

THE NEWSLETTER of
THE SIBERIAN, SPURIA and JAPANESE .IRIS GROUP
of the British Iris Society

No. 6

January 1980

THE OBJECTS OF THE GROUP

1. Communication between members in Great Britain and Overseas.
 2. A means of exchanging ideas, plants, seeds etc.
 3. To assist beginners in growing Iris and to offer help with problems.
 4. To report on Hybridisation.
-

EDITORIAL

I am keeping my promise and including the talk given by Ray Jaffa to the Kent Group, also the article by Currier McEwen concerning 'The Small Ones'. I find them both very interesting indeed, and hope you all do too. This means that

I. Laevigata will have 'pride of place' in the June Newsletter. I would however, like to thank Lady Hicks for her contribution. I have not seen I. Laevigata growing in 'Spring water', they must look very beautiful, and probably have a larger flower than those grown in ponds- The white one sounds magnificent, perhaps you could find the time to tell us more please.

John Taylor who is at the present time writing a aeries of articles on the 'Iris' in Garden News, was kind enough to mention our Group, as a result of which we welcome Michael Peach to the 'fold', we hope he will find our Newsletters interesting and helpful.

Now that Anne Blanco White has relinquished her post as Hon. Secretary of the B.I.S. she too has joined our ranks, welcome Anne, we look forward to your expertise and knowledge and thank you also for your contribution.

Our thanks also to Mr. G. Cassidy who has taken over from Anne and has also written us an account of his Iris,

Do keep writing in please, then when we have a few more accounts, I will compile a list or 'top ten' of Iris grown.

I now have a most sincere apology to make to Evelyn Sharland and Denis Goodwin for stating in the June N/L that Denis was the Hon.Treas. of the B.I.S. Evelyn is, of course, the Hon.Treas. of the B.I.S. and Denis Hon. Treas. of the Species Group. I do hope you will both forgive me and that it has not caused either of you any inconvenience.

Lastly, may I wish you all a Happy 1980, although there is much trouble in the world, to walk round the garden and see the Iris already starting to shoot up, gives us hope for the Future,

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

Dear Fellow Members ...

As I write my first letter to you as your new Chairman, the winter is almost upon us, and the shorter days give us time to sit back and review -the summer performance of our gardens. It has surprised me to hear many people talk about a 'poor' summer this year; admittedly, it was late in starting and the long, cold Spring held many things back, but this was more than compensated for, by the rich profusion of blossom when, eventually, the warmer weather arrived. Perhaps we were more fortunate in this particular area, for, as far as Iris are concerned, I feel it has been one of the best Seasons I have ever known. The bearded varieties were exceptionally good. The Sibiricas also flowered well. In the 'Spuria' Group 'Carthaginae' and 'Halophila' fairly romped away and had to be severely restrained later. The 'Hybrids' also did not do quite so well. The Ensata or Kaempferi as I prefer to call them, were not too good, but I have not had much experience in growing these, and am still learning.

The mild Autumn following the not too dry Summer, has allowed the work of lifting and replanting to go forward steadily, so that with the garden reasonably tidy we can now relax and look forward to next Season.

It is gratifying to hear from our Secty/Treas. that our Finances are in a

sound position and that new Members are being enrolled.

Happy Gardening and Best Wishes to you all for 1980.

Hilda Goodwin, Hon. Chairman.

MY IRISES

1. Iris Laevigata

Ursula Hichs

I have grown this Iris for a number of years with considerable success and

satisfaction. Its roots stand in 2 - 3 inches of spring water with a fairly

strong lime content.

I started by buying 2 varieties: (1) the species, a beautiful blue with a large flower. It generally seeds freely, (2) A not unattractive curiosity, white with two bands of blue (of varying intensity) on the falls which invariably number 6. The standards are usually about 4t rather whiter, and like the falls lie flat. It is a tremendous doer but one misses the beautiful Iris form.

It seldom sets seed and I have not been able to grow any.

More recently I grew from seed a very beautiful almost pure white with large flowers of good Iris form and spreading falls. This is the first year it has made a real show and I hope it will set seed.

In the drought year the spring failed completely and the ground was baked dry and cracked, but all the Laevigatas recovered with no damage. The spring does not freeze, but in any case they seem to be perfectly hardy, 500 ft. up on the Cotswolds.

2 all in a row?

Anne Blanco White

Let me clear some ground: there are irises, such as the oncos and regelias needing dry house treatment which I don't grow, I regret them, but there are limits. Plants such as the easier Junos and stolonifera, which only need protection at certain times, I can manage; and a species such as subbiflora which prefers to grow in a pot is worth the extra care for the blue of its flowers. We will pass over the subject of tall bearded as neither of my gardens seem to suit them and, basically, I prefer the species, but the smaller bearded cultivars are more co-operative if the ducks don't wreck them. The bulk of my collection, which has inexplicable gaps, is of assorted sibiricas, spurias and versicolors. Why, I wonder, do I have Wilsoni flaunting at the end of the season, but no Forrestii cowering at its roots? Snails, perhaps. The species aibiricas have a delicacy that stands comparison surprisingly well with the newer tetraploids. The trouble with the spurias is mainly their labels which I didn't believe in the first place and which get lost before the plants flower in the second. What price *I. grandis* ?

In the ditch, the three forms of pseudacorus give good value, but I am a little apprehensive about the intended introduction of Eckard Berlin's tetraploid form. Still, I daresay it can fight it out with Gerald Darby whose motto is clearly 'don't fence me in'. Various members of the versicolors include the red shades from Ullswater and are scattered around while the Epping form is in stately isolation. Holden Clough tested the water with one tentative rootlet and then plunged in - I keep finding it in peculiar places. The kaempferi do well and inevitably the best performers are those which were dumped along the stream banks. And, talking of dumping, naturally I pot up reticulatas for the early Show in the hope that they will flower in time. And after flowering it is my practice to put them in a rose bed on a sun-baked slope of nearly raw Weald clay. A surprisingly large number continue to flower in later years although losses are high owing to the depredations of assorted wild life.

One batch of plants which were chewed to the ground in the winter of 77/78, and still haven't fully recovered, are the foetidissimas - blue, yellow and white flowered forms. These include some from Wimborne and some from Malta. The seed pods on mine are usually enormous, but I can't get anyone to work out for me the actual strain on the rhizome/stem joint of half a dozen of these huge capsules.

I don't restrict myself to irises: crocuses occur and, much as I dislike lifting plants at the end of the season, I do like to have tigridias around. All forms of montbretias become weeds if they survive the first wet winter and I think the blackberry iris, *Belamcanda chinensis*, is under-rated for it produces its flowers in sequence as do my favourite Evansias.

Why japonica isn't more widely grown is one of the mysteries in my life. Can it be that people don't realise how much feeding these plants need? If in doubt, mulch the brute. In the summer of 76 I planted out Bourne Graceful and it grew and grew I really thought we had found the hedging iris at last, it died miserably in the following winter and really does best in a cold house. Lacustris and cristata I have never managed to keep for long, but I have a theory and shall try again. Other members of the family are to be found around the place and Milesii fairly strides across the beds. There are other plants, but I must make a new list. The trouble is that I don't believe what I find written down and in the meantime I have a problem: would anyone care to suggest the origin of a heavily scented, crocea-type spuria which flowered in my garden this summer? And no, I don't know where I got it from and there isn't enough to distribute for a long time to come.

3. Me and my Irises

G. E. Cassidy

I reckon that, as far as Irises go, I'm the original 'man in the street'. I'm no botanist, I know little about hybridising, I'm not really a very good gardener but I have an absolute passion for Irises of every kind. It must be some thirty five years ago that I was first properly introduced to them by the Curator of Kew Gardens and since then I have grown them in increasing numbers, and with varying degrees of success. This year I have retired from business and have a little more chance of indulging my passion, and I've so greatly enjoyed my Irises and meeting other people who love them too. It has, of course, been a funny season and even my beloved Stylosa was late in flowering and a little shy. But I followed Dykes's practice of cutting the flowers in bud and having them open indoors in the warmth. And what a joy they were in that cold dark winter. The reticulatas and danfordiae failed completely - rotting in the snow - but the range of lilliputs in which I wisely invested were quite glorious. Three weeks late, of course, like everything else, they were a riot of colour and seemed to have revelled in the hard conditions. There was a great clump of Tinkerbell, a lovely blue, drifts of Forest Light and Green Spot and good displays of Double Lament, Arrangement and Forest Glow. But my favourite Blueberry Muffins gave only a few flowers. I have a soft spot for what we used to call intermediates and this year that very old iris, Pink Elf produced a mass of spikes and its unique salmon shade caused quite a sensation on our display stand at Chelsea. Widdecombe Fair was as floriferous as ever and Indeed, Wood Pigeon and Scintilla, were also exceptionally good.. ^ When at last the T.B's decided to honour us, much later than I have ever known, they seemed determined to make up for being so late. Most of mine are oldish varieties and this year has perhaps proved the worth of the tried and trusty.

Of the whites those old stagers White City, New Snow, Vigil and Cliffs of Dover were really wonderful. Vigil is a particularly pure and well shaped variety and proved to stand the weather very well. The blues did not seem to do that so well, but Jane Phillips, Blue Rhythm and Eleanor's Pride flowered quite nicely and even Araby Pasha emerged well from the usual temperamental start. Best of all was Varsity Blue, a noble deep blue, very tall and substantial. The yellows and golds were just terrific. Our old friend Elleray, with its wide branching and enormous flowers, Berkeley Gold, over four feet tall this year, Ola Kala, the deepest yellow, the ancients Desert Song and pinnacle and the ever lovely and reliable Starshine were all very very good. Of the golds Lord Warden and Olympic Torch were magnificent though the latter did not like the high winds. Of the red/browns I still think that Tarn Hows takes some beating and all mine did wonderfully this year though more striking were Jungle Fires and Brasilia. In the plicata world I have seldom seen anything like Dancer's Veil, huge and well branched, very sturdy and lasting three weeks and followed by the more exotic Wild Ginger and Kent Pride. I have left to the end the two T.B's which for me were outstanding - Marshlander, a great tall deep red brown with horizontal falls, slightly curled, and really beautiful and then best of them all Shepherd's Delight. This is a huge apricot/pink with a deep red beard of splendid substance and endurance. One spike was cut on a Saturday morning taken by car to Rickmansworth for a show, returned to Kew and remained indoors quite lovely until the following Saturday.

Being the Historian for the B.I.S. I am naturally interested in historic Irises and most of my collection flowered this year, though not so freely as usual. Alcazar and Ambassadeur were the sensational French introductions in the early twenties and are really powerful growers. I have a number of other very early ones such as Bruno, Cardinal, Mary Geddes, Depute Nomblet and of course, W.R. Dykes, Gudrun and Joyance from the Dykes stable.

The Sibiricas were especially good this year and my pride and joy was Cool Springs which is a delicate palish blue and was resplendent with nearly a hundred spikes in one clump and gained me my first 'First Prize' card at the Mercia Show. Of the various species I try to grow, two have rewarded me this year most opportunely. *I. Ensata* var. *Lactea*, which I acquired twenty years ago and which usually has one or two flowers this year produced 14 lovely spikes and I was able to show it throughout the Chelsea week and the crested *Tectorum* was in bloom beneath my window for more than three weeks. And once again I had the joy of that great hybrid of *Chrysographes* x *Douglasiana*, raised by Amos Perry and named Margot Holmes which won the first ever Dykes. Medal in 1927.

Then finally come the Spurias in all their elegance, Ochroleuca (which I'm told we should now call Orientalis), Aurea, Monnieri, the delicately coloured Halophila and the magnificent Shelford Giant, raided by Sir Michael Foster some 75 years ago and resplendent with its lemon flowers on five feet tall stems. As I looked at it in its glory standing sentinel at the end of the season I realised that every day I should thank God for the wonder of Irises and for the nice people who love them as I do.

Report of the BRITISH IRIS SOCIETY Stand at CHELSEA 1979

by Hilda Goodwin

The British Iris Society Stand at the Chelsea Flower Show was a great success and, as mentioned in the last Newsletter was awarded a FLORA MEDAL. The chief credit for this effort must go to Mr. G. Cassidy and to Mr. S. Linnigar, who worked very hard arranging the available material, much of which they themselves provided. This was augmented by Orpington Nurseries, Messrs. Van Tubergen and various Members of the B.I.S.

Professor Bowley, Hon. Secty. of the Species Group, took charge at one end of the rather small stand, where we saw some lovely varieties of I. Innomata, Juno Iris 'Aucheri', 'Bucharica' and 'Graeberiana'. Dr. Ellis' 'Bourne Graceful' a beautiful cross between two varieties of I. Japonica. Also seen were I. Sanguinea, Ensata var. Lactea, Tenax, Versicolor and among the Pogons 'Aphylla', a collected form of Chamaeiris, Albicans, Flortentina and Kocchii.

The Bearded Iris Hybrids shown were too numerous to mention by name, but were all of the Dwarf and Intermediate as it was too early for the Talls, this difficult season. Suffice it to say, they made a very attractive picture, and the helpers on the stand were kept very busy answering questions and giving advice.

Article on the SIBIRICA SUB-SECTION OF THE APOGON IRISES

by Ray Jeffs

{Reprinted by kind permission of the Kent Group}

The sub-section Sibirica consists of two sub-series.....Sibericae and Chrysographes.

The sub-series Sibirica has two species ... I.Sibirica and I.Sanguinea (formerly orientalis) and hybridisation between these two species has resulted in many fine garden plants. All plants in this sub-series have 28 chromosomes.

The sub-series Chrysogrqaphes consists of I.Clarkei; I-Delavayi; I.Wilsonii; I.Forrestii; I.Bulleyana; I.Chrysographes; I.Phragmitetorum and I.Dykesii all have 40 chromosomes.

A unique feature common to both series is that they all have hollow stems with the exception of I.Clarkii.

So far the possibility of hybridisation between the two sub-aeries has been

limited by the difference in the chromosome numbers, but the use of colchicine may produce fertile hybrids in the near future and give rise to a new race of Irises.

Iris Sibirica This species has a wide natural range covering parts of Europe, South Russia and North Turkey. Flower stems grow up to 3ft, in height with two branches and up to nine buds; spathe valves are scarious. The colour of the flowers is generally mid blue-violet, although white or near-white forms are known. A pattern of blue and gold veins at the haft is always present.

Iris Sanguinea The distribution of this species is from Siberia to Japan. The name derives from the dark red colouring of the non scarious spathe valves, stems and leaf bases. Two deep blue flowers, larger than those of I. Sibirica and lacking the gold veining at the haft, are carried at the terminal of each flower stem; White forms exist. Hybrids between Sanguinea and Sibirica tended to resemble one parent or the other and those selected for their larger flowers, lacked branching. In recent years, branching has become more evident in the newer introductions and this has been largely due to the influence of 'White Swirl' which has two branches and broad, flaring flowers. Of the eight species of the sub-series Chrysographes, six are well-known and widely grown. The other two, Phragmitetorum and Dykesii are probably not in cultivation at present.

Iris Clarkei was introduced in 1907. Because of its solid flower stems, a case could be reasonably be made for separating it from the sub-section. It usually has two branches with four mid-blue to red-purple flowers with distinct white patches on the upper falls. It reaches 2ft in height although a giant tetraploid form over 3ft. high has been raised in Germany recently by Dr. Tamberg. The natural habitat is N.E. India and Upper Burma.

Iris delavayi This is the tallest of the sub-section, frequently reaching 5ft, in height. It mostly has six deep violet-purple flowers carried on three branched stems. It likes moisture and is the last of the sub-section to flower. It comes from the Chinese provinces of S.W. Szechwan and Northern Yunnan.

Iris wilsonii This is another moisture loving iris with yellow flowers veined and dotted brown at the haft; the standards are almost horizontal. It has been hybridised with sibirica and delavayi to produce yellow flowers with purple veining. Habitat is China, mainly S.W.Szechwan and Mid Yunnan.

Iris forrestii This species has smaller yellow flowers and shorter growth than wilsonii, and the standards are erect. There are also a number of other minor differences that distinguish it from wilsonii. It grows in mountain pastures at altitudes of 7,000 to 12,000 ft. in N.W. Yunnan.

Iris chrysographes The colours of the flowers, ranging from rich, plum-red through purple to near black, are very variable as indeed are the gold markings on the falls which give this species its name. The predominantly drooping falls are more pinched in some forms than in others. The stems carrying two terminal buds are about 20" in height. Plants are easily grown from seed and some excellent forms have been raised by selective breeding. It also crosses readily with other species, The natural habitat is S.Szechwan, W,Yunnan and Upper Burma.

Iris phragmitetorum Named for the Phragmites swamp in N. Yunnan where it was found, it bears some resemblance to sanguinea and chrysographes. The colour is dark blue with white patches between the central veins; standards ere erect. It is questionable whether it is a true species.

Iris dykesii The origin of this plant is unknown. It was found growing in

Dykes's garden after his death and may not be a true species. The distinctive foliage has a xiphium like quality and the dark purple flowers are best described as a larger and better shaped version of chrysographes with a few haft marks in white and yellow.

Iris bulleyana This iris is something of a mystery- It was named after

A.K. Bulley whose plants were thought to have been raised from seed collected by George Forrest, but it was discovered later that Forrest could remember nothing whatever of it. The flower stems grow 18" to 24" in height and carry two terminal buds. The colour of the flowers ranges from washy-purple through to yellow and there is so much variation in the colour of seedlings that its classification as a species is open to doubt and it could well be a hybrid between chrysographes and forrestii. Line breeding from it can produce very nice things as has been demonstrated by Mrs. Hansford who started with a packet of B.I.S. seed and by selecting from many seedlings and re-selecting from further generations, produced some fine cultivars that were given varietal names. Dr, Tamberg is of the opinion that these could be the basis for further advance by doubling the chromosome numbers.

Hybrids of the Sibirica/Sanguinea Group

There are many hybrids old and now. Gatineau(1932) a fine mid-blue raised in Canada by Miss Preston represented a major advance. It was used for most of the subsequent breeding, producing many seedlings that closely resembled it. However, when crossed with White Swirl it gave Cambridge.

In Britain, in the fifties, Mr. Kitton produced some fine varieties such as Blue Cape. Philip Hutchison also raised many extra good cultivars including Ellesmere and Nottingham Lace; but it was in the sixties that significant progress was made when Mrs. Brummitt, using White Swirl, produced Anniversary, Cambridge, Dreaming Spires, Lime Heart and Sea Shadows, all very fine and different and clearly showing the influence of White Swirl. Sea Shadows is particularly noteworthy because of its good branching.

In America, Morgan introduced Caesar and Caesar's Brother (1932) and Cleveland produced Tycoon in 1938. Many of the earlier crosses were unplanned and Cassebeer's epoch making White Swirl (1957) was found among thousands of seedlings grown from seeds obtained from a bushel of pods. Since the advent of White Swirl, several American hybridists have been successfully raising new varieties and McGarvey's introductions include Ego and Super Ego but those do not appear to have crossed the Atlantic.

The New Tetraploid Sibiricas

in 1966 Dr. Currier McEwen gave a talk in which he announced the work he had done to create 56 chromosome tetraploid sibiricas. By skilful use of the drug colchicine on newly germinated seedlings of 28 chromosome sibiricas, he had succeeded in raising plants with double the number of chromosomes. Colchicine has the effect of inhibiting cell division, but not all the affected seedlings that survived Dr. McEwen's treatment were complete tetraploids. Some were periclinal chimeras with diploid inner tissues covered by a tetraploid outer skin; when flowering they produced mixed pollen, Sectorial chimeras were also produced having complete tetraploid and diploid segments growing from the same plant and anything developed from the tetraploid parts, (including pollen) was pure tetraploid. The result of McEwen's work has been the establishment of a new fertile and completely tetraploid race with tremendous breeding potential. The new tetraploids are generally much larger than diploid varieties and have a good flaring form that some diploids lack. They have more substance; greater colour saturation and stiffer but not longer leaves. In some of them, flowers may be rather coarse as in Fourfold White, but on the whole elegance has been retained and some have added qualities such as extra petaloid growths on the style arms giving a fluffy and appealing effect.

In Germany, Dr. Tamberg and Eckard Berlin have followed up McEwen's success and are producing many fine tetraploids of their own, and are adventurously experimenting with other species. Many of their newest creations as well as McEwen's latest introductions are being sold for up to \$25, prices previously unheard of for sibiricas.

What of the future ?

With the possibility of tetraploid breeding being extended to other apogon irises, the prospect of fertile inter-series and inter-specific hybrids excites the imagination. In any case, we can confidently look forward to a wider variety of improved cultivars of easy culture, tolerant of moisture and able to grow in places where bearded irises don't thrive, We are lucky that nature and man combine to give extra interests to the iris, our special flower.

CULTURAL NOTES

Planting Rhizomes should be planted 2" deep and can be left undisturbed for at least 5 years. At this stage they will have become hollow centred and should be lifted and divided by chopping into sections or forcing apart with two forks. This operation is best done after flowering and divisions selected for replanting should not be too small. Portions with six to ten fans should do well if properly planted and regularly watered until well rooted, but single pieces are slower growing and more difficult to establish. An ideal spacing between the plants is 2 to 3 ft.

Soil requirements Preferably moist soil in full sun, but they will grow in any soil provided plenty of humus is added. Only the shallowest cultivation should be attempted and top dressing for feeding and weed suppression is best.

Maintenance Keep seed pods picked off or inferior seedlings may come up. Removing old, dead foliage when new growth starts in spring.

Seeds To make a true cross, flowers must be dismantled and anthers removed when quite tight buds. The remains of the flower must be covered to prevent re-pollination by bees.

Discussion A good discussion and questions followed Ray's talk. Mr. Tubbs wanted to know more about the use of colchicine? This is a poison obtained from the Meadow Saffron {Colchicum autumnale) and requires expert handling and application to plants at the correct strengths. Mr. Knowles asked about black forms of Iris chrysographes? It was stated that some are known to exist, and Mr. Venner recommended Black Knight as a good form in commence. On questions about inter series hybrids, Ray said, that Kitton's Oyster Bird, a combination of apricot and off-white was registered in 1963. It was almost certainly sterile and had a poor constitution and had passed out of cultivation. Other 28 X 40 chromosome hybrids had occurred and there had been claims of partial fertility in some. On questions about Calsibes, sterile hybrids from Pacific Coast Irises crossed with irises of the Sibirica Sub-Section, Ray said that such hybrids were not new, the earliest recorded being Margot Holmes, an English Dykes Medal Winner in 1927. Although Calsibes possessed some garden potential, they could not be expected to come to the fore until fertile tetraploid forms had been created.

Mr. Knowles asked about red flowered forms of Sibirica and mentioned Eric The Red. This variety had a striking magenta colouring, but it often died for no apparent reason. Stronger seedlings from it were growing in America and no doubt tetraploid forms would be available before long.

If in bearded irises, tetraploids had almost entirely superseded diploids in

cultivation, Ray Jeffs was certain that this would not occur with sibiricas. The diploid forms with fluttering petals and butterfly effect could hardly be beaten for waterside planting whereas the new tetraploid forms were more suited to the flower borders.

Finally, Ray said that he expected great achievements would be forthcoming from Dr. Tamberg and Eckard Berlin. They were applying their colchicine technique to all manner of things and already E,B,. had produced a tetraploid form of Iris pseudacorus, far superior to the best diploid, Golden Queen, and it would be introduced and distributed in this country in the near future.

Some recommended diploids from the many varieties currently available

All the Brummitt varieties already mentioned

Blue Mere (Hutchison 59) late flowering gentian-blue

Ellesmere (Hutchison 56) dark violet-blue, has inherited the maroon-red spathes and stems

Grand Junction (McCord 69) blue bi-tone
 Purple Mere (Hutchison 59) dark purple
 Nottingham Lace (Hutchison 59) pale wine-purple, falls laced white
 Ruby Wine (Hanger 68) short wine-red
 Sparkling Rose (Hager 68) rosy-mauve with a blue flash on the falls
 White Magnificence (Kitton 67) large, tall white
 White Swirl (Cassebeer 57) superb broad, flaring white
 Chrysographes Black Knight,
Tetraploids - a short selection. If not yet available, should be
 obtainable shortly
 Blue Pennant (McEwen 72} violet-blue
 Fourfold White (McEwen 70} very large white
 Kobaltblau (Tamberg ?) magnificent cobalt blue
 Navy Brass (McEwen 74) dark navy blue with unmarked brassy-
 gold blaze on the falls
 Orville Fay (McEwen 70) large blue
 Outset (McEwen 76) dark blue with bold splashes of white
 Silver Edge (McEwen 74) medium blue with silver edge on falls,
 much admired at Wisley
 Yankee Consul (McEwen 73) mid-blue with lighter blue edge and
 prominent blaze on falls.

TREVOR NOTTLE'S LETTER FROM AUSTRALIA

Trevor reports a quiet time, his *I. Unguicularis* 'Stoker's Pink' has at last bloomed, but he wonders if it was worth the 4 year wait, as it lacks in substance and is rather like an inferior California Iris. Coming up to bloom is *Iris Formosana* an almost white *Bvansia* with a deep orange flash. *Iris Wattii*, *Japonica X Darjeeling* will be ready in a month or so. A curiosity Trevor is hoping to receive from Hong Kong is *I. Speculatrix*, another *Evansia*. He mentions Phyl Olver's new 'oddity', *I. Foetidissima* (pale yellow), which sounds like *I. Foetidissima* 'Citrina', a plant he has had for some years. Chris Lloyd says it is far superior to the 'common' form, with larger freer flowers and much more 'eye catching' seed pods. He records it as 'Chinese' form from Hidcote. In closing Trevor says his *Spuria* Hybrids and seedlings are shooting up like 'rockets' and he anticipates a bumper season, with lots of seed to send. Trevor has since written and said how well the seed from our seed bank are doing, particularly Alex Back's *Spuria*, *I. Mirza Citronella*, *I. Setosa* (Red form). *I. Chrysographes* (Blue and White) and *I. Delavayii*. From the American *Spuria* Society he has received *I. Carthalinate* and many cultivar hybrids. Trevor has also planted out 120 *I. Spuria* 'Crow Wings' x (Crow Wings x Ferguson Black Seedling) and about 30 *I. Spuria* "La Senda x Pink Canles".
 (Thank you Trevor we do like to hear your news, and we also wish you every success with your Heritage Roses Group. Ed.)

A NOTE ABOUT THE SMALL ONES

Currier McEwen

I was very glad to see Peg's reprint in the Spring 1978 TSI of her earlier article of March 1964 about small Siberians. In spite of Peg's challenge I am afraid this has been a neglected area of hybridizing. Certainly the need for the small ones makes this an important area for development.

My own interest in what I have referred to as the 'miniatures' came quite accidentally when a small plant appeared in a group of taller siblings. This cultivar, which was introduced in 1970 with the rather unimaginative though descriptive name of LITTLE WHITE, is still one of my favorites and I have used it extensively in breeding. The following comments stem from that experience.

LITTLE WHITE itself carries 2½ to 3 inch flowers on 15 to 18 inch scapes. The flowers are nicely ruffled and are nearly horizontal which is especially desirable in a low flower which is viewed from above. It has a strong tendency to give smallness and low height to its children. Crosses with other smallish ones give seedlings which are about its own size and height or smaller and even the seedlings from crosses with plants of regular size are brought down considerably. However, as years pass, these seedlings are apt suddenly to grow larger again. A case in point is one which I introduced in 1975 as LITTLE BLUE. It had 3 inch flowers on 18 inch scapes for four years, and then, the next year, bore 4 inch flowers on 26 inch scapes. I have struck it from my list. Its sister seedling, BLUE SNIPPET, introduced in 1976, also suddenly became larger after three years of observation. From a 2½ inch flower on 10 to 12 inch scapes it became a 3 to 3½ inch flower on 20 inch scapes. However, I then divided it and lined it out and for the past two years it has again been a delectable 2 to 2½ inch ruffled blue flower on 12 to 14 inch scapes. Whether it will now remain small or, when fully established, will again grow larger, remains to be seen. Currently, however, my experience suggests:

1. that in appraising one's miniatures it is best to watch them for perhaps four years before assuming the original height and flower-size are fixed, and

2. that if such a miniature starts to become bigger, dividing and replanting it may bring it down to size again.

One cross with LITTLE WHITE was especially interesting. Jean Witt's FLIGHT OF BUTTERFLIES is a lovely small blue flower heavily streaked with white (or perhaps it should be described as having white falls heavily veined with blue), but its height is about 30 inches. Hoping to obtain more ruffled flowers of that pattern on lower scapes I crossed it with LITTLE WHITE. To my surprise every one of the twelve seedlings resulting looked like a typical species *I. sibirica* with 4 inch flowers on 36 inch scapes. I subsequently crossed two of those siblings, but again the resulting seedlings were similar to *I. sibirica*. Hence, it appears that LITTLE WHITE cannot make them all smaller,

Currently in our garden there are four cultivars in addition to LITTLE WHITE that have stayed small and low year after year. Nana (white), which I presume from study of the Check List is SIBIRICA NANA ALBA, is about 15 inches high with rather tailored 2½ to 3 inch semi-flaring flowers. It has two buds at the terminal and no branch, which certainly suggests origin from *I. sanguinea* rather than *I. sibirica*. A white dwarf sent me by Helen von Stein-Zeppelin from Germany is known to her merely as Weisser Zwerg (White Dwarf). It is very like the white Nana described above. The other two are little blue ones bearing the labels Orientalis Nana. One, given to me by Sarah Tiffney and obtained by her years earlier from Garden in the Woods, is less than 12 inches tall with 2 to 2½ inch nice blue flowers. The other, sent to me from Leningrad by George Rodionenko, Director of the Botanical Garden there, is labeled *I. orientalis* F. Nana, and Dr. Rodionenko's note says it was collected in Mongolia. It is similar to the other in color and height but to my taste its form is less pleasing. Both of these have only two buds at the terminal and no branch which would fit *I. sanguinea*. I am confused about these two since the Check List records Orientalis Nana as an invalid name. I think they are probably a dwarf form of *I. sanguinea*, however, because of the two buds and lack of branching and that feature also makes me wonder whether the plant called Nana which I have may not be from *I. sanguinea* instead of *I. sibirica*. Even a short *I. sibirica* I would expect to have more than two buds at the terminal, although its short scape might not allow room for a branch. If Peg or others have information about these four little fellows, I will appreciate comments.

There are, of course, others in our garden with small flowers on low scapes. Notable among them are LADY GODIVA and one sent to me by Lorena Reid labeled 'pink dwarf 68-1'. Both are lavender pink, very low and small, but I have had them only two years and cannot be sure yet about their future behavior. The same is true of the rather exotic LOOKS MOHRISH. I have obtained LITTLE DAN, ACUTA and SKEENA only this year but will watch them with great interest. Another of my own seedlings, SM 67/90, is a nicely colored red one which I have high hopes for.

I can make only a very preliminary comment about tetraploidy in breeding small ones. One would expect tetraploidy to be unhelpful in developing miniatures because it tends to make the flowers larger. However, I have been told that in daylilies it can be useful. At all events, I treated with colchicine some sprouted seeds of crosses involving my smallest ones. They bloomed this year and two of the fifteen seedlings proved to be chimeras. The stalks were only 12 inches tall, but the flowers were about 4 inches wide and were too large for the height of the plant. Further experience may be different, but as of now I doubt that tetraploidy will be useful in breeding for the little ones.

As Peg's article emphasized, there is need for more of the really small Siberians. I am sure this is a challenging field for hybridizers which will pay good dividends, and I hope more will enter it. (Note, on the question of names of the cultivars; I think it is quite possible that all four of the dwarfs, SIBIRICA NANA ALBA, Weisser Zwerg, and the Orientalis Nana and I, orientalis F. Nana, could be from *I. sanguinea*. SIBIRICA NANA ALBA was apparently either never registered by Amos Perry, or somehow the record of the data of registration was lost, or possibly it was actually in commerce before registration of irises was instituted. The only date I have had access to for it is the one in the AIS Check List for 1949 which indicates it was listed in his catalog at that time - 1940. I suspect that Mr. Perry, who was occasionally rather careless about registering his introductions, didn't bother to do so when he introduced it - or it might have been sunk in transit; there were U-boats about in those days. His SIBIRICA NANA, which was introduced in 1940 but not registered, would suggest that he might have introduced both at the same time. The name was evidently validated at some later date, perhaps by action of the AIS Board. Orientalis Nana is classed as not a valid name because it was not registered - and not validated later. (as for the use of the name SIBIRICA for what seems likely to be a hybrid or a form of *I. sanguinea*, this does not seem to have been an uncommon thing. The group of garden Siberians went by the term Siberian in common parlance; some who wanted to be, or seem to be, more scientific, wore apt to use the term Sibirica, not always with much regard to the actual ancestry of the iris. As for Orientalis, or *I. orientalis*, this was an accepted term for the species we now call *sanguinea*, and is still used by some even though the botanical world has agreed that *sanguinea* as the species epithet antedates *orientalis*. (I hope this clears things up a little. Weisser Zwerg might possibly be the same as SIBIRICA NANA ALBA, with the label lost in the war or in the shuffle. Peg)

*

THE GROUP LIBRARY

Copies of the following American publications are obtainable from the Hon. Librarian, Mrs. J. Hewitt, Haygarth, Cleobury St. Mary, Cleobury Mortimer, Kidderminster :-

Newsletter of the Spuria Iris Society.

Reviews of the Society for Japanese Irises.

Journals of the Siberian Iris,

The Genus Iris ,.,, subsection Sibiricae - B.I.S.

Alphabetical Table and Cultivation Guide to tho Species ...B.I.S.

Please include postage when requesting items.

THE SEED DISTRIBUTION

The following seed are available :-

Section *Laevigatae*;

<i>I. Laevigata</i>	25 pkts. at 5p
<i>I. Pseudacorus Bastardii</i> (Pond Iris)	5 pkts. at 5p
<i>I. Versicolor Kermisiana</i>	13 pkts. at 10p

Series *Sibirica*

<i>I. Sibirica</i> (28 Chromosomes)	11 pkts- at 5p
<i>I. Sibirica</i> (small) Dwarf form of <i>Sanguinea</i>	4 pkts. at 5p
<i>I. Sibirica</i> (short) Purple/Blue Purple	2 pkts. at 5p

Series *Chrysographes*

<i>I. Chrysographes Hybrid</i> (Purple and White)	15 pkts, at 5p
<i>I. Mirza Citronella</i>	18 pkts. at 5p

Series *Tripetalae*

<i>I. Setosa</i> . (Blue Violet) col Hokkaido Japan	6 pkts. at 10p
<i>I. Setosa</i> (Red Violet) very rare	5 pkts at 10p

This is the last time we will be offering one or two of these items.

Will you please add postage when you send for seeds to :-

Mr. E. Elliott, Seed Distribution Officer,
27 Nelson Street, COTMANHAY, Ilkeston, Derbys. DK7 8PA,

THE GROUP'S OFFICERS

Chairman Mrs. H. M. Goodwin, 42 Tycehurst Hill,
LOUGHTON, Essex

Hon. Secty/Treas Mrs. Joan Trevithick, 86a Grantham Road,
RADCLIFFE-on-TRENT, Nottingham.

Hon. N/L Editoras above,

Hon. Seed Distribution Officer ... Mr. E. Elliott, 27 Nelson Street,
COTMANHAY, Ilkeston, Derbys. DE7 8PA.

Hon. Librarian Mrs. J. Hewitt, Haygarth, Cleeton St. Mary,
CLEOBURY MORTIMER, Kidderminster, Worcs.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Income and expenditure Account for the year ended 31st December 1979

	£	p		£	p
11. 4.79 NewsLetter & Postage	5.67		Subscriptions	15.50	
31. 7.79 Leaflets	7.00		Donations	13.50	
29.12.79 Donation to B.I.S,	<u>5.00</u>		Sole of seeds and plants	4.13	
	17.67				
Surplus	15.46				
	<u>33.13</u>			<u>33.13</u>	

Balance Sheet as at 31st December 1979

Accumulated Fund	43.48	Interest for 1979	3.61
Surplus for year	15.46	Cash in Bank	55.33
	<u>58.94</u>	Total Cash in Bank	<u>58.94</u>

As you will see our finances are quite sound, and therefore we are able to keep the Annual Subscription at 50p, due on June 1st each year. I would remind you that from this total there will be a sum in the region of £10 to be taken, for Printing and Postage. The reason we did not have to pay so much last time is due to the kindness of our Printer, who gave her services, and to whom we extend our most sincere thanks. Thanks are also due to those members who sent donations as well as their subscriptions, I have sent a Donation of £5 to The Parent Society.

I feel we should not be complacent about the situation, because Postage Rates have, in some cases already increased, and paper is becoming more and more expensive, so if you have not paid your subscription, and you can check this because you will hold a receipt, will you please send it as soon as possible please.

TERMINOLOGY

It occurred to me, that members, new to the Iris World might wonder at the terms 'Diploid' and 'Tetraploid' mentioned in two of our articles, 'Diploid' means having the full or unreduced number of chromosomes, characteristic of the species (as in body cells). 'Tetraploid' means having twice the number of chromosomes of the normal 'diploid'.

This leads me in to something I have in mind for the June Newsletter; a comprehensive list of terms used in the growing and knowing of Irises, or at least as comprehensive as I can make it. The help of experienced Iris growers in our Group would be greatly appreciated.

LIST OF MEMBERS

British Isles :-

- Mr. J. Baxendale, 16 Fenton Road, Lockwood, Huddersfield, Yorks, HD1 3TX
Mrs. A. Blanco White, 72 South Hill Park, London NH3 2SN.
Miss E. C. Butcher, 20 Ticehurst Road, Forest Hill, London SE23 2TJ.
Mr. G. E. Caasidy, B.A. F.R.I.B.A. J.P. 67 Bushwood Road, Kew, Surrey.
Mrs. and Mrs. D. Conley, 17 Udale Close, Ainsdale, Southport, Lancs.
Mr. M. E. Davis, 29 Fairlawn Avenue, Moele Brace, Shrewsbury, Salop.
Prof. D. A. Dixon, Sea Birches, 6 Nicholas Avenue, Whitburn, Co. Durham.
Mr. E. Elliott (Seed Dist.) 27 Nelson Street, Cotmanhay, Ilkeston,
Derbys. DE7 8PU
Mrs. H. N. Goodwin (Chairman) 42 Tycehurat Eillr Loughton, Essex.
Mrs. J. Grout, Colt House Nursery, High Cross, Thurgaton, Notts.
Mrs. M. Hand, 49 Colborn Street, Nottingham
Lady U. Hicks, Porch House, Blockly, Glos. GL56 8BW-
Mrs. D. Hansford Morris, 'The Little House', 58 Oakley Street,
Belle View, Shrewsbury, Salop.
Mrs. J. Hewitt (Librarian), 'Haygarth', Clgeton St. Mary, Cleobury
Mortimer, Kidderminster, Worcs.
Mrs. M. E. Howells, 'The Old Corn Hill', Ingwardine Lane, Farlow,
Kidderminster, Worcs. DY14 OLP
Mr. V. H. Humphrey, 8 Howbeck Road, Arnold, Nottingham KG3 BAH
Mr. H. R. Jeffs, Nutfield Nurseries, Crab Hill Lane,
S.Nutfield, Redhill, Surrey.
Mr. F. I. L. Knowles, 11 Garth Road, Sevenoaks, Kent.
Mrs. E. A. Loverton, 96 Derby Road, Risley, Derby,
Flg/Offr, M. B. McCarthy, 22 Lockington Crescent, Stowmarket, Suffolk.
Miss P. M. Olver, 'The Garden House', Angley Park,
Cranbrook, Kent, TN17 2PN
Mr. M. Peach, 59 Channel Close, Heston, Middlesex TW5 OPJ.
Miss N. K. Scopes, 'Larch Cottage', 68 Somerset Road, New Barnet, Herts.
Miss K. M. Sharland, 'Broad View', Farnborough Common,
Farnborough, Kent.
Mr. J. D. Taylor, 'Saltwood', Fosseyway Avenue, Morton-in-Marsh, Glos.
Mr. D. A. Trevithick, 86a Grantham Road, Radcliffe-on-Trent, Nottingham.
Mrs. G. J. Trevithick, (Hon. Secty/Treasurer)
86a Grantham Road, Radcliffe-on-Trent, Nottingham.
Mr. A. E. Whittaker, 'Chestnuts', Hidden Way, Littleton,
Winchester, Hants.

Overseas

- Frau M. Ahlburg 3171 Rotgesbuttel, Hohes Feld 22, West Germany
Herr E. Berlin 795 Biberach/Riss, Marktplatz 5, West Germany
Dr. T. Tamberg 1000 Berlin 45, Zimmerstrasse 3, West Germany
Mr. Akira Horinoka 17 Kitamonodani, Minami-Ku, Osaka, Japan
Dr. R. H. Egli Avenue de Sully 67, CH 1814, La-Tour-de-Peilz,
Switzerland
Dr. D. Koza 1171 East Idaho Avenue, Saint Paul,
Minnesota 55106, U.S.A.
Mr. T. Nottle 5 Walker Street, Stirling 5152, South Australia
Mr. Ben R. Hager, 309 South Best Road, Stockton,
California 95206, U.S.A.

CONTACTS IN SOCIETIES

Secretary of the B.I.S. Mr. G. E. Cassidy, B.A., F.R.I.B.A., J.P.,
67 Bushwood Road, Key, Surrey.

Secretary of the Special Group: Prof. M. E. A. Bowley,
'Brook Orchard', Graffham, Nr. Petworth, Sussex.

Editor 'Spurie Iris Society Newsletter': mrs. Joan Cooper,
212 W. County Road, C. Roseville, Minnesota 55113 U.S.A.

Editor 'The Siberian Iris': Mrs H. L. Edwards,
235 Koehl St, Massapequa Park, New York 11762 U.S.A.

Editor 'The Review Society for Japanese Iris':
Mr. W. Ouweneel, R.R. 31 Box 206, Terre Haute, Indiana
47803 U.S.A.

NOTICES:

Anno Blanco White has the following Iris from Wisley for sale at £1 each, inclusive of P. & P. (proceeds to the Group), Available on a first, come first served basis from August this year. Subject to the weather (i-e. not too dry) and the time you would like them to be delivered.

Doris Hansford's 'ROB' and 'SPLASHDOWN'.

Alex Back's 'VALDA' and 'V.I.' (VeeOns),
also 'BOURNE GRACEFUL' at £3 inclusive.

Please send your order direct to :-

Mrs, A, Blanco White, 72 South Hill Park, London NW3 2SN.

(Anne is looking for a supply of I.'Monspur Blue', can anyone help please).

Messrs. Perry's Hardy Plant Farm Ltd. Theobald's Park Road, Enfield, Middlx. EN2 9BG. Tel, 01-363-4207 have notified me of a Special Offer to members of the B.I.S. until 5th April 1980 as follows :-

Iris Cristata	70p	Special Offer	60p
" Foetidissima	65p	do,	55p
" Kaempferi Blue Peter	75p	do.	65p
" do. - Varietgata	£1.15	do.	£1.00
" Louinisiana Hybrids	95p	do.	85p
" Sibirica Emperor	50p	do.	45p
" do- Mrs. Rowe	45p	do.	40p
" do, Mrs. Saunders	45p	do.	40p
" Versicolor Kermesina	65p	do.	55p
Minimum Order	£5.00	P. & P.	£1.