

Keith Andrew

A Living Legend



BOURNEMOUTH ORCHID SOCIETY

Introduction

Orchids are one of nature's most potent creations and, until recently, thought to be a fairly new creation. Though new fossil evidence now suggests they have beginnings that date back to the days of the dinosaurs.

From those prehistoric beginnings, these incredible plants have evolved into a multitude of variations and now inhabit every continent on this earth, except the Antarctic which is just too cold for most living things.

These varieties range from tiny plants with flowers only one cell thick, to others that grow into some of the largest flowering plants known, bearing thousands of exotic flowers. There are species that spend their lives underground and some, cling to precipitous cliff faces, while many others inhabit the highest trees of tropical jungles. Orchids have evolved to take advantage of every niche in nature. Some safe and secure, while many others cling on precariously to a knife edge existence. Those of us who love orchids appreciate all the nuances of their forms and marvel at their complications.

Even so, it is the nature of mankind, that even when surrounded with thousands of beautiful varieties, it has the desire to create new forms. Some would say we can never improve on those natural forms, while others have more lofty ambitions and strive to create something new and wonderful.

Those orchid hybridist are rare creatures, who go quietly, almost secretly, about their work; armed with just a wooden toothpick for pasting pollen to glue. Not done in haste, but carefully, with much thought and often years of their own experience and that of others before them.

This shared knowledge has taken us from the very first man-made orchid hybrid made in 1853 in England to well over 50,000 registered hybrids today. All these hybrids have amazed and excited us from the very first to today, creating such diversity to rival, perhaps, the species.

Whatever our preferences, we cannot deny hybrids have enhanced the orchid world and become a No 1 "must have" plant for the home, adding that something extra to our lives. That, surely, can only be a good thing.

This publication recognises the achievements of a master hybridist, who has, in his way, enhanced our lives. Keith Andrew, famous throughout the world has created some of the most memorable orchid hybrids in several genera.

His talent was to "know" the species he used when developing his creations and understand their influences on colour and form. It meant he attempted things that others would never consider and, in so doing, has left a legacy of many unique hybrids, unrivalled in the world of orchids.

He campaigned to encourage others to recognise the influence of the species behind the hybrids, and, contrary to popular opinion, this has not fallen on deaf ears. As a member of the RHS Orchid Committee I can assure you, flowers do not now have to be big and round! A testament to Keith's influence.

Keith, along with others, was instrumental in founding the Bournemouth Orchid Society, way back in 1959. Known then as Bournemouth Poole and District Orchid Society. He has been its President for many years and his support and knowledge has been well valued. His comments and cultural advice for the monthly points table are eagerly anticipated and applauded.

The pages in this publication is filled with two things. First the words of those who have known Keith. Their experiences are many and varied but all have the same rhythm.

Secondly Keith's hybrids, their beauty is self evident and I have tried to select those that compliment the tributes and also illustrate the glory of Keith's work.

My problem putting this together has not been what to put in, but what to leave out, and I am sure there are many more individuals who would have liked to contribute to this tribute. My apologies to those people, and if any of you are still eager to contribute you can always write to Keith directly, or E-mail your messages to me, and I will pass them on to him. (E-Mail: allanburdis@hotmail.com)

My thanks to all those who sent their tributes and mug shots. It is nice to see the faces behind the words. Some are even good looking!

Thanks also to Roger Russell of the Bournemouth Orchid Society who initially contacted several of the authors and managed to photograph surreptitiously the many awards shown on page 14. Our very own secret agent.

The images of Keith's plants were taken from the CD, **Keith Andrew - One man's 50 years of hybridising**, produced and distributed by Dr Derek Copley, Chairperson of Bournemouth Orchid Society. (CD available @ £10 each, E-mail derekeuea@aol.com)

Recent changes to the classification of members of the subtribe Oncidiinae have meant that the genus *Odontoglossum* is no longer valid and, therefore, absorbed into *Oncidium*. This has created numerous name changes and caused much confusion. There are many people who are resisting this, but perhaps, in these modern times of DNA mapping, it is inevitable and we will have to get used to rewriting our plant labels.

But having said that, I felt it would not be appropriate to incorporate such name changes in this publication, as it would require an added explanation of all the affected genera. This would be confusing and detract from the whole point of this publication. I am sure it will take a long time before we get our heads around the new names.

Allan Burdis

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Front Cover: Keith Andrew taken at the Bournemouth Orchid Society 50th Anniversary Show 2009
Photo Allan Burdis

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Warm Friendship

Dr. Derek Copley (Chairman Bournemouth Orchid Society)

I first met Keith and Janis at the nursery in Plush in 1970, 44 years ago. It was an encounter that changed my life, by setting me on the road to becoming an orchid 'fanatic'. Many years have passed, and I still feel that thrill when I drive over to see them in their lovely cottage. The nursery is no longer, but this man's enthusiasm hasn't changed a bit. It is still his passion after many decades.



Keith always was and always will be an entrepreneur. At every visit, he excitedly tells me about his latest new way of potting and growing. His drive to experiment has not diminished, and his fame for trying out new things is the stuff of legends. In an article for the Orchid Review I once referred to him as a 'living legend', which indeed he is.

He is not afraid to break the rules, and that 'recklessness' lies behind his many hundreds of successes in creating new hybrids from many different genera. Jokingly, I often encourage him to create a new lecture called 'rules I have broken'!

Keith is a visionary thinker, and that is the background to his numerous successes. At some stage he made the great 'discovery' that orchids are 'plants'! Well of course they are! But once we come to that same conclusion, it takes the fear and mystique out of these lovely flowers. Then we can work out how they should be treated in our UK greenhouses and windowsills.

Keith, I will be indebted to you for ever, for what you have taught me, but even more than that for your warm friendship.



*Oda Star Trek
(Shelley x Phoenix)*

Photo Keith Andrew

Hawaiian Sojourn

Bob Burkey (Kamuela Greenhouse/Specialty Orchids, Hawaii)

Others have rightly praised Keith as a master gardener and genius orchid hybridiser. It was an honour to experience both and discover much more behind the man during Keith's Hawaii sojourn many years ago. Keith's uniquely charming orchid hybrids are a legacy to his vision and passion for creating pretty flowers. I was to learn his secret is due to his "Eartha Kitt formula for breeding". Let him elaborate. As a seasoned senior English nurseryman, Keith helped establish our fledgling orchid company with many sayings still quoted nearly daily such as: "We are a nursery, not a nursing home!" And Keith imparted his wise orchid hybridizing philosophy to this young upstart with encouraging maxims like: "It is not how many hybrids you make, it is how FEW you make that counts!" And of course we heard often that there are hybridisers as well as mere breeders in the orchid world!



Seemingly always the consummate dapper and proper English gentleman, I discovered Keith also had a devilish fun-loving side. The man could fill the pockets of his travel suit coat with more orchids than most people have in their collections! He arrived from overseas trips with filled envelopes of tiny Miltonias and Odontoglossums stuffed in pockets and shoes and hats and whatever else he could smuggle through the many lines of customs inspectors. His smile and easy manner could warm the coldest of bureaucrats. Sure enough, on a trip to Colombia Keith breezed by the DEA (Drug Enforcement Agency) agents as we boarded the plane but they stopped and frisked me! And lest we forget how we needed to pass a cash payment to the ticket officials to secure our seats on the return flight.

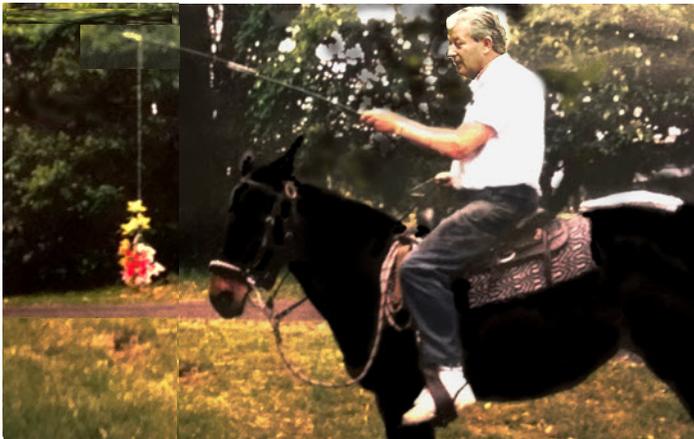
And who can forget the Kuhio escapade? Stuck in Honolulu for the night on our way back to the Big Island the two of us searching Waikiki for a bite to eat only to find a persistent lovely new friend tailing Keith up and down the sidewalk! Fitting that a new hybrid was named in his honour called Oda. Waikiki Keith, mimicking the colour of the namesake's face.



The memory of Keith driving up and down the Volcano Highway in his big blue Buick monstrosity of a luxurious American car is still fresh. Far from his thatched roof cottage in Plush and later Piddletrenthide,

Keith braved the Glenwood rain and started to fancy hard-cane Dendrobiums. Our workers at the nursery loved Keith's tutelage. His friends included a fellow named Babachick and some say Keith was spotted at wild parties in Hawaiian Acres. Of course I cannot forget Keith's expertise in riding our lab tech's testy mule as he had a special trick to get it moving.

Once I agreed to drive Keith and Brian to the airport in Tijuana so that Brian could visit a supplier in Mexico City. On our way, after crossing into Mexico, a policeman stopped me for supposedly running a stop sign. Of course the policeman spoke fluent English and after threatening us with arrest and taking us to a police station across town I asked how we could resolve the issue on the spot. We settled on how much cash I had on hand and then we were on our way. Needless to say, both Keith and Brian were sweating profusely in the back seat. Keith also used to help me sell at Santa Barbara Orchid Show and he used clever tactics like being a shill to bring in customers. He was a darling of the "blue tint crowd", meaning the older ladies loved his English charm.



Keith's expertise knew no bounds

Photo Bob Burkey

Seriously, Keith is as special as they come. He opened my eyes to orchids like no one else has. He was my mentor extraordinary. And I will cherish his friendship always. Several years ago after heart surgery as I was just being released from the Intensive Care Unit, sitting awkwardly in a wheelchair with bandages and tubes protruding from god-knows-where, an orderly appeared with a portable phone and said I had a caller. "Who", I thought, "would call me NOW?" There on the line was a cheerful "Piddletrenthide here, how's the weather there?" I still remember the pain from the laughter as I kept from falling off the chair.

Keith, I miss our many orchid conversations. I miss your ability to bring back to life a near-dead plant. No one appreciates your knack with growing Disa like I do. You are a marvel and if there were an Orchid Westminster Abbey you'd be the statue front and centre with a toothpick in one hand and a magic wand in the other.

The Bournemouth Orchid Society is lucky to have you!

Footnote:

I met Keith on a trip I took with Andy Easton in November 1981. We visited his nursery in Plush and had dinner in his beautiful cottage. I remember Keith said the beams were from salvaged Spanish ship lumber after the famous failed invasion. Once I started my own orchid nursery in 1985, I imported seedlings and divisions from Keith to sell. We continued this arrangement through early 1990 when we moved to Hawaii. Keith spent parts of several years helping us start our new venture. We have continued to be in contact since. He is my primary mentor and good friend.

Presently I own and operate Kamuela Greenhouse/Specialty Orchids in Waimea, Hawaii. Rapidly reaching retirement age, my wife and I are in the process to move back to California. We plan to continue in orchids in some capacity. We are hoping Mr. Andrew can once again join us to "get the engine running again".

Bob Burkey

Best Friends

Sara Rittershausen (Burnham Nursery, Forches Cross, Devon)

I have lots of good memories of time spent with Keith and Janis during my childhood as Keith and my Dad Brian were best of friends, having grown up as fellow orchid nurserymen from the 1970s.

They travelled extensively around the world, visiting orchid nurseries and giving lecture tours together, making lifelong friends in California, Australia and India. I remember a few snippets of tales of their travels. No guarantees they are exactly correct, it is how I remember being told them!

I believe they were in Australia (might have been California), taking a break from a busy schedule at the beach, when Keith fell asleep, lying face down on the sand.



Keith and Brian together at the 50th Anniversary Show of the Bournemouth Orchid Society, 22nd February 2009

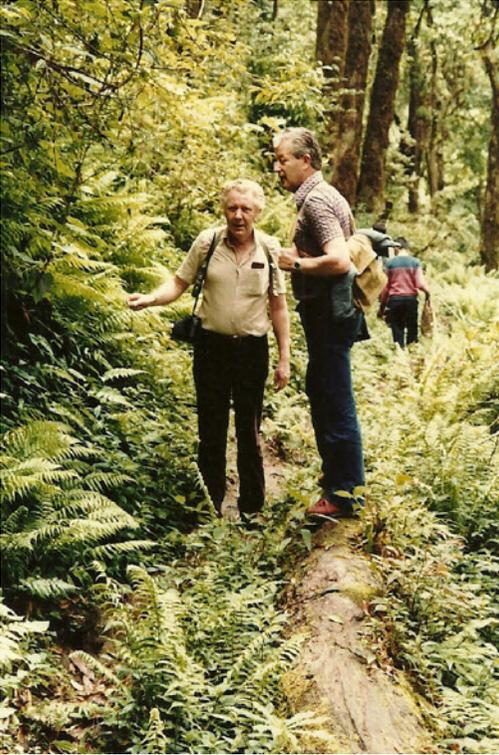
Photo Allan Burdis



Keith collecting selected cultivars of *Cymbidium devonianum* for his breeding programme Kalimpong, India 1981

Photo Sara Rittershausen

This unfortunately caused him to burn the backs of his legs and soles of his feet so badly that it was extremely painful to walk about in the following days! Lots of soothing cream and feet up was required as they continued to be on the road touring orchid societies. Not a mistake you repeat in a hurry I am sure!



Once again Dad and Keith were travelling, this time to visit an orchid nursery in Mexico. I believe that Keith picked up a nasty tropical bug which made him really very poorly.

On returning to the UK, doctors discovered he had a parasite which had never, or hardly ever, been seen in the UK before and is now pickled in a jar somewhere for posterity!

We have a lot to thank Keith for as he helped me start up our seed raising laboratory at Burnham Nurseries. I had been using lab space at our nearby Agricultural College but we had made the decision to move it to the nursery. This was just at the time when Keith had decided to give up his seed raising and sell his nursery at Plush, so he kindly let us have his redundant laminar flow cabinet and autoclave sterilizer which was antique even then in the early 1990's.



The equipment was good though and served us well for another 20 years until we replaced it in 2011. It's still good to chat to him about our

little orchids that are coming along and hear about the hybridising he is still doing.

Photos Sara Rittershausen

Devonianum Dynasty

Andy Easton (New Horizon Orchids, New Zealand & USA)

I think I first became aware of Keith Andrew about 1961. I had been growing orchids and cyclamen for a couple of years and the orchids soon took over. Keith was the right hand man at Dorset Orchids, owned by a Mr. Barnard-Hankey. I think B-H was happy to pass my letters, full of questions, onto Keith and I have no doubt Keith would have been happy to have avoided them too!



But he didn't and patiently answered all my youthful and overly-enthusiastic epistles. Keith took over the nursery when Barnard-Hankey retired to Scotland and quickly made a name for himself with both *Cym. devonianum* breeding and innovative forays into Odontoglossum Alliance lines. There were devonianum hybrids prior to Keith's efforts but nobody saw the potential in what had been up until then, an undistinguished Indian species. Keith Andrew then went on to create a devonianum dynasty in Dorset!



Cymbidium devonianum

I well-remember an early Keith Andrew article in The Orchid Review that ticked off a few of the chattering set. "Round and Round in Ever-increasing Circles" left nobody in any doubt that Keith Andrew had a very different perspective on hybridizing than some of his contemporaries.

Keith has always had both the ability to see beyond the generation at hand and a keen commercial sense of what the wider orchid-buying public would enjoy. He was making miniature Phalaenopsis types for example when the Dutch barely knew what a Phalaenopsis was.

Keith spent time in Hawaii after closing the nursery in Plush and sadly, many of the locals failed to avail themselves of his insights and experience. He has been every bit as much a grower's grower as a hybridizer's hybridizer. In fact, I cannot think of any orchid genus which interested him that he failed to master the culture of. *Disa* or *Dendrobium*, *Cattleya* or *Cymbidium*, all responded to his instinctive skills.

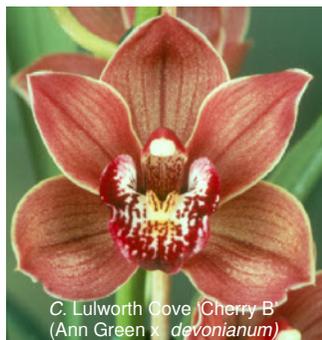
I was speaking with Keith just the other day and he mentioned he had made three *Cymbidium* crossings. He carried on about being unlikely to ever see the progeny bloom and I laughingly reminded him he had been playing that tune for more than fifteen years, at least three orchid generation's worth.

Keith is a "Living Treasure". Always a person of integrity and broad horticultural savvy. I am proud to call him a friend of over 50 years and also to acknowledge that every time we speak, I learn a little more. For those of us who love genuinely exciting orchids, Keith Andrew has provided us with a priceless legacy.



C. Bulbarrow 'Will Stuteley' AM/RHS

First generation *Cymbidium devonianum* hybrids



Further generation *Cymbidium devonianum* hybrids



C. Devon Lord 'Viceroy' (Devon Park x Rincon)



C. Ann Wilson (Touchstone x Khyber Pass)



C. Sweet Nuptial
(Devon Ranee x Fred Stewart)



C. Warp One 'Magic Fire'
(Ngaire x Kalimpong)



C. Lepe Green
(Sikkim Gold x Dryden Shantung)



C. Sea Jade 'Fresh Water'
(Touchstone x Ruthven)



C. Warp One

Awards

- 1 RHS Gold Medal 1983
- 2 The Gold Veitch Memorial Medal (RHS) 1985
- 3 The Westonbirt Orchid Medal (RHS) 1985
- 4 Grand Champion
Cymbidium Devon Lord 'Viceroy' AM/AOS (see back page)
41st Santa Barbara International Orchid Show
1986
- 5 Silver Medal
42nd Santa Barbara International Orchid Show
Outstanding Display
1987
- 6 The Jack Hudlow Award
of the Cymbidium Society of America
In Recognition of Keith Andrew's Contribution to the Creation of
Modern Cymbidium Devonianum Breeding and its Popularity
- 7 The Odontoglossum Alliance
Lifetime Achievement Award
For his inspirational work in the creation of Odontoglossum hybrids
2005
- 8 The President's Distinguished Service Award
of the Cymbidium Society of America
2004
- 9 Torrance Cymbidium Society
For the insight in recognising the potential of *C. devonianum*
and laying the foundation for the most popular group of cymbidiums
grown by our members.
2004



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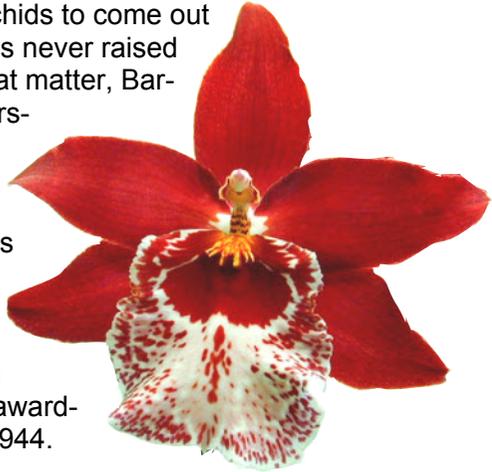


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Vuylstekeara Cambria 'Plush'

One of the most famous orchids to come out of the nursery in Plush was never raised by Keith Andrew or, for that matter, Barnard - Hankey, who owned the nursery, known as Dorset Orchids, before Keith took it over in the 1970s. Vuylstekeara Cambria (*Vuyls. Rudra x Odm. Clonius*) was registered by Charlesworth and Co. in 1931.

In 1933 the RHS awarded a plant of *Vuyl. Cambria* which only had a single flower. A total of four were awarded by the RHS between 1933 to 1944.



Keith first became aware of this hybrid when he joined Dorset Orchids Ltd., in 1953. Three seedlings had been purchased by Barnard-Hankey from Charlesworth and Co. Keith says he had seen it flower several times but as he was still a "rookie in the culture of orchids" (his words), thought little of it.

May 1967 was the first Chelsea Flower Show where the Nursery, now called Keith Andrew Orchids, was to exhibit and Keith was persuaded to put up a flowering plant with the cultivar name of 'Plush' before the RHS Committee. This resulted in a First Class Certificate (FCC/RHS).

Subsequently, the American Orchid Society awarded this plant an Award of Merit (AM/AOS) in 1972 and a First Class Certificate (FCC/AOS) in 1973.

And so Vuylstekeara Cambria 'Plush' became one of the few orchids to be awarded top honours in both the UK and USA.

Vuylstekeara Cambria 'Plush' went on to be meristemated by the million and Keith says this orchid is probably the most meristemated orchid of all time. And who would doubt that? As examples of this cultivar must have graced most orchid collections throughout the world at some time or other. Even now, this is a sought-after hybrid, much admired and loved by orchid growers world wide.

The photograph above is a division of the original awarded plant grown by Roger Russell.

Cambria hybrids



Vuyli. Keith Andrew
(*Vuyli. Cambria* x *Oda. F Stirling*)



Vuyli. Matador
(*Vuyli. Cambria* x *Oda. Drummer Boy*)



Vuyli. Red Trooper
(*Vuyli. Cambria* x *Oda. Remembrance*)



Vuyli. Matador
(*Vuyli. Cambria* x *Oda. Drummer Boy*)



Vuyli. Matador group
(*Vuyli. Cambria* x *Oda. Drummer Boy*)



Vuyli. Oliver Andrew
(*Vuyli. Cambria* x *Oda. Lyn*)

More Tributes

My earliest memories of Keith date back many decades to when I was a young boy living in Weymouth. My late father started growing orchids in his home-made Wardian case in the early 1960's and used to take me to visit Dorset Orchids in Plush when Keith Andrew was a nurseryman there. I remember us being taken around the greenhouses by Keith, who talked about the plants with his infectious enthusiasm. I particularly recall being shown what I now know to be meristem cloning in Erlenmeyer flasks containing a whitish coloured agar gel and remember being fascinated to see the little plantlets growing inside. Keith was definitely an early factor, along with my father, in sparking off my interest in orchids.



Neville Roberts

Programme Secretary
Bournemouth Orchid Society

In all the time I have known Keith, he is always turned out smartly with a pleasant and radiant smile and this against a background of considerable physical discomfort. This attitude alone wins him respect.



Orchid breeding

How many of us have a few of Keith's orchid hybrids within our collections. A treat indeed. Blooming of his crosses never ceases to encourage excitement. If you have not, then you are missing the fruits of his gifted labours. For those who like pendant *Cymbidium* flower spikes, you could not do better than to seek our Keith's crosses that include the genes from *Cymbidium devonianum*.

Knowledge

Listening to Keith speak, cannot fail to convey his aptitude, and at times modesty, for learning new skills in growing his orchids more skilfully. His story that when he left some Odonts outside his green house standing in a tray of water, promptly forgetting them, and at the end of the season re-discovering them, admitted that he had never grown such large pseudobulb's on his Odonts before.

Keith is an orchid grower who is always willing to experiment, for example when he decided to use a bag of SCATS general plant compost for sowing his seedlings in, explaining that they really grew well. How many of us do you think could manage to grow orchid seedlings so well in the same compost without rotting off all the roots?

Judging

Having spent pleasant hours judging orchids with Keith at society meetings and shows, he is always enthusiastic, not only in the plants before us, but also in freely encouraging others, both in imparting technical guidance as well as in-depth practical advice.

Teaching

After one judging event, I happened to mention that I was having no success in selling an *Odontoglossum* (now *Oncidium*) species in my collection. Keith's eyes lit up and he freely gave a hour of his time, explaining his hypothesis on why nature seems to prevent such pollinations, and importantly how one can practically operate to overcome nature's blocking tactics! His advice was strictly followed and behold, pods started to form resulting in viable seed and subsequently strongly growing seedlings. This gracious action by Keith epitomises the special person he is, not only very able and knowledgeable, but also so gracious and generous with his practical and robust knowledge. A true asset and an additional characteristic to be admired.

To me Keith is all anyone needs to encourage a mere glow of interest in orchids to develop and flourish, long may he influence us all.

Nick Fry

Publicity Officer

Bournemouth Orchid Society

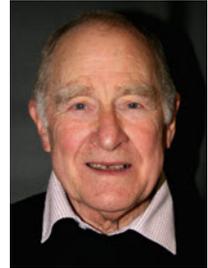


Vuyll Durango
(*Oda. Heatonensis* x *Milt. Bleuana*)

Orchid Chums

Roger Russell (Bournemouth Orchid Society)

Having left the Royal Navy and settled in civvy street I took up beekeeping until my back started complaining about the heavy lifting and I had to get rid of the bees. A more sedate hobby was required so when my wife suggested I revive my interest in orchids that was it, and some! I decided to join the Bournemouth OS and Wow ! Keith Andrew of Plush was the President.



I met Nick Crabb, also a new member, and we decided to alternate driving our cars from Weymouth to the meetings, as it is an hour journey time to Bournemouth. Time passed, I seemed to be growing mostly Pleurothallid types and Nick, Cymbidiums, then we noticed that Keith was not attending many meetings and as our chairman stated that Keith's health was making driving difficult, we looked at each other and agreed that it would only be a slight detour if Keith, the President, wanted to get to the meetings so much he would deign to travel with us !

When we broached our invitation, Keith insisted it was too far out of our way, but we immediately became a threesome and our Orchid meetings always commenced with a sumptuous starter in Piddletrenthide as we were treated to a tour of Keith's greenhouses and discussions of the latest orchids in bloom. This was followed by an hour bombarding of questions and queries on our part and many stories, answers, hint and tips etc on Keith's part, all whilst travelling to our monthly meetings. I now look upon Keith as my chum who lives in the wilds of Dorset while I lord it in the tropics of Weymouth. I still cannot believe how Keith just looks at a plant and says "Oh ! that is 'such and such', it's parents are 'so and so' and 'so and so' and their parents are.....! I have learnt a lot, even had a go at 'childish' hybridising and now try to treat my few orchids which seem now to be predominately Odontoglossum types as plants.

Thanks Keith, I look forward to our next chat with a little 'trepidation' !

Phalaenopsis & Disas



Phal. Temple Rose 'Snowflake'
(Temple Cloud x Rose Parade)



Phal. Dorset Bride x Puffin



Phal. Solvang 'Portland Star'
(Lena Martell x Barbara Moler)



Phal. Cashmore
(Party Dress x Barbara Moler)



Phal. Solvang 'Sunset'



Phal. Dorset Delight
(Dear Hear x Temple Cloud)



Disa Diores 'Inca Princess'



Disa Ruby Gem 'Antarctica'
D. watsonii x *Kewensis*



Disa Ruby Gem 'Antarctica'



Disa Diores 'Inca King'
AM/RHS



Disa Diores 'Inca Queen'
AM/RHS



Disa Diores 'Inca Sunset'

Orchid Perfection

Allan Burdis (Vice President Bournemouth Orchid Society & RHS Orchid Committee Member)

I was lucky enough to know Keith during his time at the Plush nursery in Piddletrenthide Dorset. He was always happy to see visitors and I can recall how difficult it was to choose plants to buy. Not because there were so many gorgeous things to buy, although there was, and not because I didn't have much money then, because I didn't. No, the reason it was so difficult to choose anything was Keith just wouldn't stop talking about orchids from the minute you stepped in the nursery to the minute you stepped out, which didn't leave much time for any purchases.

He was always enthusiastic about his latest growing techniques, such as the heated bench for his cymbidium seedlings. This was a bench which supported a sand filled section, heated with warming cables and seedlings were planted into the sand. Keith would gleefully lift plants out to show the fantastic root system they developed.

Another time he dragged me to a corner where he had set up an area for selected Paphiopedilums and explained his latest cultural methods for this group and how well they were responding.

Keith was never secretive but always generous with his knowledge and happy talking to a complete beginner or experienced grower in equal measures.

Keith was generous with his plants, lending them for shows the Bournemouth Orchid Society attended throughout the country and parts of Europe. I recall a time I went to the nursery to pick up a few cymbidiums he had offered for a show the Society was attending in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. He pointed to a group of about fifteen large plants and I asked which ones could I take, he looked at me and said, "all of them, of course". I then pointed out my car was not big enough for all of them. He then confidently said he often transported lots of plants in the boot of his car without a problem. Although I was quite sceptical he then proceeded to show me how he could fit fifteen or more large cymbidiums in full flower, laid one on top of the other without damaging a petal into a car boot.



Those cymbidiums travelled back home, then on to the three day show, where they were much admired and awarded and back to Keith without a blemish.

I will always remember my visits to Plush with joy, the traditional orchid nursery, snuggling in the quintessentially English countryside, owned by the quintessential Englishman. Oh, and not forgetting, next to the Brace of Pheasants, a quintessential English thatched pub. What could be more perfect than that?

Thank you Keith for all your time, knowledge and, of course, orchids.



Keith's Cymbidiums adorn the Flower Cart
on the Bournemouth Orchid Society display at the
BOC Congress Cheltenham 1988

Photo Allan Burdis

A Remarkable Orchidist and Trailblazer

Bob Hamilton

It is with the privilege and pleasure I write a note in tribute to Keith Andrew.

As a neophyte orchid grower in the early 1980's, who chose *Odontoglossums* as their genus, it was natural to turn to England for knowledge, inspiration and plants. In those formative years I made the acquaintance of few other *Odontoglossum* growers, most of us residing along the West Coast of the United States and, because of remarkable climate, the majority of these lived in the environs of San Francisco. We were a collegial collection of growers who frequented each other's greenhouses with a sense of purpose. We would eventually become part of the international group that established the International *Odontoglossum* Alliance.



I became a friend of Tim Brydon of San Francisco and we remain good friends to this day. Tim made frequent trips to England to view orchid shows, attend RHS judging and to make the rounds of the orchid nurseries. To most of us England was the Holy Grail of *Odontoglossums*. Sometimes we would meet at Tim's home and pool our money for Tim to buy *Odontos* from his English visits. He was very good at spreading this good fortune. Upon Tim's returns we would again meet at his home to see what he brought back and to listen to the story of his latest travel. Some years later I would revisit England as an orchidist. While I had travelled throughout the British Isles in my college-years, orchids hadn't yet become an interest.

In those early days the name and fame of Keith Andrew was well known to us. With Tim's travels we gained a better knowledge of Keith's work. Eventually I would meet Keith along with Brian Rittershausen on a visit they made to San Francisco. During that visit they stayed with Tim. Both Keith and Brian came off as the consummate, knowledgeable English gentlemen us Yanks tend to think of as "the English growers".

About the time of their visit, being both restless and foolish, I began my own *Odont* breeding program. It seemed so simple; cross the best with the best and one might get better! As often happens when one begins a new thing, it became evident I didn't know, what I didn't know.

My overconfidence would soon get crushed. Orchid hybridizing, and particularly Odont hybridizing is a dicey avocation with the proof of the pudding revealed only at the tasting. With Odonts it's with the flowering. Keith Andrew personifies a great orchidist and terrific hybridizer; his efforts often prove brilliant. My take on meeting Keith was as an easy going, intelligent, friendly and good manager of humour, carrying off that wry humour we Americans often attribute to Englishmen.

Using Keith's own work with Odonts as an example, why would any hybridizer, in the latter part of the 20th Century, choose to use Oda Heatonensis as a parent? Most breeders (and I choose this word from one of Keith's favourites) would describe this diminutive Odontioda hybrid, made by Charlesworth Ltd. in 1906, as a piss-ant in the Odont world? Its flowers are not large or round, or particularly bold and colourful. Some, but not all, might say Heatonensis' got charm. Most would miss out on one important trait, a trait Keith clearly understood. Oda Heatonensis is refractory - still around after more than a century and that means, it's got vigour! From the time of its raising in 1906 through 1921 it was rarely used. Then, along comes the wizardry of Keith Andrew and we get wonders like Oda Shelley and Nicholas Andrew. Shelley begets the wonderful Oda Star Trek. More recently, Oda Star Trek begets Oda Trisch (Star Trek x nobile), bred by John Miller, the Odontoglossum Alliance's secretary and newsletter editor.



Odontioda Nicholas Andrew 'Topaz' AM/RHS
(*Oda Heatonensis* x *Oda Fire Dance*)

Photo Keith Andrew

Digressing a bit; we have come to a tough time for orchids. In the United States offshore producers are fulfilling the demand for pot plants via their subsidized nurseries and producing boiler-plate flowers. This is taking its toll on commercial growers in the United States, particularly the creative ones. Successful growers simply passing forward what is fed to their "pipeline" and creativity has waned. Add to this the calamity of social networking which has siphoned away new talent. There's an attrition of hobbyists and orchids have not been spared. Our national orchid organization, the American Orchid Society has fallen on tough times. Their future seems iffy. And to top things off the genus *Odontoglossum* has come under attack by taxonomists for their want of a bigger genus!



For *Odontoglossums* to have a future they need further hybridizing to make them faster growers, with greater warmth tolerance and to flower more quickly from flask. A parent inspired during the San Francisco visit of Keith Andrew is *Odm. Tribbles* (also known as *Odcdm* and *Onc Tribbles*). *Tribbles* combines Keith's faithful *Odm. nobile* with the warmth-tolerant *triblobum*.

It exists as both a 2n and some plants that were converted to 4n. *Tribbles* is a fast, robust grower, early to flower, warmth tolerant and it will grow in Florida, one of our hot states. Its progeny have vigour and come in many colours and patterns while still maintaining vigour.

Yet another new stepping stone, inspired by Keith, is *Oda Prince Vultan* which is essentially *Heatonensis* less the *cirrhosum*. It's vigorous, charming and a fertile parent.

Both these new lines owe their creation to the genius of Keith Andrew.

Keith is a remarkable orchidist and a trail blazer. One would be wise to ask what hidden logic drives this man. It is an honour to be offered space to acknowledge and pay tribute to Keith Andrew.



Odontioda Star Trek Photo Keith Andrew
(*Oda Shelly* x *Oda Phoenix*)

Footnote:

Tim Brydon has been a friend and orchid colleague since the 1980's. Tim's frequent visits to England to see the BOGA show, the Chelsea Flower Show and for RHS judging gave us USA-West Coast growers insight into the dynamics and excitement of that English orchid world.

Keith's reputation precedes him. Keith was already famous when I began growing in 1975. There was excitement and lust to get his crosses, particularly here in California. His pendulous cymbidiums were both new and exciting. Then there were the meristems such as *Vuyi Cambria* "Plush" *Cambria* caused a sensation when it first appeared on the market.

Bob Hamilton

Mixed Oncidiinae



Odontonia Renee 'May Time' AM/RHS



Odontonia Renee x *O. harryanum*



Odontonia Renee 'Ballerina'



Vuyksteeara Dorset



Vuyksteeara Dream Catcher



Vuyksteeara Drummer Boy



Wilsonara Dorset Gold



Wilsonara Dorset Gold



Wilsonara Island Clipper



Odontioda Janis Andrew



Odontioda Bugle Boy



Odontioda Pentland 'Plush'



Odontoglossum Blue Poole



Odontoglossum Blue Poole 'The Globe'



Odontoglossum Spring Jack

My First Employer

Simon Pugh-Jones MBE

I first met Keith when I was fourteen years old in 1975. I was a boy with a passion for plants and my first two from Neville Orchids, were doing well. Imagine my excitement when I found there was an orchid nursery not far from my Dorchester home in Plush.

I cycled up the Piddle Valley and was captivated by the exotic world I found in the glasshouses. After a hour wandering the nursery I plucked up the courage to ask for a job at weekends and Keith agreed to give me a trial.

What followed was five years of blissful Saturdays and school holidays amongst Keith's fantastic collection learning about the wonders of the orchid world, good culture, good breeding together with the art of potting.

Keith was an inspirational employer. I am sure that at fourteen I wasn't that good at most of the tasks I was given but he soon gave me responsibility for important tasks such as watering, potting and de-flasking. Saturday mornings in the nursery started with my favourite job, a damp down of all the greenhouses. This was a wonderful chance to have a quick look at every plant, spot new hybrids as they flowered and watch the diversity as his orchids flower their way through the calendar.

I never knew what task to expect after damping down as the life of a nursery boy was so varied. For example, Plush is where I first learned to mix concrete as well as stake Cymbidiums.

Keith was always keen to help me learn more about orchids and encouraged me to wade my way through his many volumes of Orchid Review as well as sharing long discussions about species, hybrids, cultural techniques and orchid growing around the world.

I have many fond memories of working with Keith both at Plush and at shows. Keith took me to my first RHS London Orchid show when he won a RHS Gold for a magnificent display featuring a tree of Cymbidium Bulbarrow clones. This was an exciting time at Plush and I was rather proud to be working for a man who was clearly the world's best orchid hybridist.



Now every time I take my students to set up in Westminster the scent of the RHS hall takes me back to that first show in the 1970s.

Another powerful memory from Plush is the laboratory full of seedlings in flask. Keith was passionate about his new hybrids although often rather dismissive of their likely potential when observing them in their conical flasks. I was never fooled, Keith knew exactly how significant those little green proto-corms would become and there is little to compare with the excitement of a batch of seedlings coming into flower for the first time. This was especially true with Keith's breeding as so many of the crosses were groundbreaking whether miniature Cymbidiums, strongly coloured Phalaenopsis, or elegant Odonts. I was left in no doubt that the engine room for a successful orchid enterprise is a productive laboratory which is as true for Writhlington School as it was for Keith Andrew Orchids.

It is no accident that I began growing orchids at Writhlington School when I got my first teaching job in 1989. It was a natural step after growing up at Keith Andrew Orchids and I was very keen to share the inspiration I had gained from Keith with a new generation of Orchid growers. Working with Keith has had a dramatic effect on the path my life has taken and I cannot begin to imagine how I could have achieved all that I have without those formative years at Plush.

Simon Pugh-Jones MBE is a school teacher at Writhlington School in the UK and is the inspiration behind the school's innovative orchid project. The project combines conservation, science and enterprise and centres on students raising orchid species from seed.

The project has links in Central America, the Himalayas and Indo China, allowing students to contribute to community orchid conservation projects and carry out field research linked to coursework. Trips in the last ten years have taken place to Sikkim, Laos, Belize, Brazil, Guatemala, Costa Rica and South Africa.

Simon was awarded an MBE in the New Year's Honours List 2013 for his work in Education and the Orchid Project

Generous Spirit

Dr. Peter Sander

I recall as a teenager, whilst using O' level wood-working skills to repair leased and rotting orchid greenhouses, listening to my father giving away orchids.

This he did because when he liked someone who was also an orchid lover, and they couldn't afford them, his generosity of spirit overtook any remnants of business sense so he gave them away!

I recall at the same time the money worries that were shared at meals; the bank statements, in red if one was overdrawn in those days, being open not only near the phone I used in the study but also often on the dining table itself.

A few years after my father died I was given an orchid by a grateful patient. The 'bug' took hold immediately.

My role on my father's nursery, apart from occasional damping down and odd weekend duty when he was away, was maintenance: glazing, putty, pink primer, scarfing joints with replacement timber and painting.

So, how to grow an orchid?

I knew what NOT to do and had inevitably gleaned a little from my upbringing but had never had sole responsibility for orchid culture even for a solitary cymbidium.

I decided to go to Plush; a glorious village, not far from Weymouth where I lived; a name I recalled from days taking parcels to the post office in East Grinstead, and from Dorset Orchids at BOGA and Chelsea shows.

Keith was so warm and friendly and soon encouraged me to start a collection.

I only had that "single" plant for a week!

I recognised my father's generous spirit in Keith and often was given free plants 'because I liked them'!

I naturally became a regular visitor for several years and learned loads from the master.



As national economic lows recurred, sadly Keith gradually closed his nursery.

He went to work, accompanied by much of his breeding stock, in Hawaii. I missed my visits to Plush very much, although for a decade or two I used Keith's old roller blinds and terra cotta pots, and won the odd prize with Keith bred plants, as many members of Bournemouth Orchid Society (BOS) have done!

I was fortunate to be able to visit Keith in Hawaii and stay in his cottage on the nursery.

Gents using the loo in his cottage looked out on a beautiful banana tree and the climate was very orchid friendly.

Keith's taste in large cars came to the fore and he collected me from the airport in a massive early 1970's sedan which I got to know a bit when we got a puncture on the way home!

He showed me the Kilauea volcano on the island which was still active and that sight, like the Northern lights and my trek towards Everest, will remain with me till I die.

Keith, with Janis' fine support, is a true survivor as well as a good friend, so its no surprise that this octogenarian is still hybridising, albeit from two rather small greenhouses.

He is also a true plantsman; I still enjoy the rooted cutting he gave me 20 years ago of the Rhododendron that shares a pollinator with *Cymbidium parishii* var *sanderi* in Vietnam; nor indeed the long line of pots growing seed of *Araucaria araucana*, the monkey puzzle tree!

I would guess that, like my dad, he wouldn't change a thing. They travelled the world, met many interesting people and had the thrill of the recognition of awards of their own crosses. Keith wrote an article for the *Orchid Review*, of which David was the editor in the early 1970's: "Ever increasing Circles" 'In search of dinner plates'.... Are expressions that come to mind.

"Where are hybridisers going, and what exactly are they trying to achieve"?

He was a rebel and he was quite right to ask these questions both about hybridisers' motives and their methods of seeking the recognition of awards.



C. Olive Street (C. Darjeeling x *devonianum*)



His eloquent answer was to produce his 'danglies', his wonderful *Devonianum* hybrids. As a man from North Devon, a true Devonian, these for me were so aptly named and were, so far, the height of his many achievements for their sheer artistry alone. Plush Canyon is one of my very favourite hybrids.

For your big contribution to the orchid world in the past 65 years Keith, a BIG thank you; and don't forget Janis: behind every successful man is a great woman!



"His eloquent answer was to produce his 'danglies'

Cymbidium Plush Canyon
(*C. Rio Rita* x *C. devonianum*)

Photo Keith Andrew

Dr. Peter Sander, a retired medical practitioner and member of the RHS Orchid committee, is the great grandson of the famous Frederick Sander, the 'Orchid King', who reigned supreme in the late Victorian and Edwardian period.

Phalaenopsis with a Fork

Geoff Hands (Author and member of the Bournemouth Orchid Society)

A quotation from “Occasional Papers from the RHS Lindley Library”.

“..the most important new firms in the second half of the century (20th) were Keith Andrew’s Dorset Orchids, Burnham Nurseries, and.....”



I can narrow the launch of Keith Andrew Orchids Ltd more closely, since I was Secretary of a Midland orchid society (BMOS) between 1963-70, and during that time I read in “Orchid Review” that “a new orchid nursery had joined the trade”. I wrote to Keith, on behalf of BMOS, welcoming him and his firm, and offering to distribute price lists etc. among our members.

In those far off pre-motorway days, Dorset was a long way from the Midlands, probably 6 hours driving and my first visit to the nursery was a few years later. The Society ran an annual week-end coach trip for members, in which we visited two or even three nurseries, and made a good combination, visiting Burnham and Keith which we visited several times in my period in the Midlands. We always left the last few rows of seats free for our purchases, as everyone would expect.

A memory of one such coach trip is of Keith, producing with a great flourish, trays of phalaenopsis seedlings, with a table fork (!) so that we could do our own dig-ups - for a quite modest price. Maybe (?) I need to add that in those far off days, phalaenopsis were a great novelty - you could certainly not buy them (or any other orchid) at a garden centre or supermarket, and even in the trade, they were still a rarity; hobbyists like members of BOS had only just learnt that they could be cultivated without the luxury of a hothouse. There was quite a scrum around that tray, and it got emptied very quickly. On another visit, I remember seeing and buying my first ever Rodriguezia species - *R. venustum*. Keith warned me that they were a bit tricky; never let it get wet he said ... or dry either. They have remained favourites, although that first one did not survive very long. It has only taken me 30 years to learn how to grow them into specimens.

No doubt Keith exhibited at the Birmingham Orchid Show more or less annually; all of the orchid trade did - a big two day event filling the Great Hall of the University every April in that era.



From looking into an old box of souvenirs, I was reminded of a two day symposium at Birmingham Botanical Gardens in November 1969 , when Brian Rittershausen joined Keith to talk about autumn flowering orchids and their cultivation.

It must have been at an event, of this kind, although possibly a decade later, that I had a long conversation with Keith about show judging, the RHS methods, and whether British Orchid Council should set its own standards in this respect; I was on the judging sub-committee of BOC , and another member of that committee rather forcefully wanted us to specify the size of a circle, have ring gauges made to that size, and issue them to all judges to use on cymbidiums in order to determine whether the flowers qualified as true miniature cymbidiums or not. The idea was that if they were too big to pass through the ring, they could not be judged - it amazed me how many days a committee could spend arguing about the difference between 2 inches and 2.5 inches. Keith thought this to be nonsense; so did I , and his special knowledge from the *Cym. devonianum* hybrids he spent so many years breeding (some 90 different ones of which he registered over his career), from Bulbarrow to Lulworth Cove - such lovely evocative names to those who love our County ! - apart from his generally refreshing and far-from-mainstream views about RHS awards - which happened to chime with my own ideas very closely - gave me extra ammunition in order to finally torpedo that idea.

My last recollections of Keith, apart of course from our conversations on the front bench at BOS meetings, are of the last days of the Keith Andrew Nursery at Plush. This must have been in the early 1990's; I was approaching my own retirement, and had resolved to build my retirement home from the ground up (not personally, but via the usual channels of architect, builder etc) and I was looking for a suitable plot of land. Dorset appealed for many reasons, some quite irrelevant (e.g. a lifetime love of Hardy's tales - Tess, Jude, the Mayor off Casterbridge etc,) and one estate agent directed me to various places where land was for sale, one of which turned out to be Keith's nursery site at Plush.

As anyone will know, I didn't buy - I did not want that much land or the hassle of selling off the excess ,but in looking round I met Keith, at that point engaged in the last remaining greenhouse, almost empty , digging up pencil sized cymbidium seedlings, tying them up in bundles, and - I think he said - shipping them out to Hawaii before he went out there too. I have no knowledge of that episode of his life, although I have a couple of phrag's I bought from Keith that day, still in my collection maybe 20 years later, which remind me of him, whenever I handle them.

Keep the Toothpick Busy!

Clive Halls (Mt. Beenak Orchids, Victoria, Australia)

Way back in the sixties I met Keith while working for David Sanders Orchids, I was the apprentice. Keith used to call in occasionally but more often we met at various shows. He was my senior by fifteen years. His nursery was a long way west in fact I didn't visit it until the late eighties!

My real contact with Keith was when we started our own 'Mt Beenak Orchids' in Australia in the late seventies. We imported flasks from him both *Cymbidiums* and *Odontoglossums*; many of those seedling flasks were seminal hybrids such as *Cymbidium* Plush Canyon, Cariad and Bulbarrow.

In the *Odontoglossum* crosses the as yet little known *Heatonensis* 'Plush' appeared as a parent, *Oda*. Shelley bred from it, one of the most notable. We still have many Shelley varieties from these seedlings we flowered.

Our demands for more and more flasks led Keith to think we needed a more 'commercial' hybridizer. He introduced us to Andy Easton then resident in the U.S.A.

This was a typically generous 'Keith thing' to do as it necessarily meant Andy would get most of our business. About this time the *Cymbidium* Bulbarrow's came to fame, Keith by now had an Australian agent in David Cannon, Nindethana Orchids, but we still had a great deal of his stock and the pendulous *Cymbidium* became 'flavour of the month'.

A visit to Plush in 1984 was a highlight of a UK visit. I don't think I have ever had such an enlightening view of a hybridizer's work. We discussed many things about growing and breeding. Keith had just put his *Odontoglossums* outside for the summer where they stood in water for many weeks. The fact that the plants looked the best ever, according to Keith, suggested we generally under water our *Odontoglossums*. We often use shallow saucers under our plants in summer to have this same effect today.



His view on ever increasing 'circles' as he called modern breeding still resonates with me whenever I contemplate making a new cross. Leave a few gaps to better view the flowers behind was I think what he said. When we flowered the first Oda. Shelley's I saw just what he meant. Keith visited Australia with Brian Rittershausen and gave a number of talks at Melbourne and Sydney Orchid Societies. To this day I have not seen more people in attendance with many standing at all events: A tribute to the man and his outstanding talent. Thanks Keith for your innovative breeding, your inspiration and your generous spirit. Keep the toothpick busy!



Odontioda Shelly
'Spring Dress' AM/RHS



Odontioda Shelly (Remake)



Odontioda Shelley
(*Oda heatonensis* x *Odontoglossum pescatorei*.)



Cymbidium Cariad
'Plush' (*elegans* x *devonianum*)

Keith Today

Allan Burdis

It was a hot Spring day in the beginning of April 2014 that marked a memorable visit to Keith's home in Piddletrenthide in Dorset. A village on the river Piddle 8 miles north of Dorchester and 4 miles east of Cerne Abbas. The name Piddletrenthide dates from the time of the Domesday Book (1086) and means 'estate of thirty hides on the River Piddle' the 'trente' coming from the french for thirty.

An hour's drive from my home, Walkford in Christchurch, which is the farthest easterly part of the Dorset border, on the south coast.

I had arranged to arrive at 11.00 am and as I turned the corner into Smiths Lane Keith was there, patrolling the front of his cottage. He looked at his watch and said, "Your two minutes early!" and chuckled, as only Keith does. The warmth of his smile matched that of the sunshine, but even more!

His wife, Janis, served coffee and shortbread biscuits and we sat in their beautiful garden chatting about the world in general and of course, orchids. We talked about how we grew orchids many years ago and voiced our opinions on subjects such as the declining membership of orchid societies and public interest in visiting shows, CITES and the threat to natural habitats for species. Before we knew it time was marching on and we made our way to his orchid collection.

Two greenhouses measuring approximately 10' x 12' contain a variety of flowering plants and seedlings. As you can imagine, Keith is still hybridizing and there were many pots of young plants he has raised which are showing great promise. His seed sowing lab is situated in an area in his home and although small, compared to his nursery days, it still has the power to impress.

I remembered the nursery with its distinctive whitewashed frontage. The entrance had a large wooden sign declaring "Keith Andrew Orchids" and I asked Keith if he had a photograph of the nursery. He duly produced a slide of an aerial view. Unfortunately, this view did not show the famous sign but Keith also had the answer to that. He then unlocked the door to a shed at the bottom of the garden and on entering he pointed to an object propped up against the side. I looked over and, glory be, there was the famous sign.

Our day was rounded off by a delightful lunch in the Poachers Inn. This is Keith's local pub. So local, in fact, it is no more than ten paces from his front door, which must have been a very good reason for buying the cottage!

A great day to remember and I thank Keith and Janis for their genuine hospitality.





The Nursery at Plush July 1986

Photo Keith Andrew



Keith's greenhouses today



Disa seedlings growing in profusion



Keith with the famous sign from the Plush nursery



Keith amongst his orchids today



Keith and Janis

Grand Champion Plant
41st Santa Barbara International Orchid Show 1986



Cymbidium Devon Lord 'Viceroy' AM/AOS



Keith Andrew Orchid Display
RHS Westminster Show London