

THE SIBERIAN, SPURIA AND JAPANESE IRIS GROUP.

of the British Iris Society.

.....
 NEWSLETTER No. 15.

July 1984.

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 Irises and to offer help with problems.
 4. To report on Hybridisation.
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Editorial.

'We are S.S.&J's you know,
 We sow, and sow, and sow, and sow.
 When we can't find the Iris we desire,
 Through the News Letter we enquire.
 To many we are a 'race apart',
 Loyal Members give thanks, from the heart
 For 'tips and information' learned,
 And friendships they have always yearned.
 Yearly our numbers grow,
 A very good thing some say, so...
 Here's health to S.S.&J's
 And an end to this terrible verse....

Looking round my garden at the present time, I can't help thinking, what a display we could have put on at the Moulton Show on June 2nd, with the Irises that are out now. I. *Laevigata*, I. *Pseudacorus* and *Bastardii*, I. *Chrysographes* with its beautiful 'Rubella', I. *Setosa* and the Sibiricas 'Ruffled Velvet', 'Blue Burgee', 'Francis James' 'Sally Kerlin', the most beautiful 'Orville Fay', closely followed by 'Silver Edge' and 'Dreaming Yellow' and that magnificent fellow 'Gerald Derby' and several more. On the Show day I could only muster 2 flowers and one or two buds which flatly refused to open. Iris Radford came to the rescue with some more from her garden, but our friend 'Cass' nobly 'saved the day' by presenting us with a bunch of his lovely Sibiricas.

The East Midlands prepared the Stand as a 'thank you' to those Members who worked so hard to make the 1982 Show so successful. We fully appreciated how difficult it was for them to stage the Stand as well as prepare their own exhibits.

Brett Tussler is to be congratulated on his first ever East Midland Iris Show, he can be truly proud of the results. He kindly allowed us to sell some plants, so with the swelling funds we are now able to send a donation to the British Iris Society for their help and assistance throughout the years.

Paul Richardson from New Zealand, who was visiting England at the time, looked us up, bringing a sample of the 'T' Plan Tube Culture (more details under 'Members' Hints and Wrinkles'). Meeting him gave us the opportunity of thanking him for the excellent Photographs of I. (*Delavayii* x *Clarkii*) x *Forrestii*, crosses, which he has been making and which we were using on the stand.

Our thanks also to Trevor Nottle (Australia) and Adrian Whittaker (Spuria Rep) for their Photographs of the Spurias they are raising, they enabled us to show these stately Irises for the first time. What surprised me was how very close the colour

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lines are, we are sending photographs to both of them, so that they can compare notes. Our thanks to Marion Woods, whose delightful photograph of *I. Setosa* was greatly admired, this has travelled to New Zealand and back... Paul thinks it might be *Setosa Canadensis*.

Some of Alex Back's Slides 'came to light', so we were able to use one of his *I. Spuria*, name unknown, for the first time.

My personal thanks are due to Iris Radford, who ably assisted on the Stand, sometimes, we were quite 'rushed off our feet'. I know, however she went home, tired, but happy, when Members of the B.I.S. piled her arms high with their prize blooms.

Thank you to everyone who gave us their kind support, it was so nice to meet you all again, after a 2 year gap, also to meet our new Chairman Jack Venner for the first time. Although we know one another through correspondence and telephone, our meeting has long been delayed by unforeseen circumstances, unfortunately there is not much time when Show work keeps you busy.

We extend a warm welcome to 5 new Members, Mrs. Sybil Blackett of West Bridgford, who is also an Alpine enthusiast, our long-time friend Currier McEwin from the U.S.A. has joined us. At the Show we enrolled Mr. Brett Tussler who lives at Wellingborough, Mr. P. Allery from Aldridge Nr. Walsall and Mr. and Mrs. R.G. Parkes from Irchester Nr. Wellingborough. We hope you will all enjoy reading the Newsletter, and when you feel like it, join in the discussions on growing Sibirica, *Spuria* and Japanese Irises.

A word about the delightful vase of Pacific Coast Irises so beautifully displayed on the Publications and Species Stand at the Show. Such a variety of colours... absolutely superb... Congratulations...

In the February 1985 N/L we hope to have a look at the much-neglected Iris *Foetidissima*, sometimes called the Gladwin, Gladden or Beef-Steak Iris. Years ago to be found growing wild in woods and glades. Nowadays sometimes seen in Churchyards... Great strides are being made to improve the flowers and seed heads. We look forward to hearing more about them next year.

Happy Iris Gardening. Joan Trevithick.

Chairman's Letter.

What an extraordinary season this has been... I know it is common to express concern some weeks before Show Dates... will the Irises be in flower at the right time.... Usually changes in the weather put matters right, or nearly so.... I can recall Iris Seasons in the past, that have been too early or too late, but this year.... with more rain than normal... very few warm days... such cold nights..... 1984 has been one of the latest seasons I can ever remember....

The peakflowering period for T.B's and Sibiricas, here in Essex, is usually around June 5th to 10th. As I write (15th June) it looks as if it will be nearer to June the 18th before many of them will be showing colour, although many are in bud. *I. Sibirica* 'Blue Pennant' is however, coming into full bloom, what a fine, vigorous Iris this is.

Hybrid *Spurias* are showing their buds above the leaves, but I do not expect to see their full beauty until well into July...

I notice there is a lot more disease about this year. Many of the newer tetraploids have patches of brown foliage. Other Members have mentioned that they are having the same trouble... I suppose the best treatment is watering with Benlate... Sometimes, especially after replanting, occasional watering with a very weak solution of Permanganate of Potash can be beneficial.

May I add my congratulations to Brett Tussler for the Moulton Show. It is not an easy task to stage a Show for the first time, and he did it very well. I am sure a lot of hard work in preparation went into making it successful. Let us hope it will be the first of many such occasions... Well done...

It is my hope that you will all continue to send in your interesting articles and experiences, so that we can all learn more about these Irises, which are proving to be more fascinating as they are developed.

Best Wishes to you all.

Jack Venner.

My Irises.

by Jack Ashford.

I have been making a supreme effort to put my garden affairs in order this year ... in the process I came across the Newsletter of July 1983..... May I add my twopence worth to the 'Ensata quandary' So.....

My understanding was always that Ensata was a 'water Iris'... Tough.. Like I. Pseudacorus... I therefore set mine at the 'low Summer level' of my natural pond. It was a new pond made by digging a hole and letting the natural water 'seep in'... a lot of sweating and straining, as you can imagine. At first the Iris did poorly, the ground... an old paddock... very barren, barely able to sustain any form of life. However, by the simple expedient of digging in everything I could find... the fertility steadily improved and thereby the Iris.... I let the pond go... did not take out any fallen leaves and dead weeds, so by now the bottom has a good 6 ins. of primeval mud... and do 'nt the Iris like that!!!!

I then made, what I thought, at the time, was a fatal error... I dug a ditch to a nearby bog and raised the water level of the pond by about 6 ins. This I did over a year ago... the Iris are now mostly in water, only in high Summer are they on dry land.. They are growing through 9 ins. of water and are, quite obviously, liking it... So.. I for one, put my vote with the 'Water Lobby'....

One other item.. I made an effort to get a cross between I. Ensata and Iris Pseudacorus.... thought I had 'Pulled it off', but after starting to swell the seed pod rotted and fell off... Ah. Well!

My big trouble is that I find Siberians and Japs. do not readily transplant, in fact, I seem to lose about half and the rest.. just sulk for a year or two.

Good Gardening and Success to everyone.

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A Remembrance.

Some years ago, when I paid my first visit to the B.I.S. Show in the R.H.S. Hall, a very kind gentleman introduced himself as one of the Seed Distribution Officers, from whom I had been receiving seed for a long time, He was, of course the late Reg Usher.. He proceeded to take me round, pointing out the flowers I could expect when the seedlings matured.. I still have some in my garden to-day.

At a later Show, I met him again and once again he still showed that extreme, kindness.. He will be sadly missed and we send our sincere sympathy to his family and friends in their sad loss.

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A Message.

Our Fellow Member, Win Tallack, who has worked so hard as the Information officer of the B.I.S. is not well, We send her our Best Wishes and hope she will soon be feeling better... God Bless.

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Trevor Nottles Letter from Australia.

I was away from home promoting my Book during most of the last Iris Season, but managed to be at home for the Spurias, Siberians and Japs. also for the very early Pacific Coast Iris... Overall the season was only fair, many Iris not having recovered from the drought of 1982. So while the individual flowers were good, they were not present in large numbers... Best flowers were in a group of I. Sibirica x 'Polly Dodge' with several reds, purples and blues... all with a fine velvety finish. Among Iris Sibirica Grandis seedlings from Mrs. Witt (Jean), was a very tall pale mauve, which caught the eye among all the usual blues.

My Spurias flowered poorly, with many 'tagged' the year before, not flowering at all, so further evaluation will have to wait.

The best Spurias are still a batch of very dark blue seedlings, with more or less veining in gold, which are almost inky, One has red veins and I am going to send it out for trial this year.

The Japs. grew strongly during our reasonably mild Summer, but flowering was restricted, due to the drought again..... (cont).

While I was away in Sydney, I got plants of Iris Virginiana, in several forms, including a lovely lilac pink, but sadly, not the beautiful white. I also came home with 'Holden Clough' and a good piece of I. Pseudacorus Variegata. The latter is barely known here at all, so I was really pleased to bring it to my garden...

Members may be interested to know there is a book, soon to be published, called 'Growing Iris in Australia' by Graeme Grosvenor. It is, no doubt about T.B's, but is supposed to have 100 colour plates, so it should be interesting. Published by Kangaroo Press, the price will be 15 dollars plus p&p.

All the Best from Australia.

(Here are the names and a short description of the Spuria photographs that Trevor sent for the stand. Spuria 'David Huston', subdued mauve uprights, soft yellow falls with mauve tips. Spuria 'Sky Pilot', paler mauve with large yellowy patch on falls. 'Chocolate Paddle', chocolate brown (delightful) with subdued yellow patch on falls. 'Margaret's Gold Sanite', lighter mauve uprights, darker mauve falls, with a small deeper yellow patch, a real beauty. I know I have not given them the true praise that they deserve, perhaps Trevor will put this right, when he writes again. They were certainly an asset to our stand, and received much attention and admiration. Thanks.)

Paul Richardson's Letter from New Zealand.

Further to my comments on Tube Culture of Junos etc., the results of the first season are promising. Next season should really tell. I am also using the Tubes to grow seedling Japanese Irises. To clear up any possible misunderstanding, the Tubes are not TUBS, but are littall Tubes of heavy dark green plastic sheeting, open top and bottom, and holding roughly a bucketful of soil. The 'Caps' are clear plastic sheeting that can be fitted or removed, as required, and are supplied with small ventilation holes. In general terms the 'Caps' provide frost protection and a humid atmosphere. (For my purposes, with the Junos, the Caps are fitted in early December and are not removed until the end of March, in this case they provide the arid summer conditions needed.) For the Japanese seedlings the Tubes are used, partly to conserve garden room by enclosing the root system, and partly to facilitate watering.

I sink the Tubes partly into the soil, fill to lins. from the top with rich compost, and fill the water space, once or twice daily, as I sprinkle the Fuchsias. Placed in any odd corner they are excellent for forcing lettuce or cabbages, especially in crowded gardens. If they become a local embarrassment they can easily be moved, complete with contents to another location. The Japanese seedlings, and an odd Chrysographes seedling, which tends to be iffy in the open ground, are all flourishing. The facility of concentrating water, where it is needed, is the obvious advantage in these cases.

My seedling Chrysographes crosses continue to show promise. they are (Delavayii x Clarkel) x Forrestii. Those that bloomed for the first time last season all resembled Forrestii, but had a more robust growth. This season a further lot from the same seed bloomed for the first time and they all have Delavayii characteristics.

Although the garden always seems full, I usually have a few trays of seedlings and they nearly always get planted somewhere. This year we have started to gut down on T.B's, and try to make the garden look a little less like a half-baked nursery. I am in the process of putting up a 16' x 10' conservatory. Everything is ready, including the shelves and I just need the glass which the supplier seems somewhat reluctant to deliver. It is most frustating. Perhaps in our old age there might soon be a transfer of interest, at least, in part, from the plants in the open garden to those in pots!

Cheers from New Zealand.

(Paul goes on to say about his plans for a trip to the U.K. which were not going well at that time, however, as you will have realised ... he made it, and it was nice to meet him and his son as well. I hope that when he has found his feet again, he will write and tell us how his trip went. Pictures of his seedlings were given 'pride of place' on our Stand, I am sure that they will be very popular, once they have passed their trials. You will find more about 'Tubes' under 'Members Hints and Wrinkles' because there has been a slight change since Paul wrote this description. They look as if they will be a good aid in growing seedlings. Thank you Paul. Ed.)

'This article is reproduced from the Review of the Society for Japanese Iris (Fall 1983) by kind permission of the Editor. It is in the form of a discussion between the President Mrs. Wells. E. Burton and the Vice President Dr. Currier McEwen. '

.....
If I were seriously considering hybridizing Japanese Iris I would.....

- 1st. Buy the check list of Japanese Iris, put out during Adolph Vogt's term of office.
- 2nd. I'd study it to see what has been done.
- 3rd. I'd try not to use the same crosses that have been made.
- 4th. I'd work with newer award winners, thus using others work to climb towards my goal.
- 5th. I'd have a goal- maybe better branching, maybe 12' Japanese Iris etc.
- 6th. I'd keep records of my work--- in triplicate.
- 7th. I'd plant my seeds in an area where the seedlings could stay for 2 years.
- 8th. I'd keep my J.I. seedlings for 3 years -- at least --- 3rd year blooms are more typical.
- 9th. I'd try, not to keep more seedlings than I had room for or more than I could tend.
- 10th. I'd look for an improvement in a colour or a colour break in my seedlings.
- 11th. I'd look for more than two-way branching.
- 12th. I'd look for good spacing of the branches, so if 2 blooms opened at once, they would not be crowding each other.
- 13th. I'd look for good form.
- 14th. I'd look for good substance and texture.
- 15th. I'd show my J.I. seedlings, every chance I had.
- 16th. I'd visit gardens of J.I. growers and hybridizers and J.I. shows.
- 17th. I'd invite judges to see my J.I. seedlings and to give an unbiased opinion.
- 18th. IF I were seriously considering hybridizing J.I. I would check my soil to see if it was acid enough for J.I., if I had enough sun in the garden area and if I had an easy, near by source of water supply.

'Ginny' Burton.

- 19th. I'd work for early and late season flowers.
- 20th. I would look for repeat or continuing bloom.
- 21st. I would hybridize both diploid and tetraploid cultivars.
- 22nd. I would work for miniatures and all sizes.
- 23rd. I would work for flowers with green signals and with no signals.

Dr. Currier McEwen.

What would you do ???

Reprinted by kind permission of the Editor of The B.I.S. Year Book 1983.

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New Irises in the Tamberg Garden.

From a big group of seedlings of the cross '40 chr. Siberians x Iris Lactea (Ensata Lactea) ' we had a first flowering stem representing the new group of Chrysata Hybrids. The flowers were somewhat damaged by an insect, but they looked graceful and interesting. Their colour was blue with dark veins crossing the white centre of the falls.

We hope for a full flowering season of the seedling group next year. The cross itself is easily done and yields a lot of seed. Preferably the 40 chr. Siberian is used as the mother plant and pollen of the very early I. Lactea is stored for a short time.

The two flowers we had this year, proved to be seed and pollen sterile.

The development of the tetraploid Calsibe hybrid has gained some speed by the appearance of two new and fertile plants:- one, a blue and white coloured flower is derived from our own 40 chr. Siberian 'Beautiful Forty', the other one comes from a dark Mirza-hybrid and 'Banbury Gnome' and has a velvety black violet colour. The pollen of both plants has produced some 50 seeds with our 'Starting Calsibe', the second generation tetraploid Calsibe, now being introduced as the first of this type.

Horinaka's cross I. Versicolor x Laevigata has been repeated in our garden involving I. Versicolor 'Kermesina' and I. Laevigata 'Regal' as parents. From a number of seedlings, two flowered as rather small plants, showing flowers of intense wine-red colour and with flaring falls. In the meantime the plants have increased enormously

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and will certainly produce taller stems next year. Until now they are sterile, but colchicine treatment has already been done.

Two tetraploid *Sibrosa* hybrids (I.Sibirica x I.Setosa) had their first normal flowering season this year. Last year one of them produced two flowers on a stem, that was dwarfed by a very late frost. Even these flowers were fertile, however, giving rise to 54 seedlings by selfing and 60 seedlings by use of the *Sibrosa* pollen with tetraploid Siberians... The interesting aspect of the 1983 flowering season was the very late flowering of both of the original hybrids... They were much later than both of their parents... Flower shape was somewhat disappointing, indicating that only I.Setosa varieties with wide falls and short hafts should be used for such crosses.

Our efforts to convert wide-petalled Siberians of the 'Blue Rosebud' type into tetraploids finally resulted in two sectorial *chimaeras*.. One of them has tetraploid flowers of special width... wide, but upright standards... The falls show some ruffling.... The pollen of this seedling was successfully used with McEwen's 'Dear Dianne'.

Another conversion we had hoped for, took place with a seedling of 'Dreaming Yellow' x self... The result is a somewhat stiff flower in the colour of 'Butter and Sugar' which is fertile with other tetraploids... There is, however a lack of genetic variety in the field of yellow Siberians, and it is difficult to find a partner for such a new tetraploid, that avoids the disadvantage of highly inbred lines.

As a last success of the 1983 season, I should mention an extremely large and wide flowered 40 chr..Siberian.. The mother of this Iris is a seedling from Lorena Reid's seed circulated as 'Tall Iris Delavayii Hybrid' with the International Siberian Iris Round Robin.. The father is our 'Berliner Riese'(40chr. I.Delavayii x I.Clarkei.).

The following is also reprinted by kind permission of the Editor of the B.I.S. Year Book 1983. I think you will find that Currier's article sheds some light on the mysteries of Iris breeding.

I have previously written two articles on tetraploid Siberian Irises for the Year Book and have accepted with pleasure the suggestion of the Editor that I might do a similar to up-date my efforts to induce tetraploidy in Japanese Irises. By Japanese Irises, I mean, of course, not *Iris Japonica*, but the ones usually called *Iris Kaempferi*... Although that designation has been used for many years, it is, unfortunately, taxonomically incorrect, since that name had previously been used for another Iris. The taxonomically correct name is, I believe, *Iris Ensata*... which adds to the confusion, because, what has long been called I.Ensata is, I am informed, now correctly named *Iris Biglumis*... At all events, because of these taxonomic difficulties most of us find it much simpler to think of them as Japanese Irises... this has been given added authority in North America by the fact that the Society concerned with them calls itself 'The Society for Japanese Irises'....

In the two previous articles which I wrote for the Year Book, I have discussed 'general nature of tetraploidy and methods to induce it,' and therefore can be brief in doing so here.... Most plants, growing naturally, have two sets of chromosomes one set from each parent, and hence are called DIPLOIDS, meaning two-fold. In nature for reasons not known, some plants have doubled their chromosomes and are, therefore called TETRAPLOID or FOURFOLD... Tetraploidy appeared in this way in Tall Bearded Iris but, to my knowledge, has not occurred in Siberian or Japanese Irises.... It can... however be induced by means of the drug Colchicine, long used in the treatment of govt. The particular methods I now use are detailed in an article in the Bulletin of the American Iris Society... One other technical comment I must make relates to 'CHIMAERA'.. The Chimaera was a creature in Greek mythology which was part lion, goat and serpent.. botanists have used the term to apply to plants which have mixed tissue, for example, part diploid and part tetraploid.

I started treating Japanese Irises with Colchicine, using what I have called 'the sprouted seedling' method, in 1960.. By 1966 I had a number of Chimaeras and one which appeared to be a pure tetraploid, T.64/12 from a cross of 'Aghea x Shikino' kindly made for me by Dr. Shuichi Hirao, who helped me in those days by

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sending me many seeds for colchicine treatment. Mr. Arlie Payne helped me, most generously, in this way also... Unfortunately, in my crosses made with the Chimaeras only the Diploid pollen and ovules succeeded, with the result that only diploids resulted... and for some years my one pure tetraploid T₁ 64/12, seemed sterile. However perseverance was rewarded and in 1973, a cross of it, by one of the Chimaeras succeeded and my first.. second generation...and hence unquestionably pure-tetraploid bloomed.. It was only slightly better than it's parent, but it came, one which I considered good enough to warrant introduction.. so in 1979 my first tetraploid Japanese Iris was launched... It is a large flaring single with a wide and rather irregular border of raspberry colour... This colour is seen also at the tips of the styles.. Because of it's colour pattern I named it 'Raspberry Rimmed'. In addition to it's strong substance and attractive appearance, it has one or two branches and up to seven buds per stalk and it also repeats its bloom.

Since 'Raspberry Rimmed', I have selected for introduction only two more tetraploid Japanese Iris, out of perhaps 80 tetraploids of advanced generations. One is a white single which I named 'Triple Threat', borrowed from the sporting term meaning excellence in three ways, for it has a nice appearance and bud count and repeats. The third is a child of 'Raspberry Rimmed' in which the colour is much bluer, suggesting its name of 'Blueberry Rimmed'... There are now many more to select from for future introduction, but I have been slow in doing so thus far, because only in the past two years have I seen large numbers of Japanese Irises other than my own, and I have wanted to be sure that these plants compare adequately with the diploid plants already available.

The particular features of the Tetraploids compared with the Diploids are... strong substance giving a flaring form, richer colours and larger size. The greater size is not marked, however, which is fortunate since the Japanese Irises are naturally very large. One of my best single whites is what I call a preferential repeat bloomer, with one branch and three buds at first bloom and two to three branches and up to nine at repeat bloom, when the stalks are also about 6 ins. taller.... These virtues come about genetically, I believe, and not because of the tetraploid state.. but the latter does, I am sure, accentuate the virtues just as it could exaggerate shortcomings in a plant of bad genetic potential.

My experience suggests that singleness is dominant to doubleness in these plants, because although I have had many chimaeral doubles for some years, crossing them with my pure tetraploids, all of which were single, has given only single progeny. Only in 1982 did some rather nice doubles of advanced generations appear.

Among my current goals are the development of white flowers with green instead of yellow signals, truer pinks and blues, miniatures with 3 inch flowers on 10 to 12 inch stalks, and plants with repeat or continuing bloom. Second blooms occur in Siberian and Japanese Irises, not after a rest period of several months, as it usually does in the Bearded Iris, but after a pause of only one to three weeks.... Because of this striking difference, we have recommended that in the case of Siberian and Japanese Irises the second period be called 'Repeat Bloom' rather than 'Rebloom' to help underline the difference in timing... The Repeat Bloomers add much to the garden value of the flowers, giving nearly continuous bloom for as long as six or seven weeks and putting on a fine show, long after others have finished.

Although Experience is still rather meagre, the results to date encourage me to believe that tetraploidy in Japanese Irises will lead to improvements, as it has in the case of the Tall Bearded and Siberian Irises.....

(We look forward to seeing your lovely new Japanese Iris in this country Currier, thank you for such an interesting account of your work.) Ed.

Show Reports for 1984.

By Jack Venner.

The Early B.I.S. Show was held on Saturday June 2nd. at Moulton School near Northampton. It was an excellent venue, as a large hall had been made available for the Show and facilities were provided for light refreshments, but not an easy place to find.

1984 has been one of the latest Iris Seasons for many years. On previous occasions when seasons have failed to coincide with Show Dates, there is usually one exhibitor

at least, who has sufficient flowers to make the Show successful... This year it was the B.I.S. Year Book Editor, Cy Bartlett, who provided most of the blooms... He staged a large number of named T.B.'s, as well as some excellent seedlings, all grown in the warm sheltered environment of Cannington Agricultural College, Somerset.

It was nice to see a few Beardless Irises, when only an optimist would have expected any at all... Ray Jeffs had somehow managed to coax some of his plants into flower, remarkable, considering his garden, near Reigate, is in a cold, low-lying, area which is prone to late frosts.... He was awarded the German Iris Plaque for a vase containing one spike each of 'Anniversary', 'Cambridge', (both too well known to need description), 'Kobaltblau' (Tamberg 78), a cobalt blue self, with lighter style arms, 'Laurenstuhl' (E. Berlin 79), standards mid-blue and falls dark blue-violet, and 'Navy Brass' (McEwen 73) a fine navy-blue tetraploid with a gold blaze on the falls.... Ray also won the Angela Marchant Trophy with a vase of I. Missouriensis.

Mary Tubbs showed I. Sibirica 'Blue Burgee' (McEwen 71), another good purple tetraploid, unfortunately the round falls were slightly weather marked.....

As there were no Spuria or Japanese Irises, I should perhaps mention a few other beardless Irises, which helped to back-up the beardless Iris bench.... Among the Pacific Coast Irises, Hilda Goodwin had a fine vase of seedlings beautifully arranged. Our B.I.S. President, Anne Blanco White showed both types of Iris Graminea in one vase. The smaller Graminea may not be considered garden-worthy, because its flowers do not rise above the foliage, but it is scented, whereas the larger type, known as Graminea Forma Pseudocyperus is much taller, but completely scentless.

Naturally, there was little in the way of flowers to make up the S.S & J. Group Stand, but this had been anticipated by erecting a triple screen, more like three windows, in which were displayed, the next best thing to flowers... large colour photographs of Members Irises.... Including Sibiricas, Japanese and some arresting Spurias... Adrian Whittaker's seedlings showed how well his hybridising efforts are progressing... Trevor Nottles named Spurias told us how well they grow in Australia. Paul Richardson's beautifully photographed Crosses, growing so well in New Zealand. Last, but not least a picture of Spurias growing in Alex Back's garden, of which I see there are more in the B.I.S. Slide Library.... Group funds were given a boost by the sale of beardless Iris, all growing in small polythene containers.....

Regrettably, a number of Members were unable to make the journey to Moulton for one reason or another, but I hope this brief Report will convey some idea of the Show, where lack of blooms was compensated by the cordial atmosphere that always seems to prevail, when Irisarians get together.....

The British Iris Society Show at the Royal Horticultural Society Hall
12th. and 13th. June 1984.

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Beardless Irises were better represented at this Show, being mainly in the Shpws Division 3, classes 14 to 19 inclusive.

In Class 14... for 4 Hybrid Sibiricas in 4 vases, five Spikes of one variety in each vase..... there were six entries, all of a fairly high standard..... The winning Exhibit was shown by Bob Wise and was awarded the 'Spender Challenge Trophy'. His spikes stood literally above all the other Exhibits, the stems must have been nearly 3 feet tall.... The varieties shown were.... 'Ewen' tetraploid (McEwen 70), 'Orville Fay' tetraploid (McEwen 69), 'Navy Brass' tetraploid (McEwen 73), and 'Cambridge'. 'Ewen' has light flowers, much lighter than 'Polly Dodge', in fact they are almost Cerise... The standards are upright in the T.B. fashion and the falls, although, not as broad as some of the later Tets... are of good horizontally flaring shape.... My advice to all our enthusiasts is, if you have not already got it.... take steps to obtain a plant, as soon as possible.... 'Orville Fay' and 'Navy Brass' are two other excellent Tetraploids.... outstanding in Bob Wise's exhibit..... Second in the Class went to Ray Jeffs.... His Varieties were ... 'Cambridge'.. An E. Berlin purple seedling with nicely rounded falls... 'Anniversary', the well-known white (a good shapely Iris, if you can grow it) and Tamberg's SS TT 88, a nice violet-purple with broad, rounded falls..... Third went to Mr. H. Foster... His exhibit included 'Ego' 'Silver Edge' tetraploid (McEwen 73) with excellent mid-blue flowers, and 'Cleve Dodge' (McEwen 68) a very dark purple with rather narrow twisted falls. (cont).

I liked Jennifer Hewitt's stems of 'Welcome Return' (McEwen 76) a soft hazy violet-blue Jennifer also showed 'Illini Encore' (Varner 66), which has rather small white flowers, tinted lilac and violet.... The question is .. is it remontant... I hope so.....

Hilda Goodwin showed 'Violet Flare' (Cassebeer 59), an older variety, but attractive and interesting, because of it's colour which is so difficult to describe... I noted it as smokey-violet, with veining and a darker area in the centre of the falls.

Class 15 for Chrysographes and 40 Chromosomes Series, and only two exhibits. Mr. H. Foster had tall spikes of Chrysographes x Forrestii... The flowers were pale violet, almost white, with typical Chrysographes markings on the falls..... Dr. Wood had five assorted Spikes of 40 Chrs. Hybrids... Three being various shades of purple and two pale forms, with Chrysographes markings on the falls.

Class 16 was for Spuria Irises, so not surprisingly, there were no entries Spurias are barely in bud this year.

In Class 17, for other Hybrids.... Jennifer Hewitt came first with P.C.I.'s 'Lompico', 'Paper Boy' and 'Allure'... 'Lompico' (GHIO 70) was most impressive with lavender standards and red-purple falls edged lavender and with yellow in the upper falls... I am surprised that this variety is not better known.

Ray Jeffs showed a number of Spikes of 'Holden Clough' and also a vase of tetraploid Pseudacorus, the best of the series seen so far.....

Other Irises noted were Graminea (the short form).... I. Carthalinae (the only Spuria) and Cass showed a nice Spike of 'Pseudacorus Bastardii'.

This was perhaps not among the best of recent Shows as far as Beardless Irises were concerned, but there was some consolation for our Members provided by the large number of high quality T.B's. on view.

Regional Report for the North West.

by Ruth Conley.

'CATEGORY'!!!!

From time to time callers at our place remark on the little truncated triangle which must be negotiated to reach the door of a narrow porch, extending across the front of the bungalow. The porch itself excites comment, for all year through it is full of flowering zonal geraniums, which have no resting period.

Sometimes the remarks are pleasing enough and reveal a love, or at least an appreciation, of a garden and we are tempted to ask the speaker if he, or she, would like to see the main garden... This is always greeted with surprise and astonishment that such a large plot of ground should lie hidden behind such a tiny, insignificant dwelling...

In the kinder months of the year, we often entertain visitors in the garden room attached to the house, or in the garden itself, or are invited to walk round the garden....

Over the years, we have learned to classify these garden viewers into six categories.....

The Joyful Group. They exclaim rapturously over each and every plant... They extol the virtues of the meanest, leanest growth with the same fervour as the most luxuriant gold medal winner... The dog-eared, open standards Iris in our seedling bed becomes a 'wonder of creation'... How hard we must work... What a credit it is to us... Not a weed to be seen... (Do they think we zealously cultivate that chickweed and abominable cress)..... These people are the transitory light of our lives... They turn us into all-embracing experts, gardeners extraordinary.... We bask in their unrestrained admiration... Alas !!! the warm glow of their flattery fades, with the same speed as their departing backs.

The Erudite Group. They only admire what is admirable... but they do it in tedious detail... They will stand and discuss the reasons for the varied shadings in the foliage of a plant for ten minutes.. the texture of flower petals will keep them enthralled for foot aching hours.. They know about.. yes all about, every pest that is likely to be tempted to attack any plant, every vegetable virus, every ailment it is possible for each plant to suffer, and we wonder if we ought to have an horticultural hospital instead of a garden... Soil composition, compost, organic and chemical fertilisers are spoken of in technical terms... They know the full Latin names of every

(cont).

single plant in the plot, it's remote ancestor, who discovered it... when and where... They leave us ashamed of our own ignorance.

The Specialists. Their interests are limited to certain special plants... They fail to notice the flamboyant Paeonies, the tall spires of the delphiniums, the scent of the lilies... They have eyes only for their favourites... They will stand in front of a regal Iris, above a perfectly balanced set of healthy fans and measure the size of it's falls and their angulation, the disposition of the standards and the time that elapses before they droop or open... They will discuss the likely fertility of it's pollen and arrange it's nuptials, prophesying the qualities of any progeny... They know the pedigree of any flower, back to it's specie origin and who has been responsible for it's evolution to this state of grace... They will ask unashamedly for bits, or cuttings, or roots, yet at the same time leave you with a distinct impression that they have far better samples of the genus in their own garden....

The Under*Dog Group. If there are any small insignificant flowers lurking beneath another, they will find them... Not only can they see under leaves, but behind hedges and round corners... They love the forgotten seedling, the stray orphan, and will murmur ecstatically over it's form and lovely fragility... They will spot the one escapee blooming in an otherwise immaculate lawn... their pleasure at the find emanates from them like Spring sunshine as they stoop to adore the little Thing. These people move in a world of minorities, their lives are filled with lame dogs struggling to get over impossibly high dtilles.. We welcome them to our garden as we welcome the soft April rains... they nourish our horticultural souls with their enthusiasm for the unlikely.

The Better Than Thou Group. They also spot the escapee, and the moss, the clover and the plantain... Their tour of the premises is punctuated by cries of 'Did you know there's a nettle in that delphinium !.??? 'Shepherd's purse and chickweed seem to be doing well this year'.... 'Have you noticed those colonies of greenfly on your..... ???? 'I see you have got virus in your Iris'... 'Stem rooted lilies really want a place apart, they get crippled when they run like that'.. 'Those Alstroemeria have taken over have'nt they'... 'They arènt the best for ground cover. I'd try..... 'If I were you,... ' as if it is only by some quirk of fate that our identities are not exchanged.. It is with great restraint that we refrain from pointing out that, were they me, they would do exactly as I do... They are full of 'I've got'.. and 'In my garden...'. They are only concerned with proving to themselves that their garden is a hundred times better than ours... Why is it .. I wonder, that they never invite us to visit their exquisite estates.

The Real Gardeners. They also admire only what is admirable. They tactfully ignore the weaker members of our floral family. They are knowledgeable, practical people, who, without comment, will pull up the shepherds purse, the groundsel, even the nettle... Will squash the bug which has the audacity to invade our premises and will automatically remove the dead flower heads which I missed on the morning round... They tell us of the latest cure for a mossy path and ask how we treat the lichen on the apple trees. They discuss our problems with sympathy, they commiserate with us on our failures, yet they are neither patronising nor flattering.. They are the genuine garden lovers. The ladies never damage a lawn with their high heels, nor do they carelessly swing heavy hand bags. They do not crush the delicate blooms with clumsy fingers nor bruise the tender fruit... If you ask them for advice they do not actually give it to you, they just make you sure of the things you already know.....

They may come again..... and again..... and again.....

Regional Report for the East

by Jack Wenner.

I regret that this year I have not visited any gardens in the area. I had hoped to see Hilda and Don Goodwin's garden... but must try again next year. In my own garden I am again pleased with Sib. 'Swank', it has gorgeous near blue, well shaped flowers... it is a short grower... Another satisfactory Short Sibirica, just coming into bloom is 'Polly Dodge' a lovely dark magenta. All I can say about the new Spuria hybrids is that they are in bud. Adrian Whittaker's selected seedlings look as if two will flower this year... I will give a report in the February /85 NewsLetter.

The British Iris Society Slide Library.

Some slides... 12 in all... taken by the late Alex Back, of his Spuria Iris, have 'come to light' and are now in the care of the B.I.S. Slide Librarian, Maureen Foster... If you would like to see these Slides, please apply to Maureen at the following address:-

Mrs. M. Foster, 56, Darren View, CRICKHOWELL, POWYS, WALES NP8 IDS.

To members of the B.I.S. Maureen sends a message, that she now has some magnificent slides of Japanese Iris from Mr. Hirao, including both classic and recent varieties... Also a long-awaited selection from Currier McEwen, showing his recent Siberian and Japanese Iris, these are in addition to some excellent prints of Spuria 'Academus' (Fothergill 54), I. Orientalis, I. Monaurea, I. Graminea, I. Notha, I. Crocea and various cultivars starting with 'Sunny Day' (Sass 31) right up to the recent Hager plants...

On application, Maureen will send the slides to you, then when you send them back to her, please enclose stamps to cover the outward journey....

(Please note that if you are NOT a Member of the B.I.S. only the 12 Alex Back's Slides can be sent for.) sorry.....

The Group Library

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

NewsLetter of the Spuria Iris Society.

Review of the Society for Japanese Irises.

Journals of the Siberian Iris.

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

Alphabetical and Cultivation Guide to the Species. B.I.S.

Please include Postage when requesting items.....

The Seed Distribution.

Packets of seed are priced at 5p each... Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope when applying to the Seed Dist Officer:-

Mr. David Trevithick, 86a, Grantham Road, Radcliffe-on-Trent, NOTTINGHAM NG12 2HY.

Section Laevigatae.

I. Laevigata (blue). I. Pseudacorus (deep yellow). I. Pseudacorus Bastardii (pale yellow)

I. Pseudacorus 'Sulphur Queen' var. Bastardii. I. Pseudacorus 'E. Turnipseed'

I. Pseudacorus 'Golden Queen' var. Superba. I. Versicolor.

Series Ensata Kaempferi).

I. Kaempferi (ensata). Ruby-Red (5 packets).

Series Tripetalae

I. Setosa (8 packets). I. Setosa (blue-violet) '4 packets'.

Section Xyridion.

no seed left.

Series Spuria.

I. Spuria 'Violet Bloomfield'.

Please send in any seed that you can spare, there is a very great demand for them now that our Irises are becoming better known.....

Treasurer's Report.

Dr. R.I.Woods has suggested that a 10 year Subscription of £10, no postage, no reminders and perhaps 2 generations of Spuria breeding... Inflation risks of course, on both sides, but perhaps more Members would result....

This was put to the Committee, and the majority decision was that the £10 was rather a heavy burden, particularly on older Members, and that if insisted upon, it may not be popular... It also presupposes that the Subscription is £1 per year, whereas we are keeping it at 25p until 1985.... Of course some Members do add the 25p from time to time, of their own free will, and we already have some commuted Subs., the longest being until 1990, with a review at the end... It is all left to the individual Member... The Seed Distribution, which is well supported, brings a steady, but not large income... When we put a stand on at Shows, as we did at Moulton, the sale of Plants brings in quite a tidy sum in profit.. £14... of which £5 is being donated to the British Iris Society for their help and assistance.

I would also add for the benefit of New Members that the S.S. & J. funds are placed in a Deposit Account at the Bradford and Bingley Building Socy, as they have been since 1978... Although the interest is not too good at present, and I am not able to obtain a Tax Exemption, nevertheless we do get a certain amount (see statement in February N/L), which helps to fund extra items such as Contacts in Other Societies etc I keep the Bookkeeping as simple as possible (one book). Receipts are usually sent out as soon as possible, but they are sometimes held until the N/L.. to save Postage.

It would be a great help if Subscriptions, which are now due, and arrears were paid promptly please, the funds do 'feel the draught' when Printing and Postage is withdrawn....

A Statement of Accounts is shown each February, to date we are holding our own' bearing in mind that our aim is non-profit making... just giving a Service to Members...

SO PLEASE... SUBSCRIPTIONS... 25p ARE NOW DUE.

There is a form at the back for you to send in with your Name and Address

Thank you.....

Mrs. Joan Trevithick,
86a, Grantham Road,
Radcliffe-on-Trent.
NOTTINGHAM NG12 2 HY.

Copies of Alex Back's Original NewsLetter, which is rather a Historical Document, printed in 1976, are still available Price 20p plus 12½p postage.

Copies of previous NewsLetters are gradually being reduced, so if you would like any please send in as soon as possible. Price 30p. plus 12½p. Postage.

The Group's Officers.

Chairman....., Mr,J,Venner, 'Raven's Croft' 120, St. Osyth Rd. LITTLE CLACTON.
ESSEX.
Vice-Chairman..... Mrs. H.M.Goodwin, 42, Tycehurst Hill, LOUGHTON. ESSEX.
Hon. Secty/Treas..... Mrs. Joan Trevithick, 86a, Grantham Rd. RADCLIFFE-ON-TRENT.
NOTTINGHAM NG12 2HY.
Hon. N/L Editor..... as above.....
Hon. Seed Dist. Offr. Mr. David Trevithick... address as above.....
Hon. Librarian..... Mrs. J.Hewitt, 'Haygarth', Cleeton St Mary, CLEOBURY MORTIMER
KIDDERMINSTER. WORCS.
Spuria Representative. Mr. A.E.Whittaker, 'Chestnuts', Hilden Way, LITTLETON.
WINCHESTER. HANTS.

Regional Representatives.

If you would like to get in touch with your Regional Representative, their names and addresses are:-

Eastern Area..... Mr. Jack Venner, 'Raven's Croft', 120 St. Osyth Rd. LITTLE CLACTON
ESSEX.

(Jack is also the Show Reporter)

North Western Area., Mrs. Ruth Conley, 17, Udale Close, AINSDALE. SOUTHPORT. LANCs.

Southern Area..... Mr. Aldrian Whittaker, 'Chestnuts', Hilden Way, LITTLETON.
WINCHESTER. HANTS.

(Adrian is also the Spuria Representative.)

West Midland Area.. Mrs. Jennifer Hewitt, 'Haygarth', Cleeton St. Mary,
CLEOBURY MORTIMER. KIDDERMINSTER. Worcs.

(Jennifer is also the Librarian.)

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British Isles.

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Mrs. M.Hand, 49, Colborn Street. NOTTINGHAM.

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Salop.

Mrs. J.Hewitt (Librarian), 'Haygarth', Cleeton St. Mary, CLEOBURY MORTIMER.
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Secretary of the B.I.S.
Secty of Species Group.

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Contact In Mercian Group.

Mrs. Eileen Wise, 197, The Parkway, IVER HEATH, IVER
Bucks.

B.I.S.Publications.

Mr. N.Watkins, 31, Larkfield Rd. FARNHAM. Surrey.

Because we are mostly a Postally orientated Group, I publish the List of Members each time, I had an idea... why not write to the name above and below yours or pick a name at random and introduce yourself... after all we have S.S & J. Irise at heart, plenty to talk about there.... But Please don't forget that you have 'Met' through the NewsLetter and write to us as well.....

After thoughts.. Errors and Omissions....

In the Feb/84 N/L, under Excerpts from your letters, I rather hastily, in my anxiety to help wrote 'remember a Green Label (for Botanical Purposes) is required' whereas the Post Office Guide states this:- 'For Letter Post Packets, including registered or insured letters, not exceeding £50 in value, the international (cont).

adhesive or tie-on Green Label is required.. Otherwise affix the top portion only of the Adhesive Green Label and make the declaration on the International non-adhesive form C2/CP3... For Parcels use C2/CP3 or the alternative adhesive form as shown under the name of the country'.

I sincerely hope that this will put the matter right and apologize for a misleading statement....

Sometimes a Phytosanitary Certificate is required, the address to write to is:-

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food,

Plant Health Administrative Unit,

Great Westminster House,

Horseferry Road..... LONDON SW1 P2AE.

They have sent a message that if any Member needs to know what is required to Export plants to a particular Country, they should not hesitate to ring one of the following Telephone Numbers....

01 - 216 7320

6808

6174.

Jennifer Hewitt has written in to answer Paul Richardson's question thus:- Brian Mathew gives 'Sintensi' two 'i's' in his book 'The Iris', but there may be a recent change. Also that he states in the 1983 Year Book (p96) that 'Kerneriana' was correctly spelled at the time the book was written, but since then the 'i' has been restored.. thus.. 'Kerneriana'.

Jennifer also points out that in Ben Hager's article 'Dear Delight' and 'Ruffled Velvet' were referred to as tetraploids whereas Curriers lists them as diploids. My apologies to both gentlemen for not noticing, I was so engrossed in your excellent piece of writing Ben, it has been very well received in the U.S.A.

No space for any other items, but please keep sending in your 'Hints and Wrinkles, I have one or two lined up for next February... Oh. I nearly forgot... Pauls' T-Plan (Tube Culture) they have made a slight alteration. changing the colour from black to green, but Paul would appear to have the latest style. They remind me of our 'Ring Culture' system but they are more durable and have this very good Hot Hat.... I will be able to give you a more detailed report later... Just off to fill it and put in some Iris seedlings..... Bye.....

.....
Seed Order form.

To Mr. David Trevithick, 86a, Grantham Rd, RADCLIFFE-ON-TRENT. Nottingham

NG12 2HY.

I wish to purchase the following seeds.....

.....
Herewith my Subscription for 1984/85

..... arrears if any.....

To Mrs Joan Trevithick, 86a, Grantham Road, RADCLIFFE-ON-TRENT. NOTTINGHAM.

NG12 2 HY.

.....
My name and address is