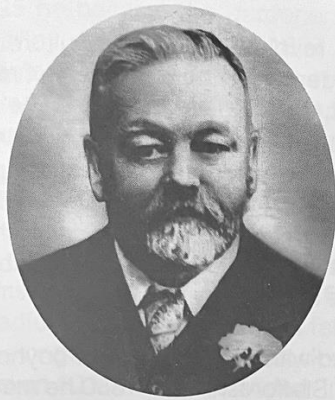




NEWSLETTER - August 2023



Alfred John



Arthur Owen



Alfred Thomas Dowding

Arthur John



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-

Dates for your diary:

Please note: Where we are invited to attend **shows other than our own NEOS monthly shows**, we request that you support your society by lending your plants for our North of England displays at these shows. The show team will carefully look after your plants and will, if necessary, collect plants from you where possible, but it makes life easier if you could deliver them to one of our addresses or perhaps bring them to the show in time for setting up.

**Sunday 3rd September 2023
(Set-up on Saturday)**

Darlington and District Orchid Society Annual Show

Josephine Butler College, Durham DH1 3DF

**Saturday September 9th 2023
North of England Orchid Society show**

Speaker: Jean Barker

**HOGHTON VILLAGE HALL
Blackburn Old Road, Hoghton, Nr. Preston, PR5 0SG**



Jean Barker's Masdevallia Brian Charles CCC/RHS

**Sunday September 24th
(Set-up on Saturday)**

East Midlands Orchid Society Annual Show

Bottesford

**Saturday October 7th
North of England Orchid Society show**

Talk by Helen Millner

**BARTON - LANCASHIRE - BARTON VILLAGE HALL
Barton, A6 north of Preston**

Saturday November 11th 2023
North of England Orchid Society show

Members' Plant Auction

**PLUMLEY VILLAGE HALL, Plumley Moor Road,
PLUMLEY, Nr Knutsford, Cheshire WA16 0TR**

Saturday December 16th 2023

North of England Orchid Society show

BARTON - LANCASHIRE - BARTON VILLAGE HALL

**Early finish, followed by Christmas Lunch at Barton Manor Hotel –
MEMBERS ONLY**



North of England Orchid Society members are spread over a wide area from Cumbria to Herefordshire and from North Wales to North Yorkshire.

We would like to see as many members as possible attending our shows and exhibiting their orchids. Four venues are used throughout the year for our monthly meetings: Barton, Hoghton, Rixton and Plumley.

If you would like to attend a show but, for one reason or another, you require a lift, do let a member of the Committee know. There may be another member of the Society who is able to help.

Orchids for Everyone Weekend at RHS Harlow Carr



Report by George
Photos by George and Lynda

Set-up for the show was from 2.00pm on the Friday when our show team of David and Lynda Crook, George Barnes and Richard Rhodes assembled the North of England display.

Because of the inclement conditions, Burnham Nurseries, who normally fit into a small tented area, had been brought indoors, so both the North of England and Harrogate Orchid Society, along with Burnhams, were all situated downstairs in the large Sunley room, with Helen Millner's display in the foyer.

I believe the presence of all of us in the one room was advantageous and over the weekend footfall from visitors was plentiful.

Both societies had some beautiful and interesting orchids on display as the accompanying photos attest.

The weather improved on the Sunday allowing us some dry weather for a picnic.

During the two-day show, talks were given upstairs by John Gay, Helen Millner and Liz Groves.

As always, the show team wish to offer thanks and appreciation to those of our society who loaned plants: Trevor, David, Richard and Dorothy, Philippa, Leon, John and Baccus.





Burnham Nurseries' own photos



North of England show - Saturday 12th August 2023

Community Hall, Rixton with Glazebrook



From Trevor's group of six orchids:
Masdevallia wagneriana* var. *pteroglossa

With our August show taking place not only during peak holiday season but also sandwiched between the Harlow Carr and Southport shows, it was not surprising to find the number of entries down in the classes. As always, however, there were some lovely orchids to admire, tea and coffee to enjoy and super prizes to be won in the raffle (where David Crook was particularly successful!).

After lunch had been taken in the hall or The Black Horse, members gathered for the Problem Plant Forum after which the President threw the floor open, inviting members to raise any matters they wished concerning the society. Lots of good ideas were put forward in a lively and enjoyable exchange.

Judging results from Rixton

Class	Exhibit	Grower	Award
3	Group display 6 orchids	Trevor Crook	1st
4	Podangis dactylocera	Trevor Crook	1st
5	Ansellia africana	Nick Gilliam	1st
8	Paphiopedilum Wossner Goldegg	Leon Skorczewski	1st
9	Phragmipedium longifolium	Trevor Crook	1st
10	Cattleya Beaufort	Philippa Illsley	1st
11	Oncidium trilobum 'J.E.M.'	Phil Howard	1st
12	Odontoglossum Gay Starshooter	Phil Howard	1st
13	Phalaenopsis deliciosa	David Crook	1st
14	Dendrobium christyanum	David Crook	1st
19	Christensoniana vietnamica x Rhychostele coelestis	Denys Morten	1st
22	Scaphosepalum verrucosum	Trevor Crook	1st
23	Phalaenopsis	Robyn Gee	1st

Plants judged 1st in class



Podangis dactylocera



Cattleya Beaufort



Ansellia Africana



Paphiopedilum Wossner Goldegg.



Phragmipedium longifolium



Oncidium trilobum 'J.E.M.'



Odontoglossum Gay Starshooter



Phalaenopsis deliciosa



Dendrobium christyanum



Scaphosepalum verrucosum



Christensoniana vietnamica x *Rhychostele coelestis*





Class 23 Phalenopsis



Group of six orchids

Also seen at Rixton



Denys's *Dendrobium densiflorum* var. *griffithii*



Leon's *Vanda Mokara jithy*

Gold Medal at Southport



Our sales area



Although the Southport show didn't open to the public until Thursday, members of the show team did a recce of the show site on the Monday before to check that everything required was in place before returning on the Wednesday to set up the display.

Over the four days of the show, a rota ensured that each morning and afternoon members of the society were on hand to keep an eye on the display, answer visitors' questions and make sales to boost Society funds.

From talking to visitors, it seems their experience is mainly of phalaenopsis. Our display was educational and, as usual, featured a wide range of genera. In addition to informative posters, there were Lynda's plant labels to inform visitors where each species originates from in the wild.

Pleasingly, four new members joined the Society during the show.

Set-up and/or break-down was carried out by George, David and Lynda, Ian and Karen, Philippa and Pete. The show team would like to thank everyone who lent plants for the display and who helped on the stand during the show.

Here are just some of the plants in our display:



Richard & Dorothy's *Phragmipedium besseae* x *pearcii*



Above, Richard and Dorothy's **Phragmipedium Vingtaine du Roquier**

Below, their **Paphiopedilum henryanum (sib cross)**





George's *Paphiopedilum parishii* x *praestans*



and *Bulbophyllum cocoinum*

Below, his tiny *Schoenorchis fragrans* amazed visitors to the show.





Philippa's *Oncidium* Wildcat 'Black Cat'



Leon's *Dendrochilum abbreviatum*



Trevor's *Masdevallia infracta x rolfeana*



David's *Cattleya maxima*



Congratulations to Ian Eastwood whose **Brassia arcuigera** took first place in the 'One Orchid' class competition at Southport.

Repotting?

If you would like to purchase the Society's medium grade (10-15mm) orchid bark, contact Chris Burrows, tel: 01772 431442 (answerphone)

John Keeling

Sadly, John Keeling passed away on Wednesday 2nd August.

John was part of the long-established family orchid nursery of A.J. Keeling & Sons which was founded in 1895.

He helped at the nursery from the age of 12 and started there full time in 1953. His speciality in the early days was paphiopedilum species and hybrids.

He was the longest serving member of the North of England Orchid Society and up until his death regularly attended meetings of the society selling his plants.

The members of the North of England Orchid Society send our deepest condolences to the Keeling family.

Below is an extract is taken from the book '**A History of the North of England Orchid Society**' (authors: Ray Buxton and Graham Yearsley), **published as part of the celebration of the Society's centenary in 1997**. It is a fascinating account of the history of the Keeling family's involvement with orchids.

The Keeling Family - 'A Century in Orchids'

That the family history would revolve around horticulture and inevitably around orchids had been evident from the start. Yet not many horticulturalists can demonstrate that their chosen activity in life had existed in the family for over a hundred years and was still surviving.

The family's fascination with plants started in the distant past when an ancestor worked as a gardener to Lord Lichfield of Chrysborough Hall. It is more than reasonable to assume that orchids were present on the estate and that from then onwards the subject became an integral part of the family's aspirations.

Alfred John Keeling, associated with orchids from his boyhood, was a native of Colwich, near Rugeley, Staffordshire. In 1880 he moved to Riding Mill, near Hexham, Northumberland, where he served an apprenticeship under his brother James, who was head gardener for Mr Drewitt o' Drewitt of Riding Mill on Tyne. This orchid owner, a keen amateur and raiser of Paphiopedilums later became a member of our Society but made only occasional appearances at our shows presumably on account of the distance involved from Manchester. It is however of some significance that his exhibits normally consisted of Paphiopedilums! The addiction was already beginning to spread.

Alfred John remained there for approximately twelve years. It was during this period that Paph. Juno (callosum x fairrieanum) was raised, a plant which gained an FCC from the RHS in Feb. 1892. Six years previously Paph. Apiculatum (barbatum x boxalli) had bloomed in the collection. This was believed to have been his first hybrid. In 1892 he was persuaded to join Mr J. Charlesworth at Heaton, Bradford. When in 1895-6 Charlesworth moved his business to the south of England, the former started his own firm at Sandy Lane, Cottingley near Bradford and five years later moved to the present site at the Grange Nurseries, Westgate Hill, Bradford. His three sons were admitted to the business, hence the title A.J. Keeling and Sons. Another successful hybrid was Paph. Bingleyense (Charlesworthii x harrisianum) which bloomed in 1899.

He was a founder member of the North of England Orchid Society and served on the committee until his death in 1920. He was also a Fellow of the RHS. His name is commemorated in *Cypripedium Keelingii* (chamberlainianum x parishii) which bloomed in 1903.

Arthur Owen Keeling was one of a family of ten, and served with his father at Riding Mill, moving with him to Charlesworth in Bradford. In 1895 he became the gardener to W.T. Wood of Brinscall Hall, near Chorley, Lancs., and in 1897 head gardener to Lord Wimborne of Cranford Gardens in Dorset. He specialised in the disposal of orchid collections which had to be dispersed for a variety of reasons. He was also both a Fellow of the RHS and a committee member of our Society. He also held share certificate No.7 in the Orchid Review on its incorporation. He died in 1939.

Alfred Thomas Dowding Keeling served for some time at Armstrong & Brown, the orchid firm in Tunbridge Wells and returned to Bradford on the illness of his father, taking over the business in 1939.

The original greenhouse block was one of 50 ft x 50 ft, and in 1940 a section 10 ft x 40 ft was added. In 1943 a further section 14ft x 50ft was also added. Note that during the war a large number of *Cattleyas* and other orchids had to be destroyed to enable the family to acquire a fuel allowance so that food could be produced both under glass and outside.

After the 1939-45 war he purchased the Dukes Edge collection of orchids, mainly *Cypripediums*, from a Mr Jensen of Woldingham in Surrey. As can be read later, he himself disposed of several important collections from northern growers, such as Capt. W. Horridge of Bury (grower A. Conningsby), Messrs. Weale & Donning of Wallasey, and also surplus plants from collectors such as Dr. W. Stirling of Whatcroft Hall. Northwich, Cheshire, and

that of Major W.G. Berry of Chorley, Lancs. He was also a founder member of the British Orchid Growers' Association and a committee member of our Society and, like the others, a Fellow of the RHS. More important still, having survived the war, he was one of the few members who was instrumental in keeping the Society alive. He died in 1962.

Arthur John Keeling from the tender age of 12 helped in the nursery on Saturday mornings and in the holidays, and already showed mature instincts and a sense of priority by 'opting out' of school on certain Fridays to help with the exhibits of the firm at the Society's shows in Manchester (at the Gas Show Rooms). He started full time at the nursery in January 1953 and, after service in the army from 1955-7, returned there. From that time onwards he was a constant visitor at the shows, soon giving his first lecture at a Society dinner on *Cypripedium* species and hybrids. For some years he was a committee member of the Society. At the present time (1997), John is still not only a member of our Society but also of BOGA and the RHS. This was a time when there was a revival of interest in orchids in Yorkshire, which affected the whole Society. This was a movement headed by the Keeling family, but the contribution of other Yorkshire orchidists should not be ignored.

Prominent among these was John Moulson of Horton Grange, Bradford, who was the Society's chairman of the 1950s. He grew mainly *Cymbidiums* (extremely well), although he also grew others. He exhibited at the Society's shows, and on one occasion included a group of *Paphiopedilums*. He was instrumental in the Society having shows at the Mechanics Institute in the centre of Bradford. The meeting there in 1953 (Sat. 28th Feb.) included his exhibit, about 90 plants in all, when his display was to be taken after the show to London for the spring exhibition of the RHS. Also present were the usual displays of Stuart Low, David Sander of St. Albans and A.J. Keeling & Sons.

In 1965, another greenhouse section of 28 ft x 40 ft was added, the firm continuing the Yorkshire revival. The Society venue was transferred to St. Luke's Church Hall, East Brierley, and continued there into the 1970s. With its proximity to Grange Nurseries, members were able thus to 'kill two birds with one stone' ---incorporating a show, and a nursery visit. In 1985, the greenhouse blocks were rebuilt as one unit, which now extends to 50 x 100 feet divided into 9 bays Thus the orchid flag was kept flying during the past two decades by A. J. Keeling (& Co.)

Input and Output

Species were imported via Holland or directly from India and other countries. As with other importers, the usual problem occurred, - loss of plants due to conditions on board ship. The journey from India lasted about a month. On the other hand, A. J. Keeling often exported orchids to North and South America, and to such distant countries as Australia and Japan. Internal distribution in the early days presented novel and intriguing aspects. Around the turn of the century, it was the custom for A. O. Keeling to pack some orchids into a case and take them by train all over the country in a buying and selling operation, which enabled him to visit the landed gentry and others with orchid establishments, buying any surplus plants available and selling these to others, or even taking them back to add to the nursery stock.

With reference to the sale of orchids from Westgate Hill, members could visit the site by alighting from the train at Birkenshaw station and proceeding to the nursery for a visit. The electric tramcar services from Bradford Town Hall passed close to the nursery.

Exhibits were of course taken to the main Society shows and elsewhere. John Keeling, our longest serving trade member, has provided us with information as to the preparations for exhibiting orchids in the early days of the twentieth century. For the shows during this period, plants were packed in boxes 3 ft square by 1 ft high, with one side or top open. Each pot was wrapped round with wall moss (obtained from North Wales) and tied around with string; if the weather was cold during transport, side and top were covered with paper and cloth. Preparing for a show would take about a week. Plants were taken to the railway station either by wheelbarrow or horse and cart. Costs of rail transport would be at the premium rate, as the orchids had of course to be accompanied during the journey. For the Manchester shows (Fridays), the plants were taken there on the Thursday and removed on the Saturday. London shows were always mid-week. Orchid salesmen would put on display of plants for sale and they would all be in flower. Due to the cost of transport, they did not take non-flowered plants or seedlings to shows. On return to the nursery, it took most of the following week to unpack and reassemble the plants.

History of Awards

A complete list of medals for group displays and individual awards would require a separate appendix. The following extracts will give an idea as to the scope of the achievements.

1901 RHS Banksian (A Silver Gilt Medal for a group of orchids).

1902 Bronze Medals at Manchester show.

1907 Large Bronze at Birmingham.

1911 Large Bronze at RHS.

1926 Large Silver Medal at the Southport Show.

1927 Large Gold Medal at Bolton.

1928 Gold Medal at the Halifax Show.

1933 Small Gold Medal at Worsley, Lancs.

1937 Coronation Challenge Cup (Miss Wrigley's)

1938 A Silver Gilt Medal was awarded to Messrs. A. J. Keeling & Son for a group of miscellaneous orchids.

1958 An Award for a miscellaneous group including Cypripediums and 'dendrobies'

1958 Messrs. A. J. Keeling & Son awarded a Gold Medal for a fine group of superbly grown Cypripediums

1966 Silver Medal for a group of orchids

1966 Silver Gilt Medal for a group of orchids

1978 Silver Gilt Medal

As a tireless supporter of the Society the Keelings also won numerous individual awards over this period. Statistics from the period

1910-1918 reveal the following: -

1 Silver Gilt, 3 Large Silver, 10 Silver, 14 AMs and 5 Bronze Medal awards from the Society alone.

Apart from his numerous activities in the whole of the country as a peripatetic salesman for orchids, A.O. Keeling was present at the inaugural meeting of the North of England Horticultural Society in 1911 with W. Mansell and W. Hatcher. They became committee members and exhibited on almost every occasion. In 1927 he received an AM from that body and continued to take part in the various galas held, ----York and Bradford among others. As if this was an inadequate representation of the orchid cause, he

journeyed further afield as in the case of the Bristol Floral Fete (24-25 July 1925). In this case his was the only group composed entirely of orchids (approx 60).

Paphiopedilum ----The Keeling Contribution

There is no doubt that the Keelings should be called the 'Kings of the Paphs'. Several plants were named after members of the family, -Alfred, John, Betty, and Charles are but a few examples, and many were awarded as such (e.g. Cyp. Charles Keeling FCC 1949). Others were named after local people but far more impressive if we are interested in numbers were the countless Paphiopedilums raised in the nursery which in turn found their way into other nurseries in the UK and abroad and were registered by their owners.

This did not detract however from their ability to present groups containing other orchids, as for example at the Bristol Flower Show in the summer of 1924, when they received a Gold Medal for a group occupying 75 square feet, which contained many choice examples of Cattleyas, Brassolaeliocattleyas, Odontoglossums and (of course) Cypripediums. We should not forget that their sales to individual growers included many species, imported in considerable numbers. This fact showed itself not only in the obtaining of awards as such but is exemplified by the presence of numerous examples in the catalogues issued. Indeed the Horridge Challenge Cup for species (new and rare) had been awarded to them three years in succession.

Of particular interest among the species listed are numerous Angraecums, Bulbophyllums (a very long list) and a good selection of Odontoglossums and Oncidiums. In many catalogues, oak and beech leaves were also offered for sale for inclusion in composts. The issue of a new catalogue in 1913 contained a list of 1,432 items!

Auctions And Sales

At times, the family seemed to have assumed the role of the Protheroe & Morris of the north in that they were entrusted with the disposal of many orchid collections. Many members of our Society disposed of their collections in this manner including Col. Rutherford, Dr. Stirling, Captain W. Horridge, the Rev. J. Crombleholme and others.

This form of orchid work was extended to the smaller collections as for example that of the 'Oak Cottage Collection' of the late J. Hamilton Walker of Pendleton, Manchester comprising about 2,000 well-grown plants including high class Cypripediums and Odontoglossum crispum.

Moreover, the firm acted as an intermediate agent for the sale of many orchids from the collection of Dr. Stirling to America including his numerous seedlings.

The history of the Keeling family represents a microcosm of that of the orchid establishments and their activities in the twentieth century. The early adventures of the family in their travelling role was an exciting and romantic one ostensibly not paralleled by others. The long-lasting love affair with 'paphs', and their equally long attachment to species has always persisted, especially the neglected ones such as Masdevallias, and still lives on.

The Keeling family was involved with the 'Spensborough Flower Fund Homes' which provided one-bedroomed flats for pensioners; the nursery additionally putting on a display of orchids at the opening of the third site. (The social conscience of prominent orchidists in the past viz. O. O. Wrigley, A. Warburton, W. Bolton inter alia, should not be forgotten).

From 1970-90 owing to illness, and later, an all-consuming further involvement with the above mentioned Spensborough Homes, the appearance of John Keeling was minimal,

and was confined to Congresses, Orchid Weekends and other occasions connected with Bradford. However, 'Keeling' continued to be a name in orchids locally as a supplier of cut orchid flowers, bouquets and corsages to local florists for weddings and special occasions.

With John's impending retirement from these 'other duties', and the anticipated involvement of his daughter Andrea Jane in the business, it is hoped that the family will return in full measure to its illustrious past.

And finally...

Philippa Illsley's **Coelogyne Burfordiense** opened too late for Southport.



Photos and other items for the newsletter should be sent to neosubmissions@gmail.com