent colonisation from Europe.

Lastly, two-digit separation or other magnification process applied to the top-left image will allow you to read my prompt letter addressed to Santa's ever-faithful helper.

Rob Jones