

Higher up on the slope was a large area of yellow flowered *Verticordia staminosa*, again a local species and one of the few winter flowering *Verticordia*.

The 400 km round trip from Perth was worth every penny. Thank-you Nye for leading it.

Max Bailey and Kate Creed

MAY GUEST SPEAKER --- Mr Ron Heberle.

The following article is an approximate representation of the speech given by Mr. Ron Heberle at the May General Meeting.

Naming and identification of Western Australian Caladenias
Good evening Ladies & Gentlemen.

I, in common with all of you, have spent a long period of time in my activities looking for and looking at orchids and trying to identify them. Our Orchidaceae is far more complex than is recognised by the professionals. We know the complexity, and this complexity gives us great problems.

Unfortunately when orchids are named, one specimen is picked out, named and described, drawn and published. That's known as the type specimen.

To identify anything related to that orchid you have to refer back to the type specimen. Most of the type specimens are in England and Europe or in the Eastern States, so the opportunity for us to do that is pretty well negligible.

Also under the conventions of the International Bureau for Central Nomenclature, the pressings (the voucher specimens that are lodged in herbariums) have to be lodged at at least four different recognised research institutes such as universities, herbariums or botanical gardens, at least two in Australia and two overseas (some Botanists send six around). That gives those people who are interested a chance to have a look at them.

When you look at a pressing, most orchids lose complete character. Under a microscope, you can see a little more but you still squash the thing flat. It doesn't look at all like what we look at and what we photograph and it becomes fairly difficult.

I've been involved with Orchids for 50 years, 20 years in Katanning, and we are approaching our 34th year in Albany, and whilst I wasn't rapt in orchids in Katanning I was still interested.

I've specialised in orchids in the Albany region for that 34 years which is quite a long time. I used to take specimens to the herbarium. I was coming up to Perth once a month and I took specimens to the herbarium throughout the orchid season. If I was able to see a botanist, he'd say "that's a so and so, and that's a so and so, and that's a so and so". Unfortunately if I took the same thing along the next year I got a different name for it, more often than not.

It became obvious to me that the knowledge wasn't that great professionally, so I decided to do something about it myself. I decided I would research the history of orchid collection, find out where the type specimens came from, go to those areas and have a look to see if I could find them. Well that was a fairly tall order but it was reasonable for those living around Albany. Fortunately, a lot of the botanical research was done around Albany because that's where the ships all called before Fremantle Harbour was established and nearly all the early botanists did their botanising around Albany so that gave me a head start.

I didn't have a great deal of trouble in identifying the orchids that Menzies collected, only 3, and those that Robert Brown collected in 1801, about 12 or 13, and a few others that were later collected and named by Reichenbach or by Bentham. I had no trouble with those, but when I came to people like Drummond, he didn't give locations because there weren't any to give. There were no datum points at all. There were no roads, no mountains were named, rivers weren't named (except for just around Perth).

That man got right over to the other side of the Fitzgerald, right up to the Murchison River and right inland to the desert areas. He collected orchids and other plants (mostly other plants) from all over that area and they were just listed as Swan River Colony.

Someone mentioned *Caladenia drummondii* tonight. *C. drummondii* was a lost orchid because it was listed as Swan River Colony. Everyone looked for it around the Swan River and in fact the type specimen came from up the other side of Wongan Hills. Rika Erickson found it and Will Nichols named it, but later it was proved that it was synonymous with what had been named by Lindley from the Drummond collection and in fact it was known all over the place. Then everyone was finding it everywhere. It's found right across nearly as far as Ravensthorpe, it's way up north of Wongan Hills and right out to Merriden and those sorts of places. It's quite common and yet it was a lost orchid.

So I'm just stressing this as the problem you can have.

My research work has continued and I published a paper which is a brief summary of my research in the forerunner of this book (*Orchids of W.A. second edition ..Ed*), on the history of orchid collecting. In spite of it all, I still have problems with identification. I didn't have problems early because I didn't know enough. I just said "that's a so an so", but I'm having problems now because I know a lot more, and the more I learn, and the more I see, the greater becomes the complexity.

This time last year I gave a talk here to the group, and the title of that talk was "Caladenia is Inextricably Confused". Of course professionals don't agree with that because it's an open book to them, but to me, even though I might be a bit thick between the ears with 50 odd years of looking at them and finding them, I still have problems about identification.

I'm going to show you a few slides tonight to carry this a bit further. What I'm going to show are some orchids that I wrote about in the first bulletin this year. I went with some people on a fishing trip and we went to an area that I'd never been to before and we found orchids flowering in thousands. In a distance of about 7 or 8 km, the place was covered in orchids and most of them I'd never seen before.

To follow this up, we have been driving up to Narrogin through Katanning for 30 odd years. In the early days we were quite sure we knew where orchids grew and so used to look where they'd be. Well that was fallacious because we've since found that the places that we didn't look, and thought there wouldn't be any orchids, there were just as many or more than in the places we knew they ought to be.

This is why I'm critical when I read statements in CALM publications where botanists are claiming to have looked in the most likely places for something. That's absolutely fallacious! They don't know! No one has that knowledge! No one has a complete knowledge about orchidaceae and no one ever will have. What we're talking about is looking at orchids that grow over about 16 or 17 million hectares. In our 40 odd years in Albany, we look at Mt. Clarence every year and we still find orchids we've never seen before (Mt. Clarence is just outside our side door). Last year we saw more orchids that we'd never seen before than ever in the history of those 34 years.

Ron then showed the group a great selection of slides that supported his arguments above. Most of the people at the meeting thoroughly enjoyed the talk and the slide show. Thanks again Ron.

SEED CULTURE WORKSHOP.

In recent years the techniques for the asymbiotic sterile seed culture of terrestrial orchids have been greatly simplified to a stage which allows the inexperienced to practice these methods with relatively simple and inexpensive equipment and materials in a reasonably sterile environment such as a kitchen or other suitable room.

Dr. Kingsley Dixon has agreed to conduct a workshop, on July 7, 1992 from 7.00 to 9.30 pm. to demonstrate and enable members to experience these methods. At present there are still four places for interested members to be a participant in the workshop. Placement will be on a first come first served basis. There will be a cost of \$10 per participant to cover the costs of the materials used in the workshop. As the number of places is limited for this workshop, I would encourage only those members that wish to use the techniques should apply this time. If Dr. Dixon's time constraints permit, he will conduct other workshops.

If you are interested in attending this workshop which will be held in the King's Park laboratory, please contact the undersigned on 381 4649 by the 22nd of June.

W.H. Burton.

PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

As part of this year's wildflower display at Kings Park, the group intends to show ten framed pictures of orchids that are not flowering at the time of the show. In this way we hope to make people aware of the variety of native orchids in W.A.

In order to select the ten pictures, we have arranged a photographic competition for members. Ten orchids have been chosen by the committee and members are asked to submit their best slide of each orchid. The winning slides will be enlarged and framed for display purposes and will remain the property of the group. The owner of the winning slide in each orchid category will win a roll of colour slide film.

A competition entry form detailing the chosen orchids is included in this bulletin. Closing date for entries is the group meeting on Wednesday 15th July, 1992.