MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING
6 December 2011, 7.44 pm

Present: 30
Apologies: Tom & Pat, Chris & Ken, Gill, Phil, and Val
Visitors: Nil
New members: Nil
Minutes: Minutes as circulated accepted (Trevor, Anne)
Business Arising: Nil

Financial Report:
The Financial Report was tabled by Sandra. Current balance is $3260.90. #2 A/c $1811.77 (Murray, Mavis)

Correspondence:
Inwards:
• Brian Klepzig (Neutrog) – thanks for invitation to give talk
• City of Belmont – liquor permit
• GCA – annual Report Re-affiliation etc.
• Various club newsletters

Outwards:
• Reply to COB Community Directory
• Reply to Species Society (Toowong Qld) re quarantine facility
• City of Belmont – booking application & Certificate of Currency.
• Application for liquor permit
• Get Well card to Tom (Chris, Murray)

Business Arising: Nil

General Business:
• A Minutes Silence was observed for Lois Merrington
• Adrian expressed thanks to Margaret & Ian for their work in the kitchen, Deanna (raffle) Mich (library & Newsletter) Ken (Newsletter & quarantine), Tony (web page), Tom (auctioneering), Sandra (Treasurer) & Maxine (Secretary)
• Members were reminded of the savings made by Early Bird Registration for AOC Conference in 2012. This opportunity closes on Jan. 31st.
• The World Orchid Conference for 2017 was awarded to Ecuador
• The Home Visit in January is on Sat 28th January 2012 at Ezi-Gro Orchids. About 26 members indicated they would attend.
• Mich reported the books of Orchids of Brazil (the Oncidiinae) by Patricia Harding have arrived. The Orchid Review magazine has not arrived since May. Mich has since rectified this.

Cultural Award: No award for Dec - Ken and Chris still away.
Raffle: No raffle held
Name Badge: John
Special Raffle: Clowesia russelliana won by Anne
NOTES FROM YOUR COMMITTEE

- At the suggestion of one of our members, Adrian, members of the committee plus any other interested members will be assessing the suitability of alternate meeting venues as a means of reducing the significant expense in hall hire fees imposed by the City of Belmont. The Belmont Sports and Recreation premises across the road from our current venue premises is used by other clubs, is significantly less expensive and may provide an option - proposed inspection date is Mon 20 Feb at 7.00pm.

- Following your support for a display at the September 2012 Conference, we are seeking members to be part of a subcommittee to plan, develop and coordinate the display. We look forward to working with you on this exciting project. Your committee have also agreed (subject to their approval) to share a sales booth with Wanneroo Orchid Society as we have done at the previous WAOS events. This was financially very successful and we will need your help to work on the sales booth, and most importantly, to provide good quality, well-grown orchids for sale.

- Peter and Shirley Masters continue to support the Society, and have donated 20 plants of Cattleya gaskelliana var alba which will be used a monthly plant. Thanks Peter and Shirley.

- If you haven’t ordered your new badge yet, please see Mich. The cost for badges with a magnetic clip is $13.50, and with pin is $11.50.

President: Adrian  
Vice President: Graham  
Secretary: Maxine Godbeer  
Treasurer: Sandra  
Editor: Ken Jones

Committee:  
Chris  
Michele  
Lee  
Sharon  
Tony  
Mavis  
Trevor  
Life Members  
Barry (dec’d)  
Gordon  
Joan & Ted (dec’d)  
Neville  
Noel & Eva

NOTICEBOARD

FORTH-COMING EVENTS

Home visits:  
At 10am on the Sunday after the fourth Thursday of each month. Please bring chairs and food to share.  
February - Bill & Sandra, Safety Bay  
March - Bruce & Kaye, Dianella  
April - Maxine, Parkerville

FOR SALE/WANTED

Murray is interested in buying some virus test kits from the following supplier:  
https://orders.agdia.com/InventoryD.asp?loc=IN&collection=ISK%2013301&attribute_Size=25

With freight costs they work out at about $11.50 each for the minimum order, but he is hoping that cost will come down a bit for larger orders. If you are interested in sharing costs for some test kits, please contact Murray on 9310 2800.

Imported plant news  
We have arranged a further inspection to release the few remaining plants from Thailand and Panama (December 2010 shipment). Whatever is released I will bring to the general meeting.

Ken & Chris Jones
Sobennikoffia robusta and S. humbertiana are often seen on the Society’s display bench. This species should be reasonably easy to grow, and provided it can be kept drier and warmer in our wet, cold winter, should be suited to shadehouse culture.

Sobennikoffia robusta comes from the drier western Madagascar where it is lithophytic on rocks, or epiphytic on low shrubs in sandy dry woods, and occasionally terrestrial (I have seen this species growing terrestrially at Malala Orchidees).

Given this environment, it copes well with hot temperatures, although does need some humidity in the hottest months of summer when it generally flowers. I have found that this species, while slow growing in our conditions, is hardy and over time produces side growths (keikis) that can be taken off and grown separately. This vegetative reproduction approach is that used by Malala Orchidees.

In keeping with many Vandaceous orchids, Sobennikoffia robusta needs high light although care should be taken to ensure that the leaves do not become too yellow as it will constrain flowering. While hardwood or cork mounts are probably the most effective means of growing this species provided summer humidity can be provided, wooden baskets or pot culture with large media are also effective.

The species is generally resistant to pests although can be vulnerable to cotton scale if there is insufficient air movement in your growing environment. When in active growth (green root tips showing) as a gross feeder, regular fertilising with a high K fertiliser will promote growth and flowering.

MONTHLY PLANT

Sobennikoffia robusta

Country of origin: Western Madagascar

Description: Lithophytic or epiphytic in dry western Madagascar

Difficulty: A strongly growing plant that is able to cope with our dry hot summer

Cost: $10.00

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 PLANTS DISPLAYED DECEMBER 2011

Chris
Paphiopedilum kolopakingii

Adrian & Deanne
Bulbophyllum wendlandianum
Dendrobium stricklandianum
Saccolabiosis armitii x self
Trichocentrum capistratum

Michele
Dendrobium stricklandianum

Peter & Shirley
Cattleya gaskelliana
Laelia purpurata

Anne & Geoff
Chiloschista viridiflava

Paphiopedilum kolopakingii
Chris

Laelia purpurata
Peter & Shirley
Thanks for your support in 2011.....
Margaret & Ian for their tireless work in the kitchen,
Deanna (raffle),
Mich (library & newsletter)
Ken (newsletter & quarantine),
Tony (web page and e-newsletter distribution),
Tom (occasional auctioneering),
Sandra (Treasurer)
Maxine (Secretary)
Adrian, President

PLANTS DISPLAYED DECEMBER 2011

Chiloschista viridiflava
Anne & Geoff

Dendrobium stricklandianum
Mich

Myrmecophila - or are they just Schomburgkias?

For this final part of this series, I will review some of the more commonly grown Myrmecophila, and revisit Schomburgkia to look at some of the other species that I found listed while researching the earlier parts of the article.

However, when I referred to Withner’s publication, the Cattleyas and Their Relatives (Part II), he comments that in his view it is in part confusion that dates from 1917 when Rolfe established the genus for the species with hollow pseudobulbs that often harbour ants. He believes that this was an arbitrary separation, although the majority are lowland rather than highland plants, lack large floral bracts and the ‘cow-horned’ pseudobulbs of the Schomburgkias. Withner therefore prefers to list them as synonyms. Nevertheless, as planned, I will cover this group separately and leave you to make up your mind about whether they are a distinct genus. Schlecter (1913) referred to this group as Chauno-Schomburgkia which refers to the cleft or gap at the base of the hollow pseudobulb that allows ants to enter and leave. Withner says that given the deficient detailed knowledge of these species, he does not attempt to narrow down their classification.

The first of these is Myrmecophila brysiiana (Lemaire 1851). This species from Belize, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua is often confused with Myrmecophila tibinicis. However, the major differences are colour and lip configuration. In this regard, while M. brysiiana is yellow and orange, M. tibinicis is red and brown. The midlobe of the M. brysiiana also has a distinct claw that is not present in M. tibinicis. This error (according to Withner) has been perpetuated in recent publications including Brieger in Schelcter III, and in Generos de Orquideas de Costa Rica (1986).

The following image from Jay Phal clearly shows the colour as described by Withner and the distinct claw on the lip midlobe. As the section on M. tibinicis later will show, the two species seem quite different in these aspects.

Myrmecophila brysiiana occurs as an epiphyte in fringing mangroves along rivers and shores at sea level. While occasionally very hot, high humidity is always present. The species is a robust plant with pseudobulbs up to 50cm in height and 2-4 large coriaceous, ovate-elliptic leaves. The tall flower raceme,
often branching, can be up to 1.5m and carry more than 30 progressive flowers.

The next species Myrmecophila exaltata (Kraenzlin 1926) is found along the Caribbean coasts of Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico in low montane forests and scrub. It is also a robust, large hot growing epiphyte. While its short (up to 30cm) ribbed pseudobulbs are substantially smaller than those of *M. brysiana*, the terminal 2m flower raceme can carry up to 80 dark purple flowers. The species name refers to a tall flower raceme that carries its flowers well above the surrounding plants rather than some other attribute.

While some authors consider this species synonymous with *M. tibinicis*, Withner does not accept that view. Nor does he accept that it is a natural hybrid between *M. brysiana* and *M. tibinicis* as suggested by others, although it may help explain the origin *M. exaltata* as a species.

The following photo Jay Phal's website shows the distinctive purple flowers, while the photo from [http://speciesidentificationtask-force.blogspot.com/2009/05/myrmecophila-exaltata.html](http://speciesidentificationtask-force.blogspot.com/2009/05/myrmecophila-exaltata.html)

shows the relatively small plant and long flower raceme of this species. Myrmecophila galeottiana (Richard 1845) is also subject to considerable debate with many synonyms, although it is most commonly known as Schomburgkia galeottiana. I have included it in this section as it also has many Myrmecophila synonyms. It is found in Guatemala and Mexico on the Pacific coast, while the florally similar species *M. exaltata* occurs on the Caribbean coast. While some authors have classified this species as *M. humboldtii* demonstrating in their view an interesting example of disjunct distribution, most authorities are satisfied that it is a separate species. However, if this alternative view was proven, the name *M. humboldtii* would have priority.

The following habitat photo from Jay Phal's website clearly shows the tall flower racemes that are a dominant characteristic of the genus.

The full flower raceme photo is from [http://orchid.unibas.ch](http://orchid.unibas.ch)

To be continued in March.
**Monthly Meetings**
Monthly meetings held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month (exc January at Forster Park Hall, cnr of Abernethy Road and Keane Street, Cloverdale commencing 7.45 pm. Usually, the short formal meeting is followed by plant descriptions given by members. Supper follows to allow members time to socialise and discuss orchids. All visitors are very welcome.

**Membership Fees**
- **Family**: $30 PA + 2 badges (1st year only) [Badges come in two versions. Pin fastening ($11.50) or Magnet fastening ($13.50)] Please indicate your preference.
- **Single**: $20.00 PA + 1 badge (1st year only) [Pin fastening ($11.50) or Magnet fastening ($13.50)]

New members who don't live in Perth will not require name badges, therefore membership will be at the renewal fee only.

**Monthly Home Visit**
On the weekend following the fourth Thursday of each month (generally on the Sunday morning), a home visit is held at a member’s home. This gives members an opportunity to enjoy the fellowship that our mutual interest provides, and to see how others go about growing their orchids.

**Monthly Plant Display**
Given that the prime objective of the Society is to promote the cultivation of species orchids, only species or natural hybrids are acceptable for display. Since we all may be uncertain about the identification of a plant from time to time, we encourage members to bring plants along about which they are unsure since someone may be able to identify them. There is no competition nor restriction on flower count, quality or length of ownership. We want members to be able to see species plants in flower. So even if your flowers are a bit past their best, bring them in as others may not have seen that species in flower.

**Plant Sales**
The Society provides an opportunity table for members to sell surplus plants and equipment, and for the Society to sell product from time to time. A commission of 10% is charged on all sales.

**Plant Purchases**
The Society endeavours to obtain a different species seedling for sale at each meeting, usually costing between $6.00 and $15.00. The Society makes a small profit on these sales which is invested in benefits to members. As it is always difficult to get new or different species, should members have 20 or more plants of one species which they feel might be suitable as a monthly plant, please contact a Committee member.

**Raffle**
The Society conducts a raffle each meeting and at home visits as a means of raising funds.

**Plant Imports**
The Society is able to use quarantine facilities provided by Ken & Chris to co-operatively import species orchids.

**Management**
In accordance with the Constitution, the Annual General meeting is held in May each year at which time the office-bearers and committee are elected. The majority of Committee members serve two year terms.