

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

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No. 13.

July 1983  
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THE OBJECTS OF THE GROUP.

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

As this NewsLetter is mainly about 'Water Irises', I hope you will not mind if I say a few words in praise of them. This year they really have excelled themselves. I. Pseudacorus flowered profusely, one spike produced 12, large beautiful blooms. I. Pseudacorus Bastardii had 9 paler, butterfly-shaped flowers, they are still flowering. I. Laevigata provided an exotic blue background for both of them. Now Iris Kaempferi (Ensata) is showing colour, more like 'magenta' than 'red', I always think. One, a 'Higo strain', I have, is deep mauve with paler mauve standards and a touch of yellow on the falls, a real beauty, my only wish is that it flowered for a longer period. All of these Iris are grown from seed during the last 15 years. Why not try them for yourself, they are so rewarding and they do extend the Iris season well into July, sometimes August. Oh.... One word more... 'Holden Clough' (which is believed to be a cross between Chrysographes and Foetidissima) has revelled in the early wet season and now the sunshine. One stem actually has had 15 flowers, and it is still out. Hopefully, it looks as if there will be seeds, it is such an unusual Iris.

Once again, many thanks to those of you who have sent in news of your Irises and also Show Reports.

We extend a warm welcome to a new member Angela Cadaxa, who is the newly appointed Conservation Officer for the British Iris Society. Angela tells me that she has started a card index of B.I.S. Members gardens and that if any of our Members are looking for a particular Iris, she will check and give them what information there is in the lists. Thank you Angela for your kind offer.

News of our friends overseas..... Our fellow Pilgrim, Trevor Nettle has been having rather a rough time in the South Australia fires, earlier this year, as you will see in the NewsLetter. We send him sympathy and best wishes in his recovery efforts. Floyd Wickenkamp the editor of the Spuria Group in America, another Pilgrim, who gave us such an interesting and informative account in the Feb. N/L has not been well we hope he will soon feel better.

For the February 1984 N/L it is back to the beloved Sibiricas, I wonder if there are any more reports on I. Mirza Citronella yet?..... Perhaps we could include some

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ideas on the position and soil, in which your Irises grow well, also any special treatment given to them, which might help others, who are having problems and difficulties..... Meanwhile... Good Gardening.... Do'nt work too hard. J.T.

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CHAIRMAN'S LETTER.

Dear Fellow Members.....

The very wet spring we had this year was evidently appreciated by the Sibirica and most of the Species Irises. I have never had a better season for bloom. The Spurias have also done well and I even had a bud on one of my Kaempferi (sorry Ensata) plants, which is quite an event for me. The T.B.'s grew very tall and many varieties had extra large flowers. I was surprised by the comparatively small amount of stem and rhizome rot, after so much rain. For weeks the garden was more or less awash, and I wondered if the bearded Irises could possibly survive. However they have proved not to be so susceptible to moisture as I had supposed. Now comes the hard work of splitting transplanting and generally tidying up. We could do with a little rain to soften the top soil.

I hear from the Editor that contributions to the NewsLetter are coming in well. Keep up the good work, it is very interesting and helpful to know how other Members are faring.

Best Wishes to you all

Hilda Goodwin.

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My Irises.

by Marlene Ahlburg.

First I must say that I do not have as many Siberians as I had 2 years ago, when I tried to sow everything I could get... Species and Cultivars. These I planted in a little meadow, which I had partially ploughed up... about 3,500 seedlings altogether. After a succession of catastrophies... drought, frost, caterpillars and children stealing the labels, as well as many, many weeds, I managed to save about 50 plants, which I brought into the house garden. This, however, is very dry, so my husband made me two 'Foil beds' to retain the moisture, which is good for my other plants too.

One of these 50 is a 'Yellow' amoena out of 'Cambridge x unknown' it is very late flowering and of fair form called 'Welfe'. Another is a very big white flowered one, probably 'Snow Bounty x bee' (tetraploid) with an enormous substance in the petals... like leather. Three of them are 40 chrs. Sibiricae, called 'Rainbride', 'Wiesenprinsep's' and 'Blanc Wiesenmotte'. 'Rainbride'... a figure from a fairy tale, has a hanging form, dark purple with sparse, fine white lines, very large flowers. 'Wiesenprinsep's'.... Meadow Princess is red/purple with white and has flaring little flowers. 'Blanc Wiesenmotte'.... Blue Meadow Moth is a lavender/Blue with a conspicuous 'moth-shaped signal looking like a mysterious insect....

Three of the seedlings are dwarf forms, one of them being a reverse amoena, with dark blue standards and sharply netted blue on white falls, probably a 'species' but I do not know what it is, as the label is lost. All I know is that it is very special.

I have a number of Dr. McEwan's plants, mostly diploids, because these stand the  
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better than the tetraploids, which have mostly 'dried up' in the course of time. One very good diploid is a white seedling 'McEwen 69/70/7' with a large yellow signal 'shining' all over the garden, with lots of flowers. Also good is 'Margot Holmes', beautiful blue, with lots of blooms and good form. I still have 'Dreaming Yellow' and 'Floating Island', but, together with other diploids they are not 'glad' to be with me.

'Butter and Sugar' and a white seedling of the McEwen yellow line (Butter & Sugar x McGarvey's best white) are doing well in the foil bed and should be good this year.

One I like very much is 'Dear Delight', bluer than 'Cambridge', I think and a very good round form. Of course 'Cambridge' is nice and healthy, as also is 'Ego' (McGarvey), both of them very good garden Irises. I believe another diploid of Curriers I like is 'Ruffled Velvet', robust, healthy and a busy flowerer. Maybe you think the colour a bit dark and smokey, but by close inspection you will think it is really beautiful.

There are a number of cultivars, the remains of those I had bought, that do not like my garden, or should I say the spot that I have given them. I try to find a better place, but often in vain. The tetraploid 'Navy Brass' (see Peg Edwards) being the most pretty, I think. 'Dear Dianne' is not long enough with me to say anything, except that it is a pretty flower and is increasing well .. so far. One I call 'Denkewitz Rose' is the only red Sibirica growing well in my dry, sandy garden. I received it, years ago from Lothar Denkewitz, who told me that he got it as an extra, without label from America. Years later I read in our 'Standengarten' that he had registered a red Sibirica I have tried, but have failed to contact him. I gave Ray Jeffs and Cy Bartlett a piece last year. It is a 'sanguinea' type plant with beautiful red flowers and a bluish flush very free-flowering. Everyone who sees it wants a piece, but of course my plant is small. A nice one, which seems to require a lot of sun is 'Kobalt Bleu' from Tomas Tamburg. 'Wide White' also from Tomas is beautiful, but does not seem to flower as well for me. A funny thing is '404 Yellow Chris', with it's stems winding on the ground like snakes, but it always has a good number of stems.

I must mention the only Sibirica (40 chr.) which is a reliable re-bloomer in our garden, namely 'Echo Two' (Jean Witt). It starts flowering as is normal for 40 chr. with 5 stems... never under, but what follows.... when the 40 chr. flowers have finished and growing seed pods.. lol.. 'Echo Two' starts again flowering beside the pods, some 3-5 stems, until the frosts come. The plant itself looks a bit untidy sometimes, and the flowers are not very conspicuous only just nice, but where is another 40 chr Sibirica doing the same, in dry sandy soil too. Surely it should be used for hybridising.....

Concerning Japanese Irises, I think you can imagine they do not prosper with me. Curriers' 'Purple Parasol' is still alive, but only increases so 'so' and if it has one stem a year I enjoy it. A seedling of, one and a gift called 'Morning Joy' are both beautiful, but I often ask myself if it is really worth the waiting and coddling for just a stem or two?? I have, however a number of Ensata seedlings which have not yet flowered, hoping for some that will resist the drought.

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The tall Spurias are not good in our garden, The only one, I bought in 1965 is I.Crocea, it does not increase well and in all this time has only flowered 3 or 4 times. I like the flower, but regard it only of botanical, not horticultural interest. My husband takes photographs so that we can enjoy them in the Winter time with our gardening friends. I have only grown other Spuria from seed. One of them I.Carthalinae has large violet flowers. The others, including some of Alex Back's seed have yet to flower, it does seem to take a long time for Spurias grown from seed, to bloom. Better are some of the little Species, such as I.Graminea, a plant which was given to me by a Farmer's Wife in our village in 1963. Very floriferous, but without fragrance... or so my nose tells me... nice for cutting. I.Sintenisi, I have 4 seedlings, they are tiny, but they show their flowers high above the leaves. I.Brandzae are still pondering, they flowered 3 years ago, perhaps they will this year. I.Pseudocyprus, has a most beautiful, large brightly coloured flower, it is about as tall as Graminea. I must confess, I am not quite sure what it is, I intend to study it more closely this year. I have the bluish form of I.Halophila, this flowered first in the Summer, then in the Autumn last year, with 5 or 6 flowers on each stem, I hope it will do it again this year. I.Unguicularis I flower on the window-sill, we cannot grow them outside, much too cold.

Now I wish us all a beautiful Iris Season..... Your friend and fellow Member.

Marlene.

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#### An Iris Experience.

by Ray Wilson.

Our recent introduction to Iris culture was associated with memories of I.Hoogiana and some T.B.'s at Bees' Nurseries in Cheshire about 25 years ago. At that time we were mainly interested in vegetables and it was only after a considerable time lapse and circumstances leading to retirement that re-awakened our interest in these beautiful plants. Apart from their intrinsic beauty they presented a challenge, one we did not want to resist. Probably the most important event, which consolidated our interest was shortly after joining the B.I.S. we read in the Newsletter that there was to be an Open Day at ACTON FIGOT. After initial enquiries we were made welcome by Margaret Owen who, despite her other culinary and horticultural pursuits, found time to introduce us to many other people present. A lot of these we later found were Members of the Local Group--- we were rather taken by a couple, who, cameras in hand, seemed to be dodging hither and thither---Official Photographers--- Well! Maureen and Barry Foster, at any rate, who later at Cannington, entranced us with their skills. The kindly Historian who who directed traffic to the car park, between periods of regaling us with a potted local History-- oh yes--- he said he was the local Group Treasurer too! We emerged from the meeting with a mixed collection of Iris, many of which were unknown to us and 3 T.B.'s. of our choice, a gift from Margaret Owen to New Members. There and then we knew we would be active Members.

From this beginning over the past two years we have acquired by dint of sow and  
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grow, buy and swap, a small collection of plants, which together with our alpinas and small shrubs almost fill our small garden and greenhouse... Just a little room left for the extra one, or two or.... At the start we decided to buy T.B's and D.B's-- Plant Sales Scheme and Group Plant Sales etc... to gain experience in various aspects of their culture. This was followed, or in some ways accompanied, by the purchase of some Sibiricas. At this stage, names only indicated that they were different varieties and later there would be a revelation, at the flowering. Realising our ignorance of the range of Species now before us, we invested in some B.I.S. Year Books and the standard works on Iris. Reading broadens the mind, and thereby slims the pocket. So 'breed from seed' was to be our motto. So we came to the Species Group... and we bred. Most of our seed came from the seed lists of the B.I.S. and the R.H.S.. Here we entered a fascinating world of compost and water... of temperature and time. Small successes we hailed with glee... the unpronounceable rolled off our lips.... well! still unpronounceable, but it was progress. We knew that it had all been done before.. somewhere, but... so what... it was our first time... So appeared seedlings of 'Munzii' and 'Hartwegii', followed by 'Halophila', 'Graminea' and 'Darwasica'. Then 'Clarkei' and 'Magnifica' and so on. Sibirica seedlings did not appear for some months and, of course we knew nothing of stratification until later. None have flowered yet, but pleasure is in anticipation....

Group Meetings and Cannington were welcome breaks and helped to fix faces to names--- does'nt your imagination run away with you!!!! It was at Cannington that we met our General Secretary, Mr. George Cassidy, someone who had time to talk, yet always busy. We nearly caught up with Cy Bartlett on occasions. The Show, the Lectures and the Visits all helped to put the B.I.S. into perspective... it was all about people and flowers.

A Meeting at Jennifer Hewitt's and we really got to grips with Sibiricas, we also got some of those extra one or two plants! Joining the Sibirica, Spuria and Japanese Iris Group seemed logical, as did joining the Remontant Group, after we discovered that we had some.

Although our bearded Iris, Sibiricas etc. were not new varieties, nevertheless they encouraged us to improve our stock. It was while we were looking, that we started sniffing, these plants had scent. We decided to investigate. 'Cass' was most helpful, supplying a piece of 'Aline' and putting me in contact with others who could perhaps help. From his copy of Olive Mussells' paper on scented Iris and the later contribution of Alex back, we learned that little had been done in this field. It is a project being actively pursued. Quite a few of our T.B's and D.B's flowered after one year, some of them from August onwards, indeed 'Wyckhill' one of John Taylor's seedlings was putting up spikes in October. Of the Sibiricas, only Margot Holmes flowered but it was beautiful. Of the Species, Tectorum bloomed well... Gracilipes small and shy, offered it's flowers one at a time, over a long period... Chrysographes and Dwarf Setosa gave us an abundance of flowers, but Forrestii did not favour us. The

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others, which are still seedlings, we will have to wait another year.

How lucky we were, that after a very happy, and in many ways, successful introduction to Irises, still another joy awaited us. On a visit to Pat Fosters at Newent, we saw Oncocyclus and Regalias and their Hybrids with T.B's, properly and got to know something of their methods of cultivation... Well... we have a little room left for one or maybe two more plants.... so we ventured..... we bought some Onco's, Regalias and other Aril bred Iris, together with some Juno's. We then went home and made our bed. By September last year, all was ready. Planting over by October, we settled down to wait for Spring..... Now... in February... 'Sari', 'Gatesii', 'Lortetii', 'Stolonifera', 'Magnifica', 'Aucheri', are all growing well. 'Sindpers' has nearly finished flowering.... With Danfordiae and the Reticulatas providing an early spring show, we feel well pleased that our Iris Experience has given us so much pleasure and interest.

What will the future bring? We have dipped into so many different pools, that it will take a little time to steady ourselves. We are beginning to know where we are going... and why.... Hybridising and Embryo Culture... Then, if we are good enough ... Showing. We hope that maybe our pleasure can be yours too.....

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# 'THEY WO'NT LET HISTORY DIE'

## 'After the Heartbreak of Ash Wednesday'

These are the headlines of the South Australian 'Courier', which are friend Trevor Nottle has sent, telling of the terrifying fires, which came to their area on Ash Wednesday this year. He writes to say that the fires missed his house, but by only 100 yards, many old and Historical houses were destroyed... His garden has been scorched by the drought, fires and lack of water. His Rhododendrons and Azaleas are dead, but his old Roses have come through, and are growing again. Trevor has written a book called 'Growing Old-fashioned Roses'.... Australia and New Zealand' which will be published in September...

Due to the time of year, his Iris were mostly dormant, so they escaped the onslaught, luckily, because he is just now considering a few of his Spurias for registration.

The pictures in the 'Courier', show a look of sheer determination on the faces of the people who are tackling the rebuilding and reclamation, it will be a hard task, but I am sure it will not take them long to complete the job. There is, however great sadness and grief for the loss of life in the area.

We send Trevor and his fellow sufferers, our best wishes in their efforts towards recovery, it is not very long ago that he was writing to tell us of his new pool and the planting around, but according to the paper, it would have taken a fire break of 500 Metres to have stopped the fires and saved some of the property. All the very best of luck..... J.T.



'BREAK A LANCE' for Iris Ensata, the Japanese Iris.

by Eberhard Schuster

Iris Ensata Thunb. which is the correct botanical name for the known species I. Kaempferi Siebold. is worth growing more often in our gardens. The species grow wild in East Asia, especially Japan, China, Manchuria and Korea. You will find them in meadows which are moist in spring.... I. Ensata is not a 'bog' plant, but many growers make the mistake of planting them like this, perhaps this is the main reason for them not being as popular as they should be.... They will die if you grow them all the year round in wet soil or shallow water. Who doesn't know a picture from Japan, showing Japanese Irises, in bloom, in shallow water? but... and this is important.... the gardeners there, overflow the blooming plants for aesthetical reasons only. They are not standing in shallow water, all the year round.....

Most varieties will grow well in normal garden soil, in our gardens, they do not need any soil preparation to hold the moisture... Some varieties prefer only a very moist soil in Summer and a dry one in Winter. I grow all my varieties in normal garden soil with very good results... Our soil is sandy, it would be much better if it was loamy. One thing is important it must be acid, about 5.5 PH. The leaves will become chlorotical and the plants will die in a limy soil..... Max Steiger, a German Iris grower, developed a 'Care' (calcium-resistant) strain of Iris Ensata about 20 years ago by growing some 10,000 seedlings in calcareous soil and crossing the 10 survivors.

The plants are heavy feeders, they like a soil rich in organic matter, with a year round mulch of well-rotted manure or pine needles. In addition I use a special acid fertilizer... the results are good. Withhold the fertilizer from the newly transplanted rhizomes until they show new growth. The best time for transplanting is Sept.-Nov., but it can also be done in the Spring (Early). Plants need to be divided every 3 or 4 years. The rhizomes should be set about 5 cm. deep. Well-nourished plants are relatively free from disease.

Iris Ensata is easily raised from seed and the seedlings generally require 2 years to flower. You can make the percentage of flowering higher, after 2 years, by additional foliar nutrition every 4 weeks. The Autumn is the best time for sowing, because the seeds need a cold period to germinate.

I would be very pleased if more Iris growers tried growing Japanese Irises in the garden.... The Plants are well worth the effort.....

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'JOHN.W. WOOD WRITES FROM NORTH CAROLINA'

(This article is reprinted from The Review, the magazine of the American Society for Japanese Irises, by kind permission of the Editor.)

If you are having trouble growing the exotic Japanese Irises, here is a sure-fire way to remedy the situation, and have them in bloom where you most desire them... Secure a child's wading pool, which is about 5 feet in diameter and 1 foot deep. Dig out a hole that will accomodate the pool and bring the rim to ground level. Save the

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top soil from the hole. Make four or five  $\frac{1}{4}$  ins. holes midway between bottom of pool and rim, spaced equidistant round side of pool. Put about one or two inches of soil in pool and add about 25 or 30 charcoal brickets, scattered over the soil. Cover them with about 1-2 ins. of soil. With the top soil you set aside, mix one bag of dehydrated cow manure (black cow) and one bag of organic peat. (You may want to add additional humus, depending on the texture of your top soil). Fill pool to within 1-2 inches of the rim with this mixture.

Plant the Irises 6 ins. from the side of the pool, about 1 foot apart. One pool will accomodate 12 to 15 plants (single division). Water in thoroughly and mulch with something that does not pack. Pine straw is excellent. When the soil settles after watering, you will have about 3 ins. for mulch to rim of pool. Depending on the Winters, you may want to add additional mulch.

The  $\frac{1}{4}$  ins. holes in the side are for drainage and the charcoal is to prevent the wet area below the drainage holes from souring....

I have found the pool is good for two to three years of bloom, with a little fertilizer sprinkled over the bed and watered in, in spring and after bloom.. The increase is very prolific and this too will determine when the plants are to be divided and the pool re-worked and re-planted.

The nice thing about pool grown Iris, is that if rainfall is sparse, there is no problem in giving them sufficient moisture, as the bottom of the pool is a reservoir for water. If you buy a pool in the off-season, you can construct a bed for under 10 dollars for materials, excluding plants. This is a small price to pay, considering the beauty at bloom season and the fabulous increase.

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#### THE BRITISH IRIS SOCIETY ANNUAL SHOW 1983.

by Jack Vennor.

The Nationwide appalling wet Spring of this year, must have caused most Irisarians to be pessimistic about prospects for the Iris season. Early reports on Irises, from most sources, were depressing, being mainly about the high incidence of fungoid diseases and rhizome rot, as well as retarded and distorted growth. It must therefore come as a pleasant and unexpected surprise to those Members who managed to attend the B.I.S. Show, held in Reading University, to find that two large Laboratory Halls, allocated for the Show, were nearly full of flowers. One Hall was devoted entirely to Bearded Irises and the other Hall contained Beardless Apogons only.

Iris Species, Species Hybrids and P.C.I.'s in particular were predominant and made up for the lack of Sibiricas and Spurias, so much so that any classes with no entries were hardly noticeable. Nevertheless, there were a few nice Sibiricas.... Ray Jeffs showed a group of three... 'Kobalt Bleu' (Tamberg 78). a cobalt blue self with light blue style arms; 'Cambridge' still one of the very best Sibiricas available: 'Sea Shadows' too well known to need description and seedling SST88 that appeared to be a tetraploid. 'Kobalt Bleu' always seems to create a good impression when shown, but strangely it does not seem to have been widely distributed. (cont)



Mary Tubbs showed a mid-blue Alex Back seedling and the old, but effective 'Yankee Trader', which is about the nearest thing to a *plicata* in Sibiricas. Cy Bartlett showed 'Summer SKies' and the very much under rated 'Lavender Light'. Understandably it was too early to see examples of those Giant Spurias that have graced previous Shows. Hilda Goodwin had a vase of smaller 'Kerneriana', mainly in bud, that showed great potential, but denied us the pleasure of a mass of open blooms.

Although our Group caters for Members who grow Sibirica, Spuria and Japanese Iris, our interests do spread to Pacific Coast Irises, which readily hybridise with Sibiricas Also without going too far into Species (adequately covered by the Species Group). We do our best to promote interest in *Pseudacorus*, *Laevigata*, *Kaempferi*(*Ensata*) and other named varieties of the Beardless Irises. So, I have extended my brief report to include a nice group of Irises which won the 'William Herbert' Bowl for Ray Jeffs. They were Iris *Pseudacorus* 'Beuron' (E.Berlin 79), Iris *Missouriensis* and Iris *Tectorum*. 'Beuron' is a nice tetraploid with *Laevigata* form and 'Missouriensis' has blue flowers veined with white.

Finally a few words must be said about the P.C.I.'s, they were splendid, in a wide variety of colour combinations. The 'Banbury' Types are still among the finest, owing to their flower form and bud count.... 'Sugar Candy'(Brummitt 66) was a great eye-catcher. The now famous Australian 'Hargreaves' Strain was prominent and showed how the colour range had been widened, but, I suspect, that further breeding, crossing with other strains and careful selection is necessary to improve the bud count

The weather conditions and the early Show date, may not have been helpful for the Exhibiting of Sibiricas and Spurias, but overall the Show was most successful and enjoyable, with an added bonus of easy access to the extensive University grounds, where, at suitable intervals, our Members were able to admire Roses, Shrubs and Herbaceous Plants, all revelling in the warmth of a lovely day.....

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I.G.A. MUNICH 1983.

by Anne Blanco White.

This Exhibition covers an area comparable in size to Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens. It is in two parts, joined by a bridge, over the motorway. Acres of grass on which the Munichers can relax, surround lakes which are fringed by *I.Pseudacorus* and two variant *Bastardii*. Naturally, there are magnificently equipped 'play areas' for the children and 'cafes' for all. Dispersed among these essentials is the equivalent of the Chelsea Show.

When I was there at the end of May, the Bavarians had been suffering from a very 'British' spring and flowering was completely out of schedule, but it was a superb day of blazing sunshine and huge crowds were surging out of the station, the buses and private cars without making any impression on the space available.

The Main Exhibition Hall, housing seasonal display was concentrating on Irises and was so superbly lit that film.. balanced for daylight... recorded the correct colours without any need for filters. . The displays here were commercial...(cont)

partly from Nursery gardeners and partly from Ceramic firms. The Nurserymen featured Bearded Iris such as 'Gypsy Jewels' and 'Lorely' set among other herbaceous plants, providing a very good idea of the garden effects that could be achieved. For the Ceramics, Sibiricas and Dutch Cultivars were used in arrangements, to 'set off' the various shapes of the containers. Oddly enough there were no variegated forms at all, either here or in the main Iris plantings.

There were various National gardens, laid out in the appropriate styles.. it goes without saying there were no Kaempferis in the Japanese garden yet, but I. Graminea Pseudocyperus was flowering in the Greek garden. Of course these were as crowded as similar exhibits at Chelsea, but here it was possible to move to an open space and get ones breath back, before tackling the next scrum.

Naturally there were other specific gardens laid out with spring and summer flowers, herbs, heaths, conifers, shade and water, and even one devoted to cemetery plots, and, of course the Iris and Hemerocallis section, which was partly flat beds and partly a long rockery, bisected by the little railway which runs through the grounds. Visitors madly peering at labels and making notes, would be interrupted by a gentle toot from the engine, then having to retreat from the track, much to the enjoyment of the passengers....

The year, having been as unhelpful as it was, most of the intermediates were on their last buds, while the tallies had not really got started. The only Sibirica in flower was 'Soft Blue' and the Spurias had not started to raise their spikes at all. Of the Medians 'In the Buff', 'June Prom', 'Cutie', 'Ice Fairy', 'Sinbad The Sailor' and 'Raspberry Blush' were still making a good show, while 'Daylight Splendour', 'Victoria Falls', 'Mirror Image', <sup>4 EISHACH</sup> were just starting for the Tallies. I was pleased to see the Oncobreds 'Eisgalast' (pale blue) and 'Lady Bernstein' (bronze amoena) doing well, but disappointed that the German introductions were rather few in number. There was what appeared to be a really historic section of I. Variegata selections including 'Shady Sands', 'Little Bluebird' and 'Charlie Brown'.

All in all, I would strongly recommend anyone with time to spare in Munich to visit this Park. Even if it had been pouring with rain, one would forgive much in a place where the exhausted visitor demanding beer is simply offered the stuff by the litre.....

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#### Regional Report for the South

Adrian Whittaker.

It has been an incredible season, over half of my Sibiricas have still to come out, all the Spurias are still in bud, even the earliest of them are usually out at this time.... The Tallies are in a very poor state with stems rotting off at the bases, and more scorch than I can ever remember. Regrettably I am unable to attend the Reading Show due to family illness, I hope other Members have had better weather and better results.

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( Dear Adrian, I do hope the sunshine has reached you now and that things are better, also that your family are all well on the way to recovery. J.T.).

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Regional Report for the East.

Jack Vennor.

'Comments on some of the Newer Sibiricas and Spurias'

This year, the Sibiricas in my garden varied in their behaviour, large clumps of 'Orville Fay' and 'Blue Pennant' were magnificent, but the newer tetraploids grew rather short, with few flowering stems. The best of the newer varieties were 'Yankee Consul' (lovely deep blue) and 'Snow Bounty' (white). 'Navy Brass'.. a favourite, did not flower. Of the diploids... most of the older varieties put up a good show, not as good as last year though. I am, however, thrilled with 'Swank' (Hager 68), it made a superb clump of dazzling blue flowers, I am also very pleased with 'Lavender Light', which is an Iris in the old tradition.... masses of butterfly-type flowers in an unusual shade of pale pinkish-lavender. It must surely be the earliest flowering Sibirica, the whole clump was up, and in flower long before the others had got going.

The older Spurias, including the 'Hutchison' varieties have put on their usual reliable show. At the time of writing are at peak flowering on 5 foot stems. The newer American varieties are not as tall... average 3½ feet, also they are not very vigorous, I await blooms on plants which are in their 3rd. season. This year out of 9 Americans only 4 flowered, namely 'Imperial Ruby'.. deep ruby-purple flowers with a yellow signal patch on the falls. 'Forty Carats'... deep pure golden-yellow flowers but absolutely no increase.. 'Looking Glass Eyes' has strange flowers, the standards which stand out stiffly at an angle approx. 50 degrees, are of pale slate colour, the falls are yellow, edged and marked with slate, the style arms are yellow with a centre purple stripe.... 'Social Circle' is an amoena type, with large flowers... standards pure white, falls deep yellow with a narrow white border. Surprisingly 'Protégé' (Hager 66), which enjoys a good reputation in this country, has yet to flower in my garden. It seems that these American varieties provide the colour, so what is needed is some hybridising to provide vigour.... I know that Adrian Whittaker and Hilda Goodwin are successfully breeding Spurias, hopefully others will have a try.

As far as Sibiricas go, Jennifer Hewitt, Cy Bartlett and Ivor Knowles are raising good seedlings, so we may get some new British raised and registered varieties in our gardens, in the not too distant future.

In my opinion, we need more good wine-reds... It should not be too difficult to breed new varieties of this colour at both diploid and tetraploid level... Pinks and yellows are colours that will arrive eventually, but at the present time, I feel we need more pale blues... pastel shades much lighter than 'Cambridge'. In the recent past, dark blues and purples seem to have dominated the show benches. Actually, I believe, it is harder than one might think to get pale blues, they do not come just by crossing dark blue with white. I think a search has to be made through catalogues to find the right parents to start with, and enough space to grow the seedlings...



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- Review of the Society for Japanese Irises.
- Journals of the Siberian Iris.
- The Genus Iris.... subsection Sibiricae.. B.I.S.
- Alphabetical Table & Cultivation Guide to the Species. B.I.S.

Please include Postage when requesting items.....

TREASURER'S REPORT.

A big thank you to all those Members who have paid the 1982/83 Subscription, so promptly, may I ask you to do the same this year please, then we can keep the Subscription for 1983/84 at 75p. and also the 1984/85. As you will all be aware Printing costs are steadily increasing, but we are managing to 'hold our own', at the moment.... Please keep sending in your spare seeds, even if it is only one pod, because they really do help, every penny of the proceeds goes into the funds, together with the money from the sale of plants.

Copies of Alex Back's original Newsletter printed in 1976 are available...

The cost is 20p. plus 12½p. postage.

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HON/SECTY.TREAS.. Mrs. J.Trevithick, 86a, Grantham Rd. RADCLIFFE-ON-TRENT. NOTTINGHAM.

HON. N/L EDITOR.. ----- as above-----

HON. SEED DIST. OFFR.. Mr. D.Trevithick, 86a, Grantham Rd. RADCLIFFE-ON-TRENT.  
NOTTINGHAM.

HON. LIBRARIAN... Mrs. J.Hewitt, 'Haygarth', Cleeton St. Mary, CLEOBURY MORTIMER.  
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Show Reporter..... Mr. J.Vennor, 'Raven's Croft', 120, St. Osyth's Rd. LITTLE CLACTON  
Essex.

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

Miss H.C. Butcher, 20, Ticehurst Rd. Forest Hill, LONDON. SE23 2TJ.

Mr. G.E. Cassidy J.P. 67, Bushwood Rd. KEW. Surrey.

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 Dr. R.I.Woods, 8, Coppice Avenue, GREAT SHELFORD. CAMBRIDGE. CB2 5AQ.

Overseas.

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 Dr. T.Tamberg, 1000, BERLIN 45 Zimmerstrasse 3, West Germany.  
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 Dr. D.Koza, 1171, East Idaho Avenue, Saint Paul, MINNESOTA. 55106. U.S.A.  
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Contacts in Societies.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <u>President of the B.I.S.</u>                       | Mrs. A.Blanco White, 72, South Hill Park, LONDON NW3 2SN.                     |
| <u>Secretary of the B.I.S.</u>                       | Mr. G.E.Cassidy J.P. 67, Bushwood Rd. KEN. Surrey.                            |
| <u>Secty. of Species Group.</u>                      | Prof. M.E.A.Bowley, 'Brook Orchard', Graffham, nr PETWORTH Surrey.            |
| <u>Editor of Spuria Iris Socy U.S.A.</u>             | Floyd Wickenkamp, Spuria Iris Society, 10521, Bellarose Dv SUN CITY AZ 85351. |
| <u>Editor 'Siberian Iris' U.S.A.</u>                 | Mrs. H.L.Edwards, 235, Koehl St. Massapequa Park, NEW YORK. 11762 U.S.A.      |
| <u>Editor 'Review Soc. for Japanese Iris' U.S.A.</u> | Mr. W.Ouweneel, R.R. 31 Box 6 TERRE HAUTE. Indiana 47803 U.S.A.               |
| <u>Editor of Kent Group.</u>                         | Mrs. Molly Baker, Librarian, Kent Group, 77, Seddon road, MORDEN. Surrey.     |
| <u>Editor of Mercian Group.</u>                      | Mrs Eileen Wise, 197, The Parkway, IVER HEATH, IVER Bucks.                    |

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To the Hon/Treas. S.S.& J.Group.

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and arrears .....

signed.....