



THE MONTHLY BULLETIN OF THE KU-RING-GAI ORCHID SOCIETY INC.

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Annual Membership : **\$15 single, \$18 family**

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Committee : Julie Iyengar

Committee : Adrian Zderic

Committee

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Next Meeting : Mon 17th March 2025

Venue : *The West Lindfield Community Hall, corner of Bradfield Rd and Moore Avenue, West Lindfield.*

COVID and even common old influenza remain a problem. **Please, if you are feeling unwell - do not attend.**

YOU MUST SIGN IN – Our insurance requires that you **SIGN** the **ATTENDANCE SHEETS** at the **front door on arrival.**
Please do it.

The hall is open from 6.30pm to set up the hall (please help), benching can begin from 7 pm but no benching until all the class cards and dividers are in place. Give the set up team time to get everything organized.

Culture Class – We haven't booked a specific culture class this month in that time slot **a few old hands** will present a wander around the **benching classes** discussing **what goes where and why**. It is a topic of constant turmoil, especially for new starters and some explanations always help in practical distinctions between the various classifications.

The society sales table will also be open as usual with pots sticks and fertiliser etc and hopefully also some spare divisions of members plants. Please respect the **“Sales Table Open / Sales Table Closed” signs** and give our sales table managers time to set up and get themselves ready before you start grabbing stock and offering money.

The Supper Break – **Supper is not self-serve.** Volunteers are assigned to serve the food for hygienic reasons. The supper volunteers are also needed to get the supper paraphernalia, out of the cupboards and set up for supper. This includes setting up and filling a water heating urn. The supper helpers do **not** have to supply anything. Basic supplies are all purchased and organised in advance. See more information about the supper in the society news section

Also – as I repeat each month – while the society provides the basic supplies, **we do ask all members to bring in a contribution of cake, slice, or biscuits, etc for the supper table edibles.** **Please remember to bring something to add to the spread.** There were some delightful cakes these last few months so thank you to those who provided them.

And Remember – **Please bring your own mug or cup with you.** *We have a few foam cups in the cupboard but no more.*

After the tea break, our **Guest Speaker** this month will be **Steve Dunstan from the central coast area.** Steve is a very good grower and will be presenting a talk on the Dendrobiums of Section Latourea. This group of Dendrobiums seems to be based on PNG where the majority of its species are found but they also occur in surrounding areas like Indonesia, Philippines and many Pacific Islands. Steve knows them well so his talk should be fascinating.

Best of the Evening Novice – grown by **Brenda Walker**

Well done Brenda. This is an old hybrid (1954) but one that still looks lovely and grows easily and graces many Sydney backyards giving pleasure as it flowers year after year.

Named after the famous developer of intergeneric orchid hybrids WW Goodale Moir, the Milonia hybrid here was actually made and produced by another famous orchidist Mr Harold William Kirch of Woodlawn nursery. This one is a simple primary hybrid between the species Milt. flavescens and Milt. clowesii and proved to be an amazingly successful hybrid. At least half a dozen cultivars have been awarded and it is very popular. The flowers are about 8 cm diameter and the spikes can carry up to 4 or 5 flowers each.

Like many Miltonias of this type, they grow well as a garden plant hanging in a basket in a tree. - Congratulations Brenda. A nice orchid and you are growing it well.



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Society News (if anyone has a news item, please phone Jim on 9476 3383, or email at jimbrydie@aussiebroadband.com.au)

Jim's view – I didn't do a headcount but judging by the signed in members list, our attendance may have been a bit down a bit last month but we did have quite a few visitors on the night. One couple have now even signed on as members so that was good. Those who couldn't come missed an excellent night.

Dave Floyd did a brilliant job running the culture class on Growing Cattleyas and had a highly engaged audience firing questions at him from all directions – which he handled with his usual smile and easy aplomb. If there was ever to be a more down to earth set of instructions for growing Cattleyas then I can't imagine what it would look like. And then later, as a follow on from our discussion on propagating Thunia cuttings from the January meeting, Dave came back just before the super break and showed members trays of Thunia stem cuttings from last season, growing row after row of shoots all along the stems. Growers in the front row seats were up on their feet with eyes bulging to get a better view. Thank you Dave. You did a wonderful job.

And after the break, our Guest Speaker Craig gave us an introduction to the amazing orchids of PNG. If for example, you could look at even just Dendrobium and Bulbophyllum through the eyes of someone only knowing what species of those genera occur in Australia, you would have to be staggered by the numbers of their species, and their exotic variations that occur in the vastly variable habitats of our mountainous northern neighbour.

While enjoying Craig's knowledgeable talk I couldn't help recalling the articles I wrote many years ago on Schlechter's explorations in New Guinea in the early 1900's, so as a follow on from Craig's talk I have republished those articles for you later in this month's bulletin. It is hard to imagine the excitement orchid explorers like Schlechter must have felt finding orchids of such exotic form and that had never been seen before by Europeans.

I didn't manage to get a cup of coffee last meeting but I did notice there were some lovely looking cakes in the table spread. Well done to all you supper suppliers. I missed my coffee and cake only because I was nervous about getting the laptop, projector and screen set up for Craig's talk. I used to do all that every month for years with one hand tied behind my back, but the laptop and projector this time were the society's new ones and were all new kit to me. Although I had had a play with the boxes at home beforehand I have to admit I was nervy last month. Still, it did all eventually work as required and I will make sure I get a supper break next month so keep up the goodies please.

Garrie and Lesley kindly donated their best of the evening prize plants to the raffle last month so those who bought tickets got a bonus. Overall the raffle take was a fraction down but that was probably understandable with the lower attendance. Such is life I guess but I hope more members manage to come along next meeting.

One final matter I would like to discuss is the 'supper volunteers'. I believe a number of members spoke to one of our committee last month saying they hadn't volunteered because they didn't really understand what is required. Perhaps I was overoptimistic by thinking it was all pretty self-evident so I would like to now make sure we aren't missing out on any potential participants.

We are separately organising a supper table manager to oversee the volunteer program and the supper set up process. The manager will make sure we order whatever supplies are needed month by month as one or the other supply (eg coffee, tea, sugar, spoons etc) begins to run out. Ordering will be managed separately in cooperation with the committee so the volunteers don't have to do any of that or to bring anything or buy anything. The committee brings the milk every month. The supplies (except for the milk of course) are locked away in the storeroom cupboards every month between meetings. The urn is also stored in the storeroom cupboards. The committee holds the keys and unlocks cupboards every meeting. The supper table manager (or one of the committee) knows where things are stored and will show volunteers how to get them from the cupboards and into position for the supper.

What we are looking for from 'supper volunteers' is people who will do the work of unpacking and later repacking the supplies, put the urn into position and fill it, turn it on when told to and keep an eye on it, Cut up the cakes and other sweets if needed, AND THEN, when supper starts, stand at the table and serve out the supper, preferable with tongs, to make sure we don't have 50 people multi handling the supper goodies. A health issue.

The volunteer job takes up a goodly portion of your time at the meeting on the night you volunteer, but I don't believe it is excessive, and not too much to ask as a member doing a little of the workload occasionally. The volunteer rosters will be available on the front table again next meeting. Please offer your services where you can.

But finally, a positive note. Dennys has agreed to chair the March meeting. See you all there.

More Society News

1. New Members – Welcome to the club Tony and Nina Agrela. I hope you make many new friends among your fellow club members and we look forward to seeing your orchids and talking orchids with you. Please be patient with us. It often takes a little while for each of us to get to know one another but we get there in the end. If you need anything from us in getting established just find a committee person and ask.

2. Social Dinner – 6.30 PM, 28 March at Silk Chinese Restaurant at St Ives.

(St Ives Shopping Village, Shop 101 near carpark, plenty of parking)

Hi everyone, just a final reminder about our Chinese dinner on 28 March at St Ives. There are still places available.

We currently have 20 bookings – a goodly number but a little short of the 30 we initially booked with the restaurant, but that's not a big problem as we do have the ability to adjust booking numbers with the restaurant provided we reset giving adequate notice. Hence the original March 14 deadline to finalise bookings and numbers. ***But note now that the new booking deadline is Mon the 17th March which is our meeting night.***

I hope I didn't scare off some members from joining us because of my hard line last month, on locking in your payment in advance. I would like to explain.

At some dinners in the past we have suffered from some members booking to come but just forgetting the booking on the night and not showing up (and not paying). Attendees at the dinner are left reserving seats for friends who were supposed to come. There is indecision about whether to phone them to see if they are on their way, or whether we should we delay the start of the dinner for 5 or 10 minutes. An unfair and unacceptable situation

'No-show' can arise for many different reasons, some entirely understandable, but experience tells us the missing people just do not come and do not phone to explain before or after. If the booking was for an individual a-la-carte dinner where you order your own food and pay yourself it wouldn't matter as much financially. However, it is more unfair on many grounds where the dinner is a "group booking". The restaurant sets tables and prepares in advance for the booked numbers. Our deal fixes a price per head based on the number we book for, which means we have to pay them even if half the bookings don't turn up on the night.

Which is why we said 'pay in advance and no refunds'. I hope you all understand we were not just trying to be tough guys. If, after booking, you genuinely can't come for some valid reason, and you call us to explain, then we will do all we can to readjust numbers to get you a refund but if we can't then someone has to pay. In those circumstances perhaps you could talk to us about giving your seats to a friend or other family to come in your place? Talk to us.

Booking for a fixed group price is by far the most economic model and works perfectly when all bookers come. I hope this better explains the process and if you want to join us we still have places to fill. Please contact Jessie (jessie_koh38@hotmail.com) or Lina (lina.h.h@hotmail.com) and talk to them about a booking - **Deadline 17 March**

3. Annual membership fees – Final Notice - 31 March. Still 20 odd unpaid. In years gone by we would give members all sorts of leeway for late payment but the world of big business (govt and insurances) has finally intervened. We are forced to remove unfinancial 'members' after 31 March. ***If you want to continue in the club as a member, Please pay your fees.***

Jessie will be at the meeting and can take your payment if you want to do it that way, but you can also pay by bank transfer. That is: **Westpac Bank, BSB No 032 188, account name - Ku-ring-gai Orchid Society Inc. and account number 103568.** If you use this method, please use **your full name as the payment description** or your **phone number** if your financial institution does not allow you to enter a name. If you wish, you can email to the this address : kuringgaiorchidsociety@gmail.com to confirm your payment.

Best of the evening Species - Catt. maxima var. coerulea grown by
Garrie and Lesley Bromley

What a delightful and delicate species. The flowers were definitely blue. It was a rather pale blue however and it is hard to show that colour accurately with pictures taken in artificial light. The long lasting, fragrant flowers are generally 12-13 cm diameter and although the segments are narrow, the overall display is balanced and appealing.

The large flowers stand up well and there are up to 15 flowers on a 30 cm inflorescence. The flowers come in a wide range of shades between pale pink to near purple, white, and the rarer blue.

The Bakers outline of the species in Orchidwiz is quite unusual as to habitat:

" This orchid was originally discovered in the hot, humid lowlands around Guayaquil, Ecuador. Since then, it has been found at high elevations on the western slopes of the Andes in northern Peru, Ecuador, and southern Colombia. Because conditions in the highland and lowland habitats are so different, we will treat them as separate species with appropriate climate data for each. Highland populations are found near El Oro and Loja in southern Ecuador southward into Peru. ... Plants grow in both dry and evergreen forests at 1000–2000 m. Visitors to the northern Peru habitat report that most plants grew on long tree branches at about 1800 m. The lowland population is found in southwestern Ecuador, where temperatures are hot but rainfall is low and humidity is high. Plants grow on horizontal branches of old trees in a desert or dry cloud-forest. They are usually found near sea level, but they are known to grow as high as 0-600 m."

There is a much more detailed explanation of Catt maxima and its two forms on the Chadick and Sons orchid website. In part of that wonderful description by A. A. Chadwick he says that Catt maxima is one "one of the few species of



the large-flowered cattleyas that are easy to identify from their color. *Cattleya maxima* has a characteristic yellow stripe down the center of the lip in all color forms including the albas. The bright yellow stripe is quite striking against the dark purple flowers of the short-pseudobulb type, as can be seen in the photograph of the clone 'Belle', HCC/AOS."

JB: I couldn't find the intended picture of Belle but the one at the right is another picture of Belle I obtained to illustrate his point.

Mr Chadwick tells a very full story and even provides culture instructions for *Catt maxima*. The website reference is :

<https://chadwickorchids.com/content/cattleya-maxima>

However, as you might imagine, the original clear distinction between highland and lowland forms of *maxima* has very likely been diluted and mixed by man's cross breeding of the species over the past 100 or more years. The taller plants and high flower numbers of the lowland plants would be mixed with the shorter plants, low temperature tolerance, and fewer flowers of the higher elevation populations. When you buy a *maxima* plant from a nursery these days please don't expect to get specifically one form or the other.

But what beautiful flowers this species has. See some the samples below.



Crownfox Delelado



Crownfox



semi-alba Estralita

Congratulations Garrie and Lesley, it's a pleasure to see your treasures month by month.

Some other delightful benchings from February



Den Foxtails Blue



Vasco. Tristar Gold



Vasco. Jean's Delight

Clarification - So let me get this straight. I go to the grocery store and buy a lb. of ham wrapped in plastic, a loaf of bread in a plastic bag, 2 litres of milk in plastic bottle, a pack of napkins wrapped in plastic, a Greek salad in a plastic container, a plastic bottle of mustard and a plastic bottle of tomato sauce, and they won't give me a plastic bag to carry it all home because the plastic bag is bad for the environment?

Best of The Evening – Hybrid: Vandachostylis Thai Noi x Apichart - grown by **Garrie & Lesley Bromley**



Some of these complex Vandaceous hybrids can be terribly complex little devils. The Bromley's seedling shown here is a particularly nice one with an unusual colour combination but as many Vandaceous species come in a wide range of colour forms, the hybrids within a cross can be VERY different from one another. Yes, even those with the same hybrid name can look quite different to one another.

I don't think this this seedling is formally registered just yet but if it has been in very recent times, I can't find its name just yet.

I think that as an illustration of the potential ranges of similar crosses, I will show you some pictures of different forms of species and different cultivars of registered hybrids.

First, the hybrid parent Vandachostylis Thai Noi is Rhynchostylis coelestis x Vanda flabellata.

Rhynchostylis coelestis (right) is a real cutie and perhaps the most desirable form and most common parent is the beautiful blue and white flowered form shown at the right. This one has the cultivar name 'HB Blue Lip'. All of the essentially blue flowered coelestis are given the name 'horticultural form coerulea' or just h.f. coerulea.



The species Rhynchostylis coerulea however are not all blue and white. It usually has an upright spike of about 25 cm and carries up to 50 flowers of up to about 2.5 cm diameter. It is not hard to imagine that Rhy. coelestis is the parent that contributes the blue lip to many Thai Noi's but in fact there are many other forms of Rhynchostylis coelestis and also other parents containing blue. Lets start with some variations of Rhy. coelestis. From the pictures below you can see the similarities, but colour is variable.

(other Rhynchostylis coelestis below)



So what about the other parent in the Thai Noi cross? That is Vanda flabellata, which used to be known as Aerides flabellata. Flabellata is a species from Thailand, Myanmar, Laos, and SW China, in tropical areas at moderate elevations. It grows to about 45cm tall and has shortish (18cm) close packed leaves. It has less flowers, only 10 to 15, but they are likewise small (2cm) and the spike is upright or horizontal. Most flowers are brownish with darker spots and a lip with a white base and quite attractive mauve patterns. However other cultivars can come with greenish or yellow flowers. There is a very distinct and noticeable nectar spur at rear of lip. Here are some samples of flabellata.



And to show you the potential of variation within Thai Noi, here are some sample pictures below from Orchidwiz, showing other Thai Noi cultivars



All different cultivars of Vandachostylis Thai Noi which was registered in 1973 so has been around a while

Now next, let's look at the background of the second hybrid parent of the Bromley's orchid ie - Vandachostylis Apichart, which is Vanda testacea x Rhynchostylis coerulea.

I have already presented pictures of one half (Rhynchostylis coelestis) so that only leaves Vanda testacea. Testacea is a quite widespread species through tropical and subtropical zones from India and Sri Lanka, and across the Himalayas into Thailand. They are found at low to medium elevations so are warmer, humid growers. The flowers are only small at 15 mm across with 20 or so to a spike. The spikes are either vertical or horizontal and the flowers mature sort of sequentially from the bottom up as you can see in some the pictures below.



So when the Thai nursery Chao Praya made this 'Apichart' cross in 2006, what sort of result were they hoping for? Well its rather unfortunate that even now, 19 years after the cross was made, there seems to be only one picture I can find on the internet of Vandachostylis Apichart itself and that was a picture (left) supplied by Chao Praya long ago. And, up until a couple of years back there had been only two hybrids registered with Apichart as a parent. I can only guess, but it seems to me it probably wasn't one of their most successful adventures. I also can't find any information on its flower size.

The picture we do have shows a hybrid with the distinct blue lip of Rhynchostylis coerulea so we could assume that using Apichart would consolidate the blue lip in the hybrid with Thai Noi but with small flowers on both V testacea and Rhy. Coerulea, I am also guessing the flowers of Apichart are also rather small as were the flowers of Garrie and Lesley's next generation hybrid.

An interesting combination to say the least. Not one I might have tried but what would I know?

Congratulations Garrie and Lesley. Yet another quite different but very nice orchid.

What do you call that thing the flowers are on?

Orchid growers tend to use a number of terms interchangeably in referring to the part of the orchid plant that carries the flowers. However, each of these terms has a specific botanical meaning. They are worth knowing

Inflorescence – is the generic term referring to the whole flowering structure of the plant.

Peduncle – means the main stalk of the inflorescence.

Rhachis (or rachis) – is the part of the main stalk (peduncle) bearing the flowers

Pedicel – means the stem which supports each individual flower in an inflorescence.

Raceme – means a simple unbranched inflorescence with stalked flowers.

Spike – means a simple unbranched inflorescence with sessile (ie unstalked) flowers (like a Gladiolus).

Panicle – means a compound, branched inflorescence.

Head – means an inflorescence with the flowers in a tight cluster.

Umbel – means an inflorescence with a circular or semicircular arrangement of the flowers.

Friedrich Richard Rudolf Schlechter (1872 – 1925)

After serving an apprenticeship as a horticulturist, Schlechter commenced his career as a world traveling botanist at the age of 19, with an expedition to Africa. At age 23 he was appointed leader of a return expedition to Africa on behalf of the German Colonial Dept. Over the next three years he made extensive trips to tropical southern Africa (including the Yoruba country, Camaroons, and Togoland) to investigate the rubber tree industry. Later expeditions took him to Sumatra, Java, Celebes, Borneo, New Guinea (including the Bismark Archipeligo), Australia, and New Caledonia. Although these trips were essentially commercial in nature, he made extensive and wide plant collections wherever he went. His interest extended to many plant groups but he was particularly keen on orchids.

In the summer of 1895, having just returned from South Africa he worked for several weeks in London, in the Botany department of the British Museum, studying the collections of orchids and asclepiads (*JB: Asclepiads are succulents including the Stapelias and Ceropegias*) he had brought back from his trip. Visiting London was to become a regular occurrence on returning from his collecting expeditions, stopping always at the herbarium at Kew and the British Museum. He was considered an interesting figure, but being no respecter of persons or things, he was apt to tread on others feelings or sensibilities. He was self confident, egotistical, and dogmatic in his convictions, characteristics which did not assist in making him popular, but on the basis of his achievements and experience he was afforded great respect.

Having a great capacity for work, he set himself a target of describing at least one new plant species each day and over his working life that target may well have been achieved. As a result of his expeditions to New Guinea and in orchids alone, his work increased the known PNG species from 90 to a staggering 1450, including 1102 which were new to science. His huge 1100 page volume “Die Orchidacean von Deutsch-Neu Guinea” published in 1911-14, documented what is even today, a huge percentage of the orchid flora of the whole of New Guinea.

Just before World War I, he married and settled in Berlin where he took his Ph. D. and served as a curator in the Botanical Museum at Dahlem. There he continued his taxonomic work in a large, well lit room, surrounded by the cases of herbarium material he had brought with him. He devoted himself primarily to orchids, dealing with species of both the Old and New Worlds, including those of the Chinese and Japanese regions. His untimely death at the age of only 53 is thought to have been due to the lingering effects of the tropical diseases he contracted on his travels.

His immense collections and botanical records were held in the Botanical Museum at Dahlem where they were tragically destroyed by bombing and fire during World War II. While much of his work and supporting material, such as his herbarium specimens, can never be replaced, some at least has been recreated from his correspondence with fellow botanists like professor Oakes Ames. In the case of the Panamanian orchids Schlechter described, the herbarium specimens were able to be replaced by provision of fresh samples from the same numbered live plants held by his supplier C.W. Powell.

It is hard for we modern orchid growers to imagine what travel in the jungles must have been like for explorers and botanists like Schlechter. In New Guinea for example, boats were practically the only mechanical means of transport and even roads were virtually non existent. All land travel was by foot following rivers or native tracks and supplies were all carried on your back or by bearers. In many areas the terrain is incredibly mountainous and of difficult access. Herman Slade, who later revisited many of the places worked in by Schlechter, observed that “in some places it was difficult to find a place to sit down, let alone find a few square metres of space on which a tent or camp could be sited”. There was no common language among the native tribes and Schlechter stated that in a days march one might pass through 3 or 4 village areas each with its own language. Many are hostile to one another and trade between them is very limited. All communication has to be carried out by sign language.

In his first New Guinea expedition during a 10 months period from October 1901 to August 1902, Schlechter took all this in his stride and explored an amazingly wide area of northern New Guinea and its surrounding islands. In addition to his commercial investigations, he collected, pressed and catalogued huge amounts of plant material for later study. Despite suffering from tropical fevers and boils, he undertook trip after trip, climbing three mountain ranges on the mainland alone, and sloggng through swamps and rivers.

In the English translation of his book, the Orchidaceae of German New Guinea, there is an appendix listing the dates and an itinerary of his New Guinea expeditions, as compiled from his personal diaries. It would be impractical to reproduce the whole Appendix here, but selected parts, particularly Schlechter’s brief personal comments, provide a fascinating insight into his travels.

As many of the places mentioned by Schlechter’s either no longer exist or have been renamed, I have inserted relevant modern place names wherever possible to give you a modern context. I have also tried to ensure that these are included on the atlas map below.

Schlechter’s First Expedition to New Guinea 1901-1902 (Left Naples Dec 13 1900)

Jan 18 (1901) – Arrived in Singapore, then traveled in the Malay peninsula, Java, and Borneo.

Oct 8 – arrived at Berlinhafen (near the mouth of the Sepik river), thence along the north coast of New Guinea to Cape Cretin on the north head of the Huon gulf.

Oct 21 Arrived at Herbertshöhe (on the far north east coast of the island of New Britain near what is now Rabaul)

Oct 23 to Nov 17 explored around the Herbertshöhe area and surroundings including Mioko island, and North Daughter volcano.



Nov 18 to Dec 13 – Explored areas on and around New Ireland (this is the long skinny island in the upper right of the map). It is about 300km long by an average of only 10 or 15km wide), then returned to Herbertshöhe. Engaged carriers for a trip to the Ramu river area back on the mainland of New Guinea.

Dec 14 to 25 – Traveled back to the mainland to the harbour at Astrolabe Bay (present day Madang). Trained a detachment of 90 natives including 10 soldiers.

Dec 26 to 31 – Heading out for the Ramu River. Traveled via the Nuru river, Schumann river, and Warapussa river amidst hostile Tamils.

Jan 1 to 18 (1902) – Explored the far side of the Warapussa river, through swampland river courses to the upper reaches of the Ramu. Followed river courses and Tamil tracks over the Bismarck range, over a ridge at 2800m altitude, within sight of a snow covered peak. Attacked by hostile Tamils and forced to withdraw.

Jan 19 to Feb 7 – Return march to the coast, often up to our hips in water. Back to Astrolabe Bay via the same rivers as on our outbound trip. Now suffering protracted and serious boils on the thigh and buttocks.

Feb 18 to 26 – Now in Stephansort (near Madang) preparing for a trip into the Finisterre ranges. Boils persisting.

Feb 27 to Mar 4 – To the Kabenau (Kambaran?) river, up to the Columba and Weyburum rivers in the Finisterre ranges at 420m elevation, and back to the coast.

Note: As a result of his exploration of the Finisterre ranges, Schlechter later wrote an observation about the unusual way in which the otherwise straight coastline of German New Guinea recedes distinctly at the Huon Gulf. He noted: "...The Markham River which empties into this Gulf, drains a wide, flat, south east tending valley behind the Finisterre Range and is (ie the valley is) separated by only a slight rise of 400m from the similarly wide flat north west flowing valley of the Ramu River. On the northern declivities of the Finisterre Range at 300 to 600m, I have seen coral which is still found in the south seas, which precludes all doubt that there have been considerable rises here and that the Ramu-Markham valley has been flooded recently by the sea. That is, that the Finisterre Range must have been an island which has become connected with the mainland in only recent times.

Mar 5 to April 14 – Visited plantations near the coast. Suffered serious attacks of fever. Making preparations for an

expedition to the Torricelli ranges, 250 km further north up the coastline.

April 15 to May 3 – Traveled to the coast opposite the Torricelli ranges. Journeyed up the Gorub valley crossing several ridges of the Torricelli ranges. Climbed a peak of 1100m altitude. Return to the coast. Visited the nearby island of Soleo.

May 4 to 20 – Spent more time in this area, repeatedly sick with fever. Finally traveled back down the coast to (Madang) and back to base at Herbertshöhe (on New Britain near Rabaul).

May 21 to 30 – to and fro at Herbertshöhe. To Matupi and on up the west coast of the island of New Ireland, to it's northernmost point.

May 31 to July 9 – After rounding the northern end of New Ireland, explored down the east coast, around the bottom or southern end, and partly back up the west coast again.

July 10 to 19 – Explored around this area in canoes due to the unfavourable weather, then traveled to the small group of nearby islands to the south west. (now called the Duke of York Group). Explored the islands then rested to recuperate, waiting for more favourable weather.

July 20 to Aug 13 – Back to Herbertshöhe. Side trips to nearby areas.

Aug 14 (1902) – Left Herbertshöhe for Sydney.

From Sydney, he traveled to New Caledonia before returning once more to Sydney to prepare for the journey home and on **May 24 1903** – returned to Germany.

The Orchidaceae of German New Guinea – by Friedrich Richard Rudolf Schlechter

(Article by Jim Brydie first published in the Ku-Ring-Gai bulletin March 2005)

In the late 1970's, the Australian Orchid Foundation sponsored the English translation of Schlechter's amazing & epic 1100 page volume "Die Orchidaceen von Deutsch-Neu Guinea". A copy of this translation is available in our library.

This is not exactly the sort of book one would just sit down and read. It is essentially a reference source on the orchids of New Guinea, and in particular, the huge number of these that you can't find in any other books. However, in addition to the reference material, the short introductory chapters make for fascinating reading. These deal with the geography and the botanical history of New Guinea, and the general distribution of flora and habitats. Schlechter was an intelligent and observant scientist who also just happened to love orchids. At least for me there is a special excitement in reading his personal descriptions of some of the habitats he visited, and the orchids he found, in his expeditions in 1901 and 1908.

In a future bulletin I will provide a short biography of the man and some of his travels, but as an opener, I thought I would present some parts of the book that give us a bit of an insight into what it must have been like tramping through jungles festooned with an almost unimaginable array of orchids. I hope you will enjoy the following extracts.

Although I am presenting these passages in quotation marks as extracts from the book, please note that I have slightly reduced the text here and there for readability. Overall I feel these changes are minor and I have retained his original wording as far as possible to capture the magic. As Schlechter's book contains only botanical line drawings, I have added colour pictures for your enjoyment. These are mostly from Schuiteman and De Vogel's terrific CD "Flora Malesiana - Orchids of New Guinea Vol. 1". This CD and the follow up Vol 2 are both still available at www.eti.uva.nl on the internet. They cost 59 Euro's each and for those with a computer, they are well worth the price.

(2025 Update : don't forget that latter part was written in 2005. Check to see what may be available today)

The Lower Hill Country



".....If we now penetrate further into the forest (away from the coastal strip), the orchidaceous flora becomes most abundant in the lower forest, especially as we approach the hill country. Here we find a few of the first saprophytes and also a few of the terrestrial species. Among these we soon become acquainted with shade loving species such as the large white flowered *Phaius amboinensis*, the graceful *Nervillia aragoana*, and species of *Tropidia* and *Calanthe*, including *C. engleriana*, a species with a dense raceme of large white flowers and about 1.5 metres



Nervillia aragoana

high, which I am inclined to consider the most beautiful species of the subgenus *Eu-Calanthe*"

"..Nevertheless, it would lead too far to try to enumerate the whole of the many species found in the lower forest. Still greater is the number of epiphytes. In the two largest genera, *Bulbophyllum*, and *Dendrobium*, the number of species is already overwhelming, and to these must be added the species of other quite different genera, such as *Oberonia*,

Liparis, Appendiculata, Podochilus, Thrixspermum, Vanda, Taeniophyllum, and others.”

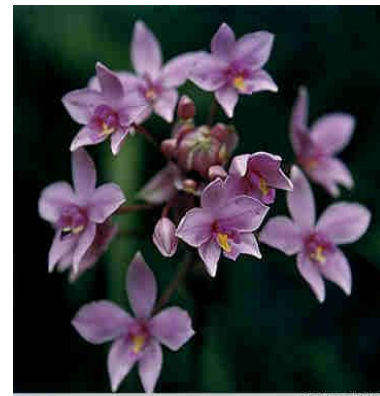
“...But a real Eldorado for the orchid collector is found by following the streams and rivers at the foot of the hill country. Almost every tree on the banks bears a number of epiphytes and among these there are usually many orchids. In all places, where the banks rise sharply, will be seen the long stalks of the pretty rose red coloured flowers of *Spathoglottis papuana* (above), and in the more shady places, the still more robust and more richly flowering *Spathoglottis grandiflora*..” (right - *Spathoglottis paulinae*, which is similar to *S.papuana*)



(*Bulbophanum johannulii*)

“Along the banks of the rivers and streams epiphytic orchids are very numerous; it would take too long to name them all. The genus with the most species is *Bulbophyllum*. *Dendrobium* is relatively rare but a few species such as *D. leucorhodum* which is as beautiful as *D. superbum*, *D. pseudocalceolum*, and a few more appear from time to time. More abundant here are species of *Phreatia* which are all small and graceful, usually with snow white flowers or more rarely, yellowish green.

Species of *Oberonia*, *Cadetia*, *Thrixspermum*, *Taeniophyllum*, *Eria*, *Liparis*, and the rarer *Vanda hindsii* and the peculiar *Vandopsis meulleri* are still more uncommon. The last one is one of the most remarkable orchids known and from a 1½-2 foot compressed stem, lignified (ie woody) branched inflorescences about 5 metres long are produced.”



Roy Bot. Gard. Edin.



(*Phreatia* sp.)

The Mist Forests

“We now enter the hill country itself and will continue our wanderings for this purpose in a river bed which brings us to the lower boundary of the mist forest. ... Depending on the aspect of the mountains, we enter the sharply defined



A. Schickman

mist forest at an altitude of 600m to 1000m. Here the orchid collector enters the true field of his activity. Such indeed as regards richness of forms is not to be found elsewhere in the whole world.” (the picture of mist forests at the left is from 2500m) “Quite suddenly, the orchid flora is changed completely. An astonishing number of genera appear which is not found below this formation. The largest genera are only represented by sections (within the genus) which are restricted to this region. In short, we are confronted with a perfectly new picture. Of course there are a few species which have penetrated here from the forests below but their number is almost negligible and all of them soon vanish as we ascend further.”

(Note: the mist forests continue upward to 3000-3500m)

“Quite a conspicuous role is played by the *Dendrobieinae*. Of these, the genus *Cadetia* grows in colonies or tufts with its small white, sometimes yellow or rose red marked flowers. The genus *Dendrobium* itself is seen in beautiful perfection. Certain of its sections such as *Oxyglossum* (eg *D. brevicale*, *D. pentapterum*), *Calyptrochilus* (eg *D. lawsii* and *obtusisepalum*), *Trachyrhizum*, and even *Herpethophytum*, are restricted to the mist forest formation. What a glorious sight to suddenly find trees, the trunks of which are covered with the dark purple flowered *D. lawsii* or with the cinnabar red flowers of *D. phlox*. In other places such as in the Torricelli range, the large flowered *D. eximium* (very similar to *Den rhodostictum*), a member of the section *Latourea*, with its white, red veined flowers, is very common and it seems a pity that this species is not yet cultivated in Europe. One has the same feeling in regard to other species in this section, viz *D. alexandrae*,



Vanda hindsii

J.B. Comber

D. forbesii, *D. polysema*, *D. pulchrum*, and many others of the mist forests. But the most beautiful species of this section is *D. magnificum* with its peculiar combination of colours. It has orange yellow, red marked perianth segments (ie sepals and petals), and an olive green, red veined lip. (this species is now known as *D. terrestre*.)



Den rhodostictum

(below) *Cadetia collina*



Dend. brevicaule



D. igneum



D. alexandrae



D. terrestre



D. lawsii 'red'



D. insigne



Corybas species



D. pentapterum



Mediocalcar decoratum



Den. obtusisepalum



D. cuthbertsonii (also in reds and yellows)



Dend. petiolatum



Den laevifolium



Climate of the mist forests

Schlechter writes: "My observations in the mountains at various altitudes could be carried out only for several days, or at most, weeks, but were always similar in that the maximum temperature was always reached about 10-11am, and very rarely lasted beyond noon. At that time, the initially light, then later thicker, mists caused a fall in the early afternoon temperature. At 1000m altitude, very seldom did the temperature rise above 22°C on warm days, and the morning temperature rarely exceeded 14°C, very often dropping to 10°C overnight. Further up the mountain at 1600m, I often registered 6°C in my camp in the morning, seldom up to 10°C and only once 22°C in the afternoon." (..... At 2000m it was 2°C cooler again).

"During my stay in New Guinea, the greater part of which was spent in the mountains, I formed the opinion that more

than double the amount of rain falls there than on the coast. At an altitude of 1000m, it rained nearly every day, and one felt this particularly when it was followed by a few dry days. The clearer part of the day was usually the morning or forenoon with the temperature rising until 10-11am. The mist then gathered and in the afternoon the rain set in with short heavy showers. Often it cleared up toward evening before sunset, but only to be followed by fresh mists. The trees and shrubs soon began to drip moisture, leading one to believe that the rain had only then ceased.When I was in camp at about 1600m in the Bismark range for a fortnight in 1908, it rained almost continually, whereas in the valley at the Saugueti base below, only 3 wet days were recorded. During this time we did not once see the sun and in our tents the blankets were so wet that the moisture could be wrung out of them. Matches could be used only if they were kept night and day in ones trouser pockets. Under these circumstances no one could consider changing clothes.” (JB: by golly they must have been tough)

Acknowledgments: most photos used in this article are reproduced from the CD “Orchids of New Guinea Vol. 1”. The picture of *Den. terrestre* was obtained from “*Dendrobium and its Relatives*” by Lavarack, Harris and Stocker; *Den. lawsii* and *Den. obtusisepalum* were from the website Orchid News of Papua New Guinea- <http://www.orchidspng.com/> The picture of *Den. laevifolium* is from a more modern award source.

Humour to end the day

Being Watched ??

A burglar breaks into a house and starts to load valuables into his sack. In the lounge room he disconnects the DVD player and puts it in the bag. As he does so, a voice calls out: “***Jesus is watching you***”.

The burglar ducks down and hides behind the TV. After a couple of minutes there is no further sound and he doesn’t detect any movement. He thinks he must have imagined it so he gets up again and starts to look for more valuables. He sees a wallet on the coffee table, picks it up and takes out all the cash and credit cards.

Again a voice calls out: “***Jesus is watching you***”. He freezes, terrified that he has been caught, but then looks around the room with his flashlight to see where the voice came from. In one corner he sees a parrot in a cage so he goes over and asks “Was that your voice?”

The parrot replies “Yes”. The burglar then asks “What is your name?”. The parrot replies “Moses”.

“That’s a strange name for a parrot” says the burglar, “What kind of person would name a parrot Moses?”

“The type who names his rotweiler Jesus” replies the parrot, “and I told you twice already, Jesus is watching you.”

The Good Bookie

Out at the racetrack, a man with a speech impediment rushed up to a bookie after the fifth race and said: “I bbbbacked a ffff ffff ffffive tttttt ttttt tttto.....” The man wasn’t presenting a winning ticket and there were a lot of other punters waiting to be paid so the bookie started to get impatient.

“Look”, said the bookie, “there was no 5 to 1 winner, so show me a ticket or buzz off.”

Not to be deterred, the man starts again: “But I bbbbbb bbbbacked a ffff ffffive ttt ttt.....” The bookie started to get really heated but the man persisted and was still trying to get out his story as the bookie tried to get on with business with everyone else. When the bookie could take no more, he pulled out a \$50 note and gave it to the man telling him to go away and stop bothering him.

The man accepted the note reluctantly and as he left the betting ring, a mate came up to and asked how he had got on. “I just met a bloody gggood bbbookie” the man stammered. “I tried tto ttell him I bbacked a ffive tton ttruck into his pporsche and he ggave me 50 bucks.”

