

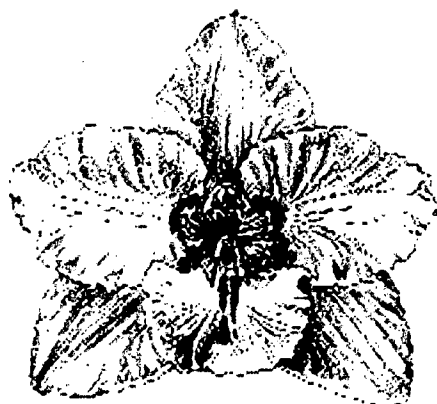
Odontoglossum Alliance Newsletter

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Odontoglossum juninense finally revealed

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When preparing a manuscript for a hopefully long lasting taxonomic treatment of a both very popular and scientifically challenging orchid genus, it seems inevitable to run into species that are more elusive than others to reveal their true identities. Only through convoluted collaborations with official authorities, and back-breaking assistance from dedicated individuals can real progress finally be made. For several years such a group of serious orchid nerds have gathered annually in Peru, where we target remote and too often severely deforested areas in search for new and endangered species. This international collaboration has been very successful, much thanks to the generous hospitality of Manolo Arias and his family, and hard-working staff of Perúflora, Lima, superbly supervised by Saúl Ruíz, one of the foremost orchid hunters ever to climb a tree. Several new species have been found and described in genera such as *Cyrtorchilum*, *Epidendrum*, *Odontoglossum* and *Masdevallia*, and several 'missing' species have been re-discovered in new areas. *Odontoglossum juninense* Schltr., is one of them.

Odontoglossum juninense was originally described in 1921 by Rudolf Schlechter, based on a collection by August Weberbauer in 1903, from somewhere in the steep cloud forests along Rio Yanango, near the little village of Huacapistana in central Peru. A single specimen appears to have been prepared, which was lost during the WW2. A drawing of a flower was made by Schlechter, and published after his death by Rudolf Mansfeld in 1929. This species seems to have been 'lost' since then and is virtually unknown in cultivation, at least under its correct form and identity. Very recently, additional plants were discovered in a restricted area in central

Peru, at the altitude of 2800 – 3000 m. The original locale along Rio Yanango has been visited by us but without finding any plants of *Odm. juninense*. Little remains of the original forest in that area, which makes plant hunting difficult and physically strenuous since climbing steep deforested mountain sides is the only way to reach any original vegetation. Other *Odontoglossum* and *Cyrtochilum* species were found though, so it seems likely that some plants of *Odm. juninense* may also still survive there. Plants of this attractive species have been found in several locations in the Huanuco region, however, and are currently propagated by Manolo Arias' orchid nursery Perúflora.

Leonore Bockemühl included *Odontoglossum juninense* in her treatment (1989) but the published photos show flowers of *Odm. cruentum* Rchb.f., and in one case (page 115), something that looks like a hybrid between *Odm. cruentum* and an unknown parent. A critical examination of the flower of the real *Odontoglossum juninense* reveals a very close similarity to the slightly larger *Odm. portmannii* Bockem., from Ecuador, which suggests a conspecific treatment. It is understandable that Bockemühl did not make this observation because no genuine material of *Odm. juninense* was probably available at the time of the publication of her treatment. In northern Ecuador and southeastern Colombia, an additional and geographically restricted form of this taxon exists. Flowers from this area differ from the southern forms by more developed and defined callus teeth. A flower of this latter form was identified as *Odontoglossum "subuligerum"* in Bockemühl's treatment (1989). The true *Odontoglossum subuligerum*, however, is a different looking species from southern Peru and Bolivia. The question though, is how to treat these and other closely related geographic forms of the *juninense* complex; as one variable 'superspecies', or split up as several very difficult to define 'subspecies'? I prefer a broader species concept in this particular case and therefore consider *Odm. portmannii* as a synonym of *Odm. juninense*.

““As Mr. Baker expresses it, “splitting” up plants of variable character into a large number of species goes a long way towards discouraging all who try to follow the “splitter””. (The Garden 25: 156, 1884)

An interesting phenomenon can be noticed in the altitude differences between some orchid habitats in Ecuador compared to Peru. Some species, such as *Odontoglossum epidendroides* Kunth, *Odm. juninense* and *Odm. lindleyanum* Rchb.f. & Warsc., occur at lower elevations in Ecuador, approximately 1800 – 2500 m, versus 2800 – 3000 m in the Huanuco region of Peru. One would perhaps expect the opposite due to the longer distance from the equator, but local weather conditions play games with us sometimes and this phenomenon may have a geographic and climatologic explanation. It may also be examples of the natural speciation process of course.

Literature cited

Bockemühl, L. 1989. *Odontoglossum*, a monograph and Iconograph. Brücke-Verlag Kurt Schmiersow, D-3200 Hildesheim, Germany.

Photo list

- A: Many areas of former rich orchid habitats in Huanuco have turned into pasture and potato fields.
- B: Steve Beckendorf in what remains of the original habitat for many endangered species.
- C: Saúl Ruíz in a patch of *Odontoglossum juninense* habitat.
- D: *Odontoglossum juninense* from Monobamba, Peru.
- E: *Odontoglossum juninense* from Pilláo, Peru.
- F: *Odontoglossum juninense* from Carpish, Peru.
- G: Manfred Lindström and *Odontoglossum juninense "portmannii"*, from Limón, Ecuador.
- H: *Odontoglossum juninense "portmannii"*, from Limón, Ecuador.
- I: *Odontoglossum juninense*, from La Bonita, north Ecuador.
- J: Dedicated orchid nerds at work.



A. Areas turned into pasture and potatoe fieldds former areas of rich orchid habitats



B. Steve Beckendorf in what remains of the original habitat for many endangered species



C. saul Ruiz in a patch of *Odontoglossum juninense* habitat



D. *Odontoglossum juninense* from Moobamba, Peru



E. *Odontoglossum juninense* from Pillao



F. *Odontoglossum juninense* from Carpish, Peru



G. Manfred Lindstrom and *Odontoglossum juninense* "portmannii", from Limon, Ecuador



H. *Odontoglossum juninense* "portmannii" from Limon, Ecuador



I. *Odontoglossum juninense*, from La Bonita, north Ecuador



J. Dedicated orchids nerds at work

SCATTERED THOUGHTS

This will be a bit of a ramble. I used to do an occasional column on Cymbidiums with this title so no reason why I cannot extend it to Odonts.

ODONTIODA FLORENCE STIRLING

Let's start with Odontioda Florence Stirling, registered in the year of my birth by a Dr. Stirling of Whatcroft Hall, Davenham, Cheshire, England. He was an eye surgeon and must have been fairly well-off because the estate is currently valued at over five million pounds and quite a chunk of the property has been sold off over the years. Dr. Stirling was known for his Paphs and Odonts, those of you who know Paphs will be familiar with Paph Lady Clunas 'Whatcroft Hall', one of the most beautiful Paphs I have ever seen in my life.

I presume Florence Stirling was Dr. Stirling's wife and I faintly recall seeing an old black and white of the two of them together. Both of the orchid's parents, Oda Astoria and Oda Melina had been bred by Charlesworth but it was Dr. Stirling who put them together. To me, this is one of the prettiest "crispum-type" Odonts that has ever graced the orchid world. I suspect that the original hybrid may have been triploid but the plant I currently own and love is Oda Florence Stirling 'Perfection', bred collaboratively by Bruce Cobbledick who owned the pod parent FS 'Celeste' and Dr. Howard Liebman who provided pollen of FS 'Goya'. It gives every appearance of being a tetraploid and seems very fertile. We look forward to introducing "Florence" to Prince Vultan and hopefully producing a royal line of beautiful new miniature Odonts.

Wonder what happened to Dr. Stirling. He was a speaker at the Third World Orchid Conference in London in 1960 but he spoke on judging Paphiopedilums rather than on Odonts and he seems to have faded rapidly from the orchid scene after that. His last hybrid was registered in 1966 and presumably he was dead before the end of that decade. Are you like me and occasionally curious as to what happened to some of these quality orchid collections?

ERIC YOUNG

When I attended the World Orchid Conference in Miami in April 1984, I had a great time but for me, the event was also overhung with sadness. Just a couple of months previously, Eric Young had dropped dead on his way to RHS judging. Eric was an amazing man whose place in recent orchid history has been little appreciated. He made a great emphasis on being the consummate amateur and never sold a plant. He would jump a plane and arrive in California or Miami to chase down an orchid that had taken his fancy. The World Orchid Conference in Bangkok in 1978 would have been a disaster had it not been for Eric's intense support behind the scenes. He flew there many times, shoring up financial support and speakers as well as advising on all necessary protocols.

Eric was maybe a lonely man and he loved to gossip about orchids. He would breeze into Santa Barbara and stay in his favorite motel by the beach. He would come to dinner and play happily with my young son. Sometimes we would drive together down to AOS judging, once in my old pickup when the car was in the shop. Eric might have owned a number of Rolls Royce's but he was just as comfortable in a 1970 truck. I can proudly say I never sold him an orchid on the basis that I would charge him, when he would sell some to me. We went back and forth on this but it was a source of great amusement. The special odds and ends I wished to share with him were very happy in Jersey. I only visited him there on one occasion, in the middle of a very cold Winter. The guest quarters were being remodeled so I was put up in a hotel. I remember the back and forth when I tried to pay the bill. The proprietor informed me Mr. Young was a very important customer and it was quite impossible for him to take my money!

Eric had a huge business empire. When we met at his Jersey office I saw the list of his registered companies, literally dozens of them. He had the agency for Seiko watches, in the 1970's this was a very lucrative franchise on Jersey. I did take advantage of a staff discount and buy some fine Scottish woolen socks from another of his agency shops. Had Eric not died in early 1984, he would have come to the Miami WOC with a huge display and his would have been the star overseas attraction. Also, with his business acumen, Eric would have set up the World Orchid Conference Trust correctly

and the whole WOC concept would now be vibrant and thriving rather than a shadow of its former glory!

One night at an orchid banquet in England, maybe in Winchester, the mind forgets details, I got sat at the head table next to Alasdair Morrison's wife. She was an Australian, very prone to indulging and she was blotto within a short time. Eric did not drink and he noticed with amusement, my dismay at the state of my table mate. Any way we played a few tricks on Ray Bilton that evening and none of us were feeling much pain. I was on my way back from South Africa and found in my suit pocket an extra pair of woman's panties that had been used for a stunt in Cape Town. I knew Eric was in the next room to me at the hotel and when I crashed around midnight, he was still going strong, chatting with all and sundry. Now Eric was as "gay as a goose" but it surely didn't stop me hanging those panties on his doorknob before I retired! About 2.00 am I was awakened by loud guffawing when Eric came to bed. He loved the joke.

Some day hopefully someone will write in detail about this lovely, complex man. He was a true friend and I miss him dearly still, after more than 30 years. The immensity of his contribution to orchids deserves much greater recognition.

ROBERT DUGGER

Bob Dugger was "Mr. Odont" for all of us in the United States. He was retired from Bell Telephone as I recall and he was an enthusiastic Odont lover when all the old Odont nurseries in the Northwest and the Northeast were waning. Bob made crosses and many of the flasks from those crosses entered commerce through the Rod McLellan Company in San Francisco.

Now I was newly enthusiastic about Odonts in the 1970's and so I hung on every word of Bob's speaking engagements. But hanging was the word. Bob spoke softly, in a sonorous monotone and believe me, he was hypnotic. I don't remember ever not nodding-off at least once in one of his slide programs. The lights went off, the projector fired up and I struggled to stay alert.

I remember when Bob's cross of Maclellanara Pagan Lovesong started blooming in 1978, they were sensational. I bought them by the tray, in 4" pots for \$18, less my wholesale discount. Now because I bloomed out so many, I became aware of something that was not necessarily common knowledge. McLellan's Lab would often proliferate seedlings in crosses with limited germination so there were a lot of PL's that have been awarded under different names that are in fact duplications. Of course there were some stunning one-offs too and we fortunately had a good number of them.

Nobody was counting the chromosomes initially but we were to find that Maclellanara Pagan Lovesong was a triploid, marginally fertile but not an easy parent. I think when Bob registered Alexanderara Songman in 1983, he thought one of the great new breeding avenues in Odont Intergenerics was underway. Funny in a way that the genus named for arguably the greatest orchid hybridizer who ever lived would be so sparingly fertile! The line is almost a dead end though we do have a clean tetraploid from our crossing of PL and Odm. Hallio-crispum album we are using to make some tetraploid Alexanderaras that hopefully will breed further.

I always thought of Bob as the "flickering candle" that just kept the Odonts going in California. Now it seems there are only a few "flickering candles" again, to keep the Robert Dugger Odontoglossum Alliance Award alive, with its correct name and some worthy representatives for award consideration.

KEITH ANDREW

Keith is in his early 80's and still hybridizing and flasking his own Odonts and Cyms. We first became acquainted, postally, in the early 1960's when I would send him all sorts of schoolboy questions. I just know he dreaded those air-mail letters from New Zealand. But he did answer them (all about Cyms in those days!) and encouraged me. I think I should hate the man.... We were chatting on the phone Easter Sunday as I drove north to visit with Bob and John in Pacifica and Keith was trying to recall when we first met face to face. It was in 1971, when my late wife and I were on our honeymoon. I had a research project in Wageningen, Holland so we flew into London and went down to visit Keith. He and Janis could not join us for dinner as they had a prior family engagement so we fronted up to our meal at the

famous "Brace of Pheasants" English Pub. The owner's daughter was married to the young French chef and we ate the best "coq au vin" of my life that evening. I was in the nursery, literally next-door early the next morning where I was shocked to see the greenhouse worker arrive with a jacket and tie! The English were bloody traditional!

Keith has always marched to his own music. A sort of anti-Charlesworth's if you like. Not that he did not pick up odds and ends from other nurseries, but he used them differently. Keith always seemed to have respect for the Stuart Low Odonts and he also saw potential in Oda Heatonensis when other English Odont breeders thought it was junk. Oda Heatonensis was registered by Charlesworth in 1906, the crossing of Cda. sanguinea X Odm. cirrhosum. Just the mere fact it survived, indeed thrived, in cultivation for over a century should be a testament to its vigor. Charlesworth registered only five hybrids from Heatonensis in the next 15 years and then nothing for almost sixty years till we bloomed and registered Keith's hybrid of Oda Nicholas Andrew in 1980. Two years later I was at the BOGA Show where Keith showed Oda Shelley 'Spring Dress'. There were a large number of plants for consideration and a screening committee of two old conservative orchidists eliminated a number of plants from consideration. The chairman of the Orchid Committee, a pompous old windbag named Maurice Mason announced that plants had been screened and if anyone wanted them considered they should speak up. Eric Young was immediately to his feet and said he did indeed want the plant of Odm. pescatorei X Oda Heatonensis nominated for an AM. Coughing and spluttering ensued with the two screeners being noticeably red-faced. The award passed with only the Chair and the two screeners dissenting. Delicious! Keith was "over the moon". He had just a couple of years earlier written a contentious article for the Orchid Review entitled: "Round and Round in Ever-Increasing Circles" which pointed out that perky flowers with heaps of personality were never going to get a fair shake in judging. Keith was vindicated and he must smile today to see Charlesworth's long-gone, Mansell & Hatcher long-gone, McBean's a repository for Dutch clones and the general boring malaise that has descended over English Odonts. He's still producing amazing Cymbidiums too!

BERT WHITE

I will finish this rambling piece with a remembrance of another wonderful English orchidist who has never been accorded his due recognition. Bert's wife Mitzi was German and from this came a connection with Artur Elle, one of the most talented of the German Odont breeders. Elle would come to England to shows and stayed with the White's. Naturally some of his good plants found their way into the Stonehurst orchid collection. Bert taught himself how to clone and I'm sure labored late many nights in his little Lab.

The owner of the estate at the time I would visit was one, Robert Strauss. A nasty, unattractive man who was rich and spoiled. It was said that Bert White, orchid grower on the estate, had never sat down in Strauss' presence which should give readers some idea of what a charmer he was. And Eric Young hated him, so that was enough for me. When plants were taken up to the RHS in London, Strauss, who was a member of the Orchid Committee, would sit in the First Class carriage while poor old Bert White would be in with the "hoi polloi" struggling with a box of plants for exhibition.

I had one memorable visit to Stonehurst in the late 1970's. It was all booked in advance from the US and when I was met at the train station by a man named Ian Jefferies, he informed me that Bert was laid low with a bad flu so he would be my host for the day. No problem but I was not to realize just how beneficial the day would be. I went through the collection very carefully. Even then we had moved far ahead of the British Cymbidiums so I did not waste much time with them but the Odonts and Miltoniopsis were a different story. I would ask if there was a piece of this or a sprouted bulb of that and Ian would hunt them up, all the while saying he was not sure whether Mr. White would be willing to let the spare piece go. I had brought a carton of cigarettes Duty Free and it seemed like Ian was just the man to give them to. He was a very happy recipient of the smokes and the pile of plants kept growing. Memorable things like Odm Goldrausch 'Stonehurts', Vuyls Lutetia 'Perfection' were all there and at very fair prices. Ian asked if they could pack and ship them up to my London hotel and I had a premonition that when Mr. White had returned from his sickness, he might get cold feet on the sale so I decided to throw them all in a big box and take them with me. I guess I spent maybe a thousand dollars all up but I had secured a treasure trove of invaluable breeders.

We went out to a delightful dinner with Ian's wife included, lots of imbibing and then I caught a late train to London,

still chuckling at my good fortune. In those sensible days before CITES and all that stuff it was easy to get plants and invaluable genetic material home safely. Never met Ian again, but he will always have a special place in my memories.

There is so much anecdotal orchid knowledge that is being lost now so I hope Alliance members will indulge me in these reminiscences. Keith Andrew always laughs and says that when you shake his hand, you are shaking the hand that shook H.G. Alexander's hand. We lose access to these tidbits of orchid-lore so easily and it is important to record as many as possible. I used to visit Wyld Court too and the only daughter sold up and left the dreary British winters for a life in Madeira where, when I last heard, she still had an orchid nursery and orchid supplies shop. I know you don't discuss a lady's age but she must be around 90! How I would love for someone to interview her and ask her about her late father, Sir William Cooke who bred the famous Cym Blue Smoke etc.

Andy Easton

April 21, 2014

Changes to the Dugger Award

The change in nomenclature by the taxonomists has necessitated a change in the definition of the Dugger Award. The award is "The Robert B. Dugger Odontoglossum Award." The change is as follows:

The Robert B. Dugger Odontoglossum Award, which was established by the friends of Robert B. Dugger and members of the Odontoglossum Alliance, has been presented by the AOS trustees since 1996. It recognizes the work of a man who was responsible for the 1980's renaissance in Odontoglossums. Dugger established new pathways in intergeneric breeding and created more than 8,000 crosses. Plants eligible for the Robert B. Dugger Award should have recent parentage that contains an Odontoglossum as defined by the taxonomy in place at the time the award was established. Examples of these species include the following: Odm. crispum/Onc. alexandrae, Odm./Onc. nobile (Odm. pescatorei), Odm./Onc. cirrhosum, Odm./Onc. spectatissimum, Odm./Onc. luteo-purpureum, and Odm./Onc. hallii.

This change will be presented by Tom Etheridge to the AOS trustees for their approval at the meeting of the same in Minneapolis this spring.

Report on the February Meeting of the Odontoglossum Alliance

A few members of the Odontoglossum Alliance met in San Francisco at the same time as the San Francisco Orchid Show 20-23 February 2014. A pot luck dinner was held at Fort Collins, the location of the show. This dinner was in conjunction with the Pluerothalid Alliance and the total attendance was about 40 people. An auction was held by both alliances. The Odontoglossum Alliance received \$755.00 from the contributions of our members. This orchid show is now the largest show in the US both in terms of show size and numbers of vendors. The Redlands show compares favorable in number of vendors. The SF show has the largest variety of orchids of any show in the US. The favorable growing conditions in the SF area make this possible. It is disappointing that we cannot get more members to attend our meeting there or at any location. Steve Beckendorf gave a very interesting talk on his adventures in searching for more odontoglossum species in South America.

Survey of Members

Your Alliance would like to find out where we can better serve you. To that end we have included a survey form as a separate item along with the newsletter. We have also included a return envelope. We encourage every member to take the time and complete the survey and return it to us in the self addressed envelope. We will tabulate the results and publish them in the August newsletter. So please respond promptly.

Dues Notice

A number of our members also have a dues notice. This notice is a label in the return envelope. If the date shown on the label is 5/14 your dues are due. Please include that along with your survey form. If the date on the label is 5/15 or later than NO dues are due. The date shows when it is time to renew.

Helmut Rohrl

3/22/1927 - 1/31/2014

Helmut Rohrl was a PhD in mathematics. He was an ardent grower of odontoglossums and a member of the Odontoglossum Alliance. He served at various times as Chairman and President of the Odontoglossum Alliance. He grew orchids, both hybrids and species for over 35 years. He created a large number of hybrids (309) in several alliances. He received 77 awards from the AOS including two Awards of Distinction, 2 certificates of Horticultural Merit, 11 HCCs and 62 AMs. Helmut was an accredited American Orchid Society judge. He served on the editorial committee of the Orchid Digest and the conservation and publication committees of the AOS. He has published over 50 papers on orchidology in various journals as well as a number of contributions to the Odontoglossum Alliance newsletters.



Oda Vuylstekeae



Odm. Extraria X Oda. George McMahon