

NEWSLETTER



OF THE
SIBERIAN SPURIA AND JAPANESE
GROUP
B.I.S

THE SIBERIAN, SPURIA and JAPANESE IRIS GROUP

of the BRITISH IRIS SOCIETY.

Newsletter No. 21 July 1987.

The Group's Officers.

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Eastern Area..... Mr. Jack Venner..... address as above.....
London Area..... Mrs. Anne Blanco White..... address as above.....
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Southern Area..... Mr. Adrian Whittaker..... address as above.....
West Midland Area..... Mr. Philip Allery, 199, Walsall Rd. ALDRIDGE. Nr. WALSALL.
WFO OBE.

Mr. Jack Venner is also our Show Reporter.

Our Regional Representatives welcome your questions and enquiries; They are a valuable asset to our Group, sending in Reports, gathering information as well as doing their own research. We owe them a big thank you....

Because of your generous response to our appeal for seeds and plants, we are able to keep the Annual Subscription at the £1 level again this Year.

SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 1987/1988 ARE NOW DUE PLEASE £1 per annum.

Once again this is rather a large Newsletter, so the full list of Members will probably have to wait until February. However I would like to remind you that the CODE NUMBER must be included in your address when you write in please.

The Objects of the Group.

1. Communication between Members in Great Britain and Overseas.
2. 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.

We like to hear from you, telling us about your garden, your Irises and any problems you may have.

Editorial.

The late Harry Randall in his book 'Iris', takes a quotation from Virgil's 'AENID', freely translated thus:-

'So bedewed Iris, adorned by the sun, accross the heavens with a thousand varied hues, speeds down through the sky on saffron wings'.

The reference is to Iris, goddess of the rainbow and messenger of the Gods, after whom our beautiful flowers are named... I wonder what Harry Randall would say to the 'varied hues' of our modern Siberians, Spurias and Japanese Irises to-day.

The Annual General Meeting of our Group was held in the Flower Room at the R.H.S. Hall on Tuesday 16th July, the 1st. Show Day. I was rather disappointed at the ^{small} number who attended, but so pleased to meet those who did, including 3 Members from New Zealand, Frances Love, the President of the New Zealand Iris Society. Paul Richardson, Past President, now Treasurer of the Society and his wife Mary, who came over this time.

Our Chairman will tell you that the Conditions devised for the Smooth Running of the Group and the Constitution of the Committee were both accepted by the Meeting. Jack, in his Address told us that he considered the Group was entering a Third Stage..... Stage 1. was forming the Organisation to protect and boost a rather neglected class of Irises. Stage 2. saw the 'link-up' with Irisarians at home and abroad for exchange of ideas.. plants... seeds etc. Now we are ready for Stage 3. to encourage Members to breed better forms, more Hybrids and then NAME the best for posterity.

TETRAPLOIDY HAS COME and will be of great use. Naming good plants will help to prevent their loss to cultivation.

Jack went on to say that Members who breed Irises should 'try them out' on other Members, thus extending the area in which they are grown.

The Secretary/Treasurer (that's me folks) reported that the Membership is now nearly 90, including most of the Original Founder Members. Experts and lay people alike, write in, giving us the benefit of their knowledge, their experiences and maintain their interest in our Group. Emphasis was made of our role in the International scene. We are gradually being regarded as a means of contact and liason by Officers and Members of the Societies in different Countries, who print our articles, quote us and support us in many ways. Of course we reciprocate by printing as much of their information as possible.

The cost of Printing, Paper etc. is still rising, however, at the moment, due to the support of Members who send in seeds, and now plants, we are able to keep the Subscription at £1 for the year 1987/1988.

I make it my aim:- Every Year, 'One More Iris in One More Garden'..... preferably Siberian, Spuria or Japanese, Hopefully they will then join our Group to learn more about them. Seriously folks.. why do'nt you try it!

Several points were raised in Members Questions, one was about the correct registration of Irises. Harry Foster told us of the FIRST Japanese Iris being registered in England by Philip Allery. (All the best Philip.. well done!). Anne Blanco White thought it would be a good idea to consider entering Japanese Irises in the July R.H.S. Show for 1989/90, usually held around the 8th. or 10th.

A general discussion took place concerning the soil and mulches to use, the merits of Forest Bark and others. This could perhaps be pursued in the later Newsletters.

A question of the £30 Reserve Fund was raised, the Treasurer promised a full explanation in the July Newsletter.

The length of time it takes Spurias to flower from seed was raised. Anne advocated plenty of watering. Sometimes, moving them will do the 'trick' was put forward. This trouble does not seem to arise when established plants are 'bought in'.

Jack then thanked everyone for attending and closed the Meeting.

(I feel a contributory factor to the low attendance could have been the very small and almost invisible notice of the correct room for our A.G.M. This will certainly be rectified next year.)

We welcome a New Member from Cumbria, Mr. V.F. Richardson, who is anxious to obtain Jap. Iris 'The Great Mogul', if anyone has a spare plant (see Members Wants at the end of the N/L.) Mr. M. Barber, who joined us at the Show, is interested in growing Irises that are 'dark' hued. Mrs. C. Taylor (John's Daughter-in-Law) has undertaken to collect together as many of John's Irises as possible, when time permits we hope that a list will be published, in order that we may help.

Jack, who was not too well at the A.G.M. wishes me to say that he is feeling much better now. We are pleased to hear this, so just 'take care'. (cont.)

Do'nt forget, if you have plants large enough to divide, send them in, we will refund the Postage (see notice at the end of the Newsletter).

Heartly Congratulations to all who have received awards for their exhibits in the Shows, I think everyone deserves a medal for producing blooms in this year of such variations in the weather, that quite a few records have been broken, mostly for more rain and lower temperatures for the time of the year.

Now, I have taken up enough space, and there are some very interesting articles and reports to come, so I will 'depart the scene' wishing you all 'Good Iris Gardening'.

Joan Trevithick.

Chairman's Letter.

Dear Fellow Members. On June 16th at the R.H.S. Hall, London, a milestone along the S.S & J. path of progress was reached, when the Group held its first Meeting of Members (to be known as an Annual General Meeting) since the Inaugural Meeting held when the Group was founded, just over a decade ago.

There has been no need for alterations in the running of our successful Group actually, thanks to the Officers, Committee and support from the Members. However it was felt that a general meeting of Members was desirable. Whilst nothing in these changing times can be regarded as permanent, for the foreseen future it is the intention of the Group to hold a Yearly A.G.M. on the 1st. Day of the B.I.S. Main Show in the R.H.S. Hall. A room will be regularly booked for this purpose.

Notices for this year's Meeting were published in the July Newsletter, so it is likely that a number of Members enjoying the Show in the Main Hall, forgot to attend. Please, try to remember this ONE HOUR get together, next year. Apart from the disappointment at the small attendance at this Historic Meeting of the Group, we did have two distinguished Members from New Zealand, Frances Love and Paul Richardson, it was a great pleasure to meet them, as Joan will have told you in her Report of the A.G.M.

Many Irisarians will say this must be the strangest Iris season that anyone can remember.. Although the weather probably varied from Region to Region, it seems that most growers of Irises have never had it so bad throughout June. In some places extremely cold nights and low morning temperatures, were followed by humid conditions with showery rain, This went on for far too long, the Irises did not seem to know what to make of it. The constant change between overcast skies with cold wet misery, followed by short spells of blue skies and sunshine was amazing. I had some respectable T.B's in flower in mid May, others remained in bud for ages, opening their flowers when they could wait no longer, despite the weather. The T.B. season would have lasted until mid July, but rain 'finished off' the last buds, so 'bud rot' is another condition which can be added to the long list of Iris troubles.

The strange effects of the weather in Siberians and Spurias, I have included in my Report for the Eastern Area.

Many thanks to Members who write in telling of their Iris experiences and to all those who send in questions, which our Hon. Sec. does her best to find the answers.

Best Wishes. Jack Venner.

A Word about Chrysographes and Others.

by Ian Smith.

Within The Sibiricae sub-section are a group of much underrated species, all of which have 40 chromosomes and therefore will pollinate with each other and produce fertile hybrids. They are as follows:-

- I. bulleyana..... ht. approx 18"... colour blue purple, yellow at hafts.
- I. chrysographes. ht. approx. 18"... colour deep violet or red.
- I. clarkii..... ht. approx. 24"... colour blue purple, white at hafts.
- I. delavayi..... ht. approx. 42"... colour deep violet, white blazed falls.
- I. forrestii..... ht. approx 12"... colour yellow, purplish brown veins.
- I. wilsonii..... ht. approx. 24"... colour yellow, reddish brown veins.

I. chrysographes is most probably the best known of the group, its flowers being of dark colour, either violet purple or burgundy red/black and having varying degree of golden yellow veining on the falls. However, when chrysographes is crossed with one of the other species, then whole new ranges of colours and patterns emerge (cont)

Chrysographes x (a) forrestii or (b) wilsonii usually produce hybrids of varying height between 10" and 24" - colours range from buff yellow to violet and wine red, with muted tones of greyish mauve or blue in between. There are also marked patterns of veining especially in the lighter shades giving a pleasing dappled effect. Chrysographes x (c) bulleyana or (d) clarkei usually produce hybrids approx. 24" high - colours in the violet and blue ranges, some in very light shades and all with good veining patterns. There is usually a distinct quadrant in the throat of the fall which can range from creamy white to bright golden yellow. There is a good possibility that crosses with clarkei will produce branched hybrids. I have not seen any hybrids using delavayi as a parent, probably because it is the most difficult to grow, however, being tall and multi-branched, I should think that some very good hybrids could be produced. As a pollen-daubing ham, I reckon I'll leave this one to the experts.

(Thank you Ian, I just do not believe that you are a 'ham', I have seen some of your crosses, which received an award in the Show, they are really exciting, they remind me of the Pacific Coast colours, and should prove most popular. We have seeds in the Distribution, if Members would like to try them, I have some coming up from last year, and cannot wait to see how they look next year. All the best, Ed.)

The Irises We Grow.

by Tom Abrego

Newberg, OR.

We very much enjoyed the February Newsletter. In response to the questionnaire on page 14, we are currently growing about 120 varieties of Siberian Iris, both diploid and tetraploid. Many of these are the newer introductions of such hybridizers as McEwen, Hager Varner, Waite, Bush, Briscoe, A. Miller, Tamberg and Hollingworth. We have a good selection of Dr. McGarvey's introductions as well. This Spring we are looking forward to evaluating the seedlings of our first hybridizing efforts. We like, very much, the new reddish purple Siberians, this is a relatively new color for these Iris, and we feel that Boe Warburton's 'Visual Treat' is one we are most excited about. 'Temper Tantrum' from Dr. McGarvey is another many people seem to get excited over. Although it was registered in 1969, it has only just recently come into commerce. Its clear reddish-purple color is truly unique and outstanding.

We also grow about 90 different varieties of Spuria Iris. Many of these are newer introductions from Hager, McCown, Niswonger, Ghio and Wickenkamp. Over the past few years we have selected several of Marion Walker's seedlings for introduction. Also, we have a number of our own crosses which we hope to see in bloom this Spring. Our favorite Spuria this past season was Den Hager's 'Destination'. It is a very deep yellow deepening almost to orange, possessing quite a vibrancy of color. In the evening light it positively glows!

Our interest in Spurias lead us to the various species of Spuria Iris. We have a number of well-established clumps of the species, and we have a number that we are raising from seed collected around the World.

Commercial efforts with Siberians and Spurias prevent us from giving our Japanese Iris as much attention as we would like. Presently we grow about 80 varieties of Japanese Iris, these are from Marx, Payne, Hirao and Kamo. None of them recent introductions, as far as we know, as we have not added to our collection in several years. We enjoy them just the same.

Spring is here and the bloom season is fast approaching. Along with all the work this means comes the anticipation of being able to enjoy the fruits of all our labor.

Best Wishes,

(Thank you Tom and Ellen, it was nice to hear from you. Members will find their address at the end of the Newsletter under 'Plantsmen and Women in our Group'. All Good Wishes to you too, let us know the results of your work. Ed.)

A Report on Fiesta Phoenix-87.

by Floyd Wickenkamp.

The 1987 National Convention of the American Society was held from the 14th to 18th April, with headquarters at the Pointe at Tapatío Cliffs resort in north Phoenix. This hotel complex is built on the side of a hill or small mountain, with several buildings at different levels. About half way up the hill the hotel officials built a terraced garden at seven levels for the more than 400 of the guest Irises. In all, the

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twelve gardens on tour contained approximately 2,300 guest Irises from more than 115 hybridizers scattered from Maine to California and from the Canadian border to Texas.

The tall bearded Irises were at peak bloom in most of the gardens, but could have used a delay of a few days for the Spurias and Louisianas. One Spuria which was in full bloom in at least four of the gardens was my 'Son of Sun', which I am pleased to report won the President's Cup. This cup is awarded annually to the most popular Iris seen in the tour gardens from a hybridizer of the host Region, in this case Region 15, Southern California and Arizona. It received 133 votes, while the first runner-up, a tall bearded of Donald Shepard (husband of the Convention Chairperson) named 'Splash of Blue', received 67 votes. The thing that was most pleasing was that this is the first time a Spuria has won the cup. At least three other Spurias also received votes, an indication that they are being given more consideration than in the past.

Among the Spurias which were doing well during the tours was a large white and yellow seedling of Henry Rowland's which had an unusually high bud count for a Spuria (7 buds) and with four blossoms open at once. I don't know whether Henry plans to introduce it, but it certainly looks like a winner.

Dave Niswonger's 'Spiced Tea' and 'Amber Ripples' were also open and looking lovely as usual. Of Ben Hager's dozen or more varieties (and seedlings) the most spectacular was his new bright orange-yellow which was registered last year as 'Headway'. In addition to the stunning color it has a good bud count.

Mary Duvall's seedling 82-2 is a lovely one and certainly deserves further consideration. It is a lavender and cream, somewhat on the order of 'Marilyn Holloway' and with excellent form and bud count. Eleanor McCown's 'Highline Coral' is an interesting color.

Among my newer introductions 'Love for Leila', named for my 95 year old Mother, was doing well, at least in my garden. But the one thing that drew the interest of nearly every one of the 550 visitors was a cactus wren in a cereus cactus (cereus peruvianus) just a few feet away from one of the Iris beds. All during the time that people were viewing the flowers (and the nest) the two parents were busy carrying honey bees, moths, worms and spiders to the three babies in the nest, and with little regard for the watchers. The people were just ignored unless they got too close and then they would sound that peculiar call which can only be described as a 'rusty hinge squeak'. Then they would go back to their feeding. For those interested in birds, the cactus wren is the largest of the wren family about twice as long as the familiar house wren.

Because the weather in the afternoons is often unpredictable in the Arizona desert, when dry winds frequently arise, the touring was limited to the morning hours with the buses (11 of them) arriving at roughly hourly intervals starting at 7.15 am. Since most of the gardens are typical city or suburban gardens, the number of buses at a particular garden at a time was limited to two. Even so, nearly a hundred garden lovers turned loose at once on a quarter acre lot, resulted in some traffic jams.

All in all, it was a fine convention and I think the visitors enjoyed their visit to the desert in spite of the 90 degrees plus temperatures. The iced-tea flowed like water, with the hot coffee going begging...

(Thank you Floyd for a most interesting account. Congratulations on being awarded the President's Cup for 'Son of Sun', certainly a 'feather in your cap' and a boost for Spurias. I know that it has been a lot of work for you and that you will not be finished until October, well done! but do not work too hard. Congratulations to your Mother in her 95th. year, hope she is well. Regards. Ed.)

Members can obtain the Introduction and Varietal Listing 1985. (Editor James J. Foreman) by writing to Floyd and sending a remittance to:-

Mr. Floyd Wickenkamp,
10521, Bellarose Drive,
SUN CITY. AZ. 85351 U.S.A.

By Surface Mail anywhere..... 5 dollars post paid.

By Air to Europe..... 7 dollars 25 cents post paid.

By Air to Aust. & N.Z..... 8 dollars 50 cents post paid.

We also have a copy in the Library which you can borrow, telling you of the names and variety of colours of these stately Irises which are becoming more and more popular. From time to time we have seeds in the seed Distribution, we hope, in due course plants in the Plant Sales will become available.

A Comprehensive Survey of the Japanese Iris.

by Wray M. Bowden.

(Continuing Dr. Bowden's Thesis. Reproduced by kind permission of the Editor of the 'Review' of the Society of Japanese Irises U.S.A.)

9. Plantbreeders.

Examples of Japanese gardeners or nurseries (en) who have named and introduced many Japanese Iris cultivars are:- Hirao; Shuho-en; Seiko-en; Kamo; Chugai; Seto; Tomino; and Mitsuda. Many Iris cultivars have been exported from Japan to the U.S.A. and from them, numerous American gardeners have produced and introduced many new cultivars. W.A. Payne (Indiana) and Walter Marx (Oregon) produced the largest numbers of new cultivars in this century. Other American plantbreeders are Hazzard, Hager, Maddocks, McEwen, Rich, Worley, Abel, Straw and Innerst.

10. Nursery Sources.

Japan: Kamo Nurseries, Harasate, Kakegawa, Shizuoka 436-01(price list and 2 posters of 184 cvs. in colour) .. excellent..

U.S.A. White Flower Farm, Litchfield, Conn. Advertises in Horticulture Magazine.

George C. Bush, York, Pa., price list.

Mrs. A.H. Hazzard, Kalamazoo, Mich. price list.

Dr. and Mrs. Currier McEwen, South Harpswell, Maine. price list.

Imperial Flower Garden, Cornell, Ill. price list.

Laurie's Garden, Springfield, Oregon. price list.

Formerly.. Walter Marx Gardens, Boring, Oregon. (excellent catalogue).

Formerly.. Melrose Gardens, Stockton, Calif. informative catalogue, production of Japanese Irises may be resumed later.

(Our thanks to Dr. Bowden, whose address is 32, Dinley Dve., SIMCOE, ONTARIO, Canada. N3Y 4Z8. In February 1988 we will conclude with 'Recommended Cultivars' and lists of Japanese and U.S.A. cultivars.)

An Appreciation of Dr. William G. McGarvey (1904-1985.)

by Harry. D. Kuesal.

Dr. William G. McGarvey, Professor, emeritus, State University New York (at Oswego) died on December 15, 1985. He was a native Pennsylvanian, who graduated from Ursinus College and from Temple University. He moved to Oswego, New York in 1941 and became a pillar of the State University's Psychology Department for more than 30 years. He also was very active in A.I.S. Region 2, serving as R.V.P. and President of the Empire State Iris Society. He was also Chairman of the A.I.S. Syracuse Convention in 1958. He was an authority on judging standards for Siberian Irises and also a Past President of the Society for Siberian Irises.

With his wife Esther, Bill McGarvey helped maintain an Iris booth at the Annual New York State Fair and helped to promote reblooming Irises, especially those that rebloomed in early September, when the Fair was usually held.. It was through this interest that he met Edwin Rundlett, who led an A.I.S. Robin for many years. I first met Bill through this same Robin in the mid-fifties.

He started to concentrate on Siberian Irises right after the 1958 Convention, and registered 28 of them with the American Iris Society. He was always too involved in other activities to introduce them, so I started to introduce them for him, through Old Brook Gardens in 1963, and continued to work with him, introducing Siberians until 1976, when I had to discontinue my commercial gardening activities.

Bill was very interested in applying Mendel's genetic theories and decided to work with Siberian Irises because they were all diploid at the time he started, and he could more accurately predict the results. He was one of the first breeders to recognise that the basic reason Siberian Irises showed no significant improvement in form for so many years, was, that they selfed very readily, and the bumble bees always seemed to get there first. So, he started a carefully planned line breeding program with Siberians. 'Dewful', which won the A.I.S. President's Cup in 1970 was a direct result.

Perhaps the high point in his Iris career can be seen in the portrait which shows him standing behind the President's Cup with a display of 'Dewful', 'Ego', and 'Super Ego',.... They all became Morgan Winners shortly after Bill received this award.

This was the first time it was ever given to a Siberian Iris.

Bill was the first breeder to plan a program to develop pink Siberians by (cont)

by intercrossing 'White Swirl' with red lines from 'Royal Ensign'. His 'Augury' was the first Siberian to ever get close to pink, and it received the Morgan Award, followed by 'Pink Haze', a better pink, a few years later.

Then tragedy struck when Esther McGarvey died in 1977, Bill was griefstricken. But his will to live, and develop better Siberians was restored when he met and married Elsie in New Smyrna Beach, Florida, and he was back breeding better Siberians again. His very plush maroon red, 'Jamaican Velvet', was one of the best Siberians at the AIS Indianapolis convention last year.

Bill McGarvey was a very thoughtful, considerate and friendly person, who made his mark in the Iris world, and we will miss him greatly.

The following is reprinted by kind permission of the Editor of Siberian (Journal of the Society for Siberian Irises U.S.A. Spring 1985.)

The Siberian Species.

by Harry B.Kuesel.

Have you ever wondered how far back the Siberian Species were discovered? Do they go back to Biblical times; Perhaps not... But the first record of *I. Sibirica* that we have is reported by Linnaeus (Carl von Linne), the famous Swedish botanist, who is often considered the father of the modern botany. In 1753 he published a book - 'Species Plantarum' and it is here that *I. Sibirica* was first described. A blue self, found in both Central Europe and Russia, but not Siberia. Maybe it was too cold to go there to find it in those times. This species has 28 chromosomes. The only other species with 28 chromosomes was *I. Orientalis*, now called *I. Sanguinea*. This is another blue self, but has only two buds per stem and was reported by Thunberg. It was found in Manchuria, Korea and Japan, in 1794.

Discovery of the 40 chromosome Siberians came about a Century later. Botanical author Marc Micheli (1844-1902), described *I. Delavayi* as a blue self, collected in Southwest China in 1895. *I. Clarkei*, a closely related species was found by Baker in the Sikkim provinces of India, that's up in the Eastern Himalayas, you know, where Mt. Everest is and K-2 and those places they are always trying to climb in the ice and snow. The famous plant explorer E.H. Wilson found *I. Chrysographes* in China at the beginning of this Century - actually 1908. This is a shorter dark plush blue self, very dark. The dark red form of *I. Chrysographes*, *Rubella* was found by K. Ward in West China in 1921. C.H. Wright found the yellow species - *I. Wilsonii* in the West Hupeh and Shensi provinces of China in 1907. Then W.R. Dykes became curious and went exploring in West China and the Northwest Yunnan Province in 1910 and found *I. Forrestii*: This is a light yellow self. He also brought back *I. Bulleyana* - a stippled blue bitone with a hollow stem, but its status as a true species is still being challenged by some botanists. *I. Dykesii* - a red bitone species was reported by Dr. Otto Stapf (1857-1933) of the Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew England, in China in 1933.

Amos Perry over in England began crossing these species, especially the 40 chromosome ones and also crossed them with Pacific Coast natives. He named the best ones *Chrysofor*, *Chrysodoug*, *Chrysobirica* and *Bulleygraphes*. Pretty soon Englishmen and Americans on both sides of the Atlantic were creating cultivars with more buds, more branches, more colors, ad infinitum...

An extract taken from Currier McEwen's Book 'Siberian Irises'.

Increasing Stock.

Having decided to introduce a plant, the hybridizer usually is faced with the dilemma of wishing to divide the plant into small divisions to increase stock and yet also wishing to use it for breeding. This can be accomplished by dividing the plant while it is still in the ground, inserting one fork through the middle of the clump and using a second fork to separate and remove outside parts. In this way a large segment can be left in place to bloom the next year for breeding and the rest can be divided into single or double fans and lined out to increase stock. Feeding the small divisions with liquid fertilizer every two to four weeks will usually give respectable plants by the end of the full growing season. Planting them with a handful of Jiffy-Mix or other commercial potting mix scattered over their roots also helps them get off to a good start.

(We have Currier's Book in the Library. A signed copy can be obtained by writing to:*

Dr. Currier McEwen, M.D. SOUTH HARBOR, MAINE 04079 U.S.A. Price 7 dollars inc.)

On checking before taking the stencils to the Printers, I find that in the Fall copy of the 1985 ^{edition} of the 'Siberian', Harry Kuesel has written an Addenda to correct his previous article, so here it is:-

The Siberian Species.

by Harry B. Kuesel.

I am indebted to Roy Davidson of the Species Iris Group of North America, and Chris Grey-Wilson who wrote 'The Genus Iris-subsection Sibericae' for the British Iris Society. in 1971, for their helpful comments.

What I reported in the first paragraph about the 28 chromosome species -- *I. siberica* and *I. orientalis*, not called *sanguinea* -- is essentially correct. The dates given for *I. siberica* (Linnaeus) -- 1753 and *I. orientalis* (Thunberg) -- 1794 were the ones in which these two botanists first reported them. It is not known who first discovered them in the wild, but its quite probable that these species existed for some time prior to the dates in which they were reported.

For the other eight - 40 chromosome species, much of what I reported last time is incorrect and I will now supply the correct information based on what these two authorities have given me.

I. clarkei Baker was first described in 1892, but it was sketched from a plant growing in the wild by the plant explorer J.D. Hooker in 1848, and collected by J.D. Clarke in 1875. The plants are found in Eastern Nepal, Sikkim in northeast India, Bhutan, southern Tibet, and upper Burma.

I. delavayi was first described in 1895 by the botanist Marc Micheli, who named the species in honor of the Abbe Delavay who discovered it in Szechuan province in southwest China in 1889.

I. wilsonii was collected by E.H. Wilson in the W. Hupeh, and Shen-si provinces of southwest China in 1907. The species was named in Wilson's honor by C.H. Wright, a botanist at the Royal Botanical Gardens in Kew, England in 1907.

I. chrysographes was also collected by Forrest and Henry over a wide range in west Yunnan, China, and upper Burma. It was first described by Dykes in 1911, this was the dark blue purple form. *I. chrysographes* (*rubellum*) -- the dark red form -- was first discovered by the plant explorer, F. Kingdon Ward, in western China in 1921.

I. forrestii was first discovered by the plant explorer, George Forrest, in the high alpine pastures of west Yunnan province in China in 1908. It was first named by Dykes in honor of its discoverer in 1910.

I. bulleyana was first described by Dykes in 1910. The original plants were raised by A.K. Bulley and believed by Dykes to have come with the first batch of *I. forrestii* collected in 1908. Its status as a true species has since been questioned, but Chris Grey Wilson has concluded, on the basis of further research that *I. bulleyana* is probably a species hybrid between *I. forrestii* and *I. chrysographes*.

I. dykesii was found in Dykes' garden after his death. The origin is unknown although Dykes' notes suggest that it may have originally come from China. It was named in Dykes' honor by Dr. Otto Stapf at the Royal Botanical Gardens Kew, England in 1933.

I. phragmatetorum was first described by the botanist Handel-Mazzetti in 1925. Chris Grey Wilson reports that as far as he can determine, it has never been in cultivation in gardens and only collected once. the name is derived from the Phragmites swamp in which it was found growing. This is located in northwest Yunnan province in China.

More detailed descriptions of all these species will appear in Jim Foreman's Siberian Encyclopedia, which will be published next spring.

(We extend our sincere thanks to Harry Kuesel for these two articles, and to the Editor of the 'Siberian' for allowing us to print them. For my part, I cannot read enough about the past History of our beautiful Irises, and it is only by talking and writing that we shall learn more about them. Sometimes it is very difficult to piece it all together -- I know to my cost- but all credit to the Historians----)

How do you feel about it ?? Do you want more ??

New Method for using Colchicine to Induce Tetraploidy in Series Sibiricae.

By Robert D. Fabel-Ward, Horticulturist (ret.)

(Reproduced by kind permission of the Editor of the 'Siberian')

Several well-established methods are used by Iris hybridisers to enlarge floral and foliage parts of Irises and other plants, and that is to treat the meri-stem tissue with colchicine.

This relatively new method is to use existing diploid stock by injecting colchicine within a few inches of the undeveloped flower bud. This method can be used as a starter programme, or by those with an existing tetra Iris programme.

THE METHOD:-

Using a solution of 0.1% of colchicine in a 1-cc Tuberculin syringe which is tied to a stake, the syringe is filled with 3-cc of the solution and is pressed until all the solution is emptied. The process is completed in two to five days (some have been completed in much less time); a lot depends on the size of the stalk.

The syringe is inserted just below the first leaf, blade in a downward fashion so the needle can be tied and easy to use. Care must be taken so as not to insert the needle too far, as it could exit the other side. No prior puncture is necessary as this type of needle is small enough to cause no problems for entering the stalk.

RESULTS:-

After about three to four days, the visible results are: First, the stalk will begin to swell and bend as the sun's rays begin to draw the solution upward into the floral parts. Secondly, as the flower opens, it will be thick in substance and much larger than those not treated. It usually takes three to four weeks for the process to be completed. What makes this method important is the fact there is no damage done to the existing plant.

PROBLEMS:-

There are no existing methods of using colchicine without some problems.

The following problems occurred in 1981 and other tests thereafter..

- (1) The seed pod can burst open because of the 'rush' of the solution and in order to overcome this problem, parafin wax can be applied to seal the splits in the pod.
- (2) There are times when the stalk will split open and it will collapse.
- (3) Because of a 'rush' the whole flower bud will 'pop off'.
- (4) Failure to produce tetraploidy and this results in 'chimera' tissue which is undesirable.

Because several tetraploids have resulted since 1981, this Method has merit, and will be used with other Iris species. This NEW METHOD was formulated by Dr. Thomas Denton, et al., at Samford University, Birmingham, Alabama.

- (Now we have seen the beginnings of our Irises and the present day improvements, some people like the old style Siberians, or should I say Originals, or species, some like the new varieties. I like both, and I think there is room for both, we must not lose the dainty Iris species, It is up to us to see that this does not happen. How do you feel about it??).

Reminder of our Plant Sales. If you have a clump of Irises which need parting, using Curriers method of dividing, send in the unwanted portion and we will refund the Postage. When packing please shake off as much soil as possible, but do not send dry roots... wrap them up in damp cotton wool or tissues, and enclose in a plastic bag. Use as strong a cardboard box as possible. First Class is best. Thank you!

(Ed.)

With The B.I.S. At Wisley.

by Eileen Wise.

Early Iris Show 6/7th June 1987.

After the recent friendly occasions at Moulton School with all its space and light, following Brett's sudden death, we did not think there would be an Early Show this year, but what a show it turned out to be at Wisley.

Held in a potting shed, which has now been redesignated 'Demonstration Area' (but still looked like a potting shed draped with green R.H.S. canvas). exhibitors and officials worked hard to make the experiment a success.

This was the first instalment of this year's Foster Festival, Maureen and Harry must have won about eighteen trophies this year, and with a few other exhibitors, we managed to fill the long benches, two with T.B's., the third with species Iris. mostly Sibericas. A further bench the length of the room was for Floral Arrangements and Special Displays, two 'Iris Rainbows' as it happened, one with T.B's by Sidney Linnegar the other a 'Siberian Rainbow' by Harry Foster. Show results in the B.I.S. Year Book.

The judging was completed by noon, the stage was set for the Public to see our Treasure Trove, they were queueing outside and it wasn't to get out of the rain, the sun was actually shining. How they enjoyed and appreciated our Show...., and how we enjoyed their gasps of pleasure at seeing the range of colours presented, we constantly heard the comment 'Oh, I didn't know you could grow Irises in all these colours! During part of Sunday we felt sure we'd have to employ crowd control, as our visitors still streamed through with their 'oohs' and 'ahs'..

At the R.H.S.Hall the visitors are all so sophisticated and have seen it all before, but here they were not necessarily gardeners, but had come along on pre-arranged coach trips, maybe they've never wandered as far as the Trial Grounds, unless it was to see Dahlias, Sweet Peas or Delphiniums at their most spectacular, and here in the gloomy potting shed-- sorry Demonstration Area, they saw blooms such as they have never seen at their local Horticultural Shows. They obviously enjoyed what they saw, it was just like accompanying someone to the Chelsea Flower Show for the first time.

We hope to have the opportunity to repeat this successful Show in 1988.

Report of the Beardless Iris at the B.I.S. Show.R.H.S.Hall June 16th 1987.

by Jack Venner.

I am afraid that this report on beardless Irises at the main B.I.S.Show, is rather sketchy, owing to my late arrival and duties as Chairman of the S.S & J Group A.G.M. It was 3pm. before I managed to get down to the Main Hall and start.

Iris time is certainly not the time to be below ones best, but I am afraid things healthwise were not going too well for me. The fact that I missed the 5pm. slide show of the American Scene given by two well-known American friends Hal Stahly and Dave Niswonger, I am sure would have convinced those who know me well, that this Irisarian was more or less forced to call it a day, which is wisely what I did.

However, about the beardless Show Report, it was very obvious that, due to the vagaries of the weather, few T.B's graced the large stand set out for them. Their absence certainly made the number of beardless Irises, mainly Sibiricas, appear larger than it actually was. As usual the blue/violet/ purple colours dominated these Siberians. Making me think, surely this should encourage S. S & J. Members to concentrate on breeding more white, creams, reds and pinks. I am also surprised that more yellows and yellow/white amoenas have not appeared by now.

The Star of the Siberians was undoubtedly 'Lady of Quality' shown by Harry Foster, I did not give it the customary close detailed scrutiny, but it obviously lived up to its name, with 4 large beautiful flowers of mid lilac-blue and lighter haft areas.

The long-flowering 'Ruffled Velvet' also showed its class, a dark red-purple with some gold at the haft, which enlivened the flowers; It must be considered one of the best new Diploids to date.

Another of Harry's Irises 'Creme Chantilly' was very impressive, a greenish-cream with some yellow. These three in Harry's Collection deservedly won the Hewitt Trophy.

Ray Jeffs showed some plants of German origin. 'Zweiter Hundent' a very large violet with haft variations and 'Weisse Etagen' a white with yellowish throat.

'Laurenstuhl' was a very fine flaring violet with white tones on the falls.

Margaret Owen had some nice spikes of 'Navy Brass' and Jennifer Hewitt showed some eye-catching Chrysographes hybrids.

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There were many other good examples of well known varieties... I apologise for not mentioning them and hope I will be excused if I omitted recording the awards they so deservedly received, especially among our Members.

Before leaving the Show, I noticed two very large containers, both planted with hybrids of *I. Pseudacorus*. One of these labelled *Pseudacorus x Versicolor* had blue *Versicolor* flowers and did not show much influence from the *Pseudacorus* parent. The plant *Pseudacorus x Laevigata* was very much like a yellow *Pseudacorus*, but had brown veining almost the whole length of the falls. I will be keeping them in mind as I feel Hybrids could mean much to Iris growing in the future.

(Thank you Jack, so sorry you had to manage on your own, I would have helped, although I do not have your knowledge, but the Publicity Stand was very short of helpers, so I gave them a hand.)

Regional Report for the Eastern Area.

by Jack Vonner.

Irises in Essex.

My travelling around has been extremely local due to this bout of ill health. However I saw some fine clumps of Sibericas in a number of gardens, I am fairly certain they were Hutchison varieties, they seem to have replaced the real old-timers. In my own garden they gave a fine display, mainly because the soil was still moist in late May, it is usually dry for a few inches deep by this time. I expected tall foliage, but was surprised when I had clumps flowering well at different heights. Siberica 'Orville Fay' grew to 3½ feet in one clump, nearby another clump only reached 2½ feet, a picture of health and smothered with large flowers. The same could be said of the other Sibericas, but I still had a fine, if uneven show of flowers. 'Dreaming Yellow' was absolutely magnificent... 'Ruffled Velvet', 'Blue Pennant' & 'Polly Dodge' have never been better. The only real failures this year have been 'Cambridge' and 'Sea Shadows'.

All the *Chrysographes* made large clumps, but compared to other years, blooms were not plentiful... I think they probably need dividing up.

One thing I am particularly happy about, is that this sunny July promises to give me the greatest show ever of *Spurias*, some of Adrian's seedlings are already out, and the new Americans will be out in a few days time.

A question I would like to ask Members is:- 'Have you ever heard of *Pseudacorus ROT*', you must think I am joking, after all the most natural place for *Pseudacorus* is at the edge of ponds and streams, with lower stems in about 3" of water. Well, I can tell you that my plants showed signs of ROT on the 3" of stem above ground level. With a few exceptions, I saved the situation by stripping off the basal leaves, a thick clear liquid resembling Glycerin oozed out. I washed the affected stems with weak permanganate and they dried satisfactorily. I assume that too much rain caused the water to get trapped, this was then warmed-up by the brief spells of hot sun, causing the trouble. However, I must not complain, apart from this the *Pseudacorus* varieties, performed exceptionally well. I find that if they are dead-headed regularly, the flowering period is extended up to 5 weeks or more. Of course this is an operation for terra firma and not ponds.

At present I have about 15 Japanese Irises... newly acquired: About half will bloom in a few weeks time. I hope to give you a report on them in the February issue.

(Thanks Jack, I find that some charcoal helps to keep the water 'sweet', but of course I do not keep fish in the pond now, only frogs.)

Regional Report for London.

by Anne Blanco White.

I. Ensata (Kraempferi) and non-acid soils.

In an earlier note on this subject, I said it was possible to breed forms of these irises which did not have to be grown on acid soils and commented that many bred for acid conditions would grow reasonably well on neutral soils. Currier McEwen made the point that plants bred for acid soils would not give of their best in other conditions, particularly the remontant and repeater forms, and I am sure he is right. Nevertheless, they will not die out and it becomes even more important to breed these plants for 'good garden soils' including alkaline ones, and not just for acid situations.

There are two essential requirements for those who would breed calciphile plants from calcifuges; patience and resistance to despair.

Start by reading Max Steiger's article in the 1959 Year Book (B.I.S.) and read
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it carefully, because much of it is devoted to calcifuge forms of *I. Ensata* (Kaempferi) and also because the numbers of seedlings he was able to handle are rather daunting for the small scale breeder.

Emphatically, as he did, you should use seed from good plants; there is nothing to be gained by wasting years trying to attain high standards from poor material when good stock is available.

Half-a-dozen plants kept in acid, artificially acid conditions will provide plenty of seed, and seeds can be acquired from elsewhere. Sowing seeds from calcifuge plants does mean that a lot of seedlings are going to be lost. Be grateful for small mercies - in four or five generations you too will have an embarrassing quantity of plants.

The Early seedlings will be poorly things and will need tender, loving care to keep them going, especially over their first winter. It is essential to keep them growing steadily all the time if you can, and that means light and some warmth. The plants are gross feeders when growing, and should be kept well supplied with fertilisers, whether organic or inorganic. This is partly the reason why they do better on heavy soils.

There is also the matter of water; ample supplies in spring and summer are necessary. The consequence of drought in the early part of the year is to abort the flowering spikes and, if later, the buds will fail to open and the flowers rot in the spathes, which is a horrid sight.

I grow some of mine in the ordinary ground and some in the stream bed. In Sussex, at least, they seem indifferent to winter freezing, but we do not have the temperatures of Continental Europe.

It seems likely that the real reason for not trying to keep them over winter in small ponds relates to starvation. The practice was, and possibly still is, to plant into containers and sink the whole below the water surface. Providing the containers were lifted religiously every autumn and the plants re-established in fresh soils, all would be well, as it has been in the Japanese gardens for centuries. But, if replanting was neglected, then the plants rapidly deteriorated and died off.

Then many Irises have no objection to boggy ground, provided the water is continuously on the move to bring this fresh water to the roots. 'Stagnant' water is not necessarily nauseating to the human onlooker. It means that the water has no movement, and plants which survive such conditions are usually specially adapted to that habitat. As far as I know, *I. Ensata* in the wild is a plant of stream sides, not true bogs.

So, make no concessions to your poor seedlings. Either they can grow in the conditions you offer them or they must die. But, plants developed for wet areas must have water: Probably the easiest way to water large numbers of seedlings is to use the perforated hoses, which can be allowed to dribble into the soil indefinitely. Have plenty of compost on hand in case of a ban on watering in a drought. Heavy mulching helps to keep the roots cool and gives the plant a better chance to get what water you can spare it. It is possible that the early generations will benefit from a dose of Sequestrene, but this is only to keep them going, and should not be used when reasonable quantities of seedlings are to hand, because you are then selecting for survival in more extreme conditions.

Having achieved, say in seven years time, some healthy seedlings, do please, give serious consideration to whether they are really worth bringing up to a J.I.C. It is your right to send anything you wish to that Committee, but it is disheartening to have your pride and joy turned down because you thought it better than it really was. Consult the helpful New Zealand I.S. 'Know Your Irises' which will provide a guide to judging in the garden. Remember too, that these Irises can be forced, within limits. This, after all, is what the Japanese do in those lovely lake gardens. The plants are brought on, in sequence, behind the scenes, and as one pot in a lake goes over, it is discreetly replaced by another. So, when you have a promising seedling and want to get it before the Judges, bring it indoors early in the year to help it get into growth before its proper time. Let you down, will it? Yes, probably, but practice in the early years with plants you wouldn't dream of letting loose in a show, and find out how to get yours into mint condition when you need them... Now, what about it?...

This has been a poor year for my *I. Ensata* (Kaempferi) I think; they grow away very late in the dark Spring and only about half of them were showing signs of flowering in mid-June, which was when I last saw them. Still, at the time of writing, the temperature has suddenly shot up into the 80's south of Watford, and it may be that there will be a sudden outbreak of spikes early in August. I should like them when all

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the other Irises are over.

We were fortunate in having both the McEwens and the Tambergs at Cannington together with visitors from New Zealand and Australia. Currier showed slides of his Sibiricas and Ensatas. One point he emphasised was the distinction between 'remontants'-plants with two distinct flowering seasons- and 'repeaters'- plants which flower reasonably steadily through the season. Something like I. Unguicularis which flowers all the Winter would be a repeater, I presume, while I. Lazica would be a remontant, with its habit of flowering in Autumn and Spring. Tomas has been working on Sibirica-Setosa hybrids, and is producing elegant plants, of which, some produce identical seedlings in the second generation, instead of the assortment of shapes and sizes which would normally be expected.

I. Ensata, of course, we do not have in the Trials at Wisley, although they are a feature of the 'canal' at the foot of the rock garden. The Sibiricas are doing nicely after their recent transplant, though the practice of leaving them for four years at a stretch, does demonstrate that replanting times are very much a matter of garden and soil conditions, rather than rules and regulations. The Spurias have only just been replanted and so were not judged at all.

I missed the Wisley Show, but hear it was a great success, both in terms of exhibits and visitors. The late Show, in London was thin, which was not surprising. The Sibiricas definitely outnumbered the Bearded, but the only exhibit of Spurias came from the Cassidys.

(Thank you Anne. The article you mention by Max Steiger on 'CARE' Ensata (Kaempferi) will be printed in the February Newsletter, as space is limited this time. I have some of Currier's seeds which he kindly sent, they have germinated, nearly 100 per cent. Also, Members can obtain the New Zealand 'Know Your Irises' by writing to B.I.S. Publications Officer Mr. Neville Watkins, whose address you will find at the back of the Newsletter. Ed.)

Regional Report for the North West.

by Ray Wilson.

Over the past year there has been a noticeable increase in the interest shown in the Species Irises, and in this area, the Siberians. This was particularly evident in the demands by Members of the B.I.S. to the Seed Distribution Scheme. There is no doubt that the soil in this Region does suit the Sibiricas better than the T.B's, both in terms of flowering, but perhaps more in 'freedom from rot'. Spurias do not do as well: I planted some last Autumn, 'Media Luz' in particular died, and one or two others found it hard going. However, because it is a matter of establishing them and giving some sort of protection, I think it is worthwhile persevering with them. I am now growing some from seed, in the hope that this will offer a better chance of acclimatisation.

Japanese Iris, on the other hand, seem oblivious of the weather and can be thoroughly recommended. Being deciduous, they are no problem in Winter and their flowers in July always attract comment. Despite this, growers do seem reluctant to move away from the old-styled Germanica and Pallida. Hopefully there will be a chance to gain some publicity in these Northern Areas for the S.S & J's: If all goes well the B.I.S. may be putting on a stand at the Glasgow Festival and in this event there will be an invitation to everybody to help, please contact me if you are interested.

Joyce and I visited Ruth and Donald Conley a few weeks ago, to talk about the Cannington Caper visit; we were most pleasantly surprised to see a garden 'shaping up' to the coming season, with P.C.I.'s and Sibiricas in bloom, lots of promise from their T.B's. On the visit to Cannington they gave us another surprise by the way they kept up with the hectic pace of the visits and talks. They wish to be remembered to the many friends they did not see, and would be delighted to hear from them... For us Cannington was a wonderful opportunity to meet a lot of people with whom we had corresponded, to sample some lovely gardens-even if we did suffer from flat feet and fallen arches- and also listen to the talks. Currier gave a most interesting one on Sibiricas. Tomas Tamberg told us of the Californian crossed with Sibiricas, which are his present interest. A highlight of the event was the play, a lovely diversion for the exhibitor, hybridist and we ordinary spectators... a truly superb performance by Maureen and Harry Foster with their 'Son et Lumiere'.

About Seeds. Seeds are the beginning and the end... so, with a real interest in the propagation from seed, it was only a short move to accept the position of Seed

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Distribution Officer of the B.I.S. I would like to grow a plant from every packet, but must restrain myself - or else! This year the whole Distribution went off very well, with big thanks to my predecessors for their help and advice. I have learned a lot, especially about the purchase of seed envelopes and the Postal problems.. but, these were minor incidents compared to the pleasure of being afforded the opportunity to assist in the worthwhile effort of spreading seed in the right places. I was happy too, to find the degree of mutual help between the various seed Officers. This helps to facilitate the obtaining of native seed for the benefit of the hybridist anxious to strengthen the local breed. If Members have seeds to spare, particularly Species, both David and I would be very pleased to have them for our respective distributions.

Being interested in propagation, it has been important to compare the germination of fresh seed with those obtained through the Seed Distribution. From my limited experience with fresh seed, I have noted there is no requirement to make special provision for treatment, by soaking, chilling etc., indeed this could be detrimental. Planting in a sterile compost, under the right conditions, will, almost certainly ensure good germination. Seeds which have ripened properly, however, do require some attention. In nature, the number of seeds produced by a plant, is usually sufficient to allow enough plants to be formed for the continuance of the Species. We, on the other hand, want much more. The method I have adopted after trying all the techniques I could find, including embryo culture, is:-

1. Soak the seed in water for 1-2 days then peel. (This allows me to examine the seed). It may not be viable; the part where the embryo is located is made visible and the possibility of fungal growth is greatly reduced.
2. Disinfect the seed in 1:4 domestic bleach: water, for about 1 minute, then wash thoroughly in running water and finally rinse in cold boiled out water.
3. Put the clean seed in a sealable plastic bag containing Perlite : water: 1:3. The Perlite has been heated to 150 degrees C. for 1 hour and the water is cold boiled out. The seed is allowed to absorb water for up to 1 month. During this time some species will germinate eg., I. Decora and can be potted on.
4. The end of the seed is cut off to expose the embryo - this is^a carefully made fine-cut with a scalpel or such other knife - to allow the embryo to grow. Place the seeds in their plastic bag containing Perlite : water, put it into the fridge, at 34-38 deg.F. for 1 month, seeds which germinate, e.g. some bearded varieties can be removed for growing on.
5. The seeds are removed to a warm environment 70 deg. F. after which germination and growth usually proceed rapidly. The Seedlings can be removed when they are about 1 - 2 cm. long in leaf and root, though this does depend on the species. It is here that the most losses occur....

I have tried putting the seedlings into perlite which is moistened daily with a dilute Phostrogen, putting them directly into a peaty-compost or a gritty-compost and recently putting them into a commercial peat-based compost with equal amounts of sand and grit, then covering them with Perlite --- the seedlings grow through the Perlite and the roots establish quickly. They can all succeed, no matter which method is used, it is essential however, to keep the plantlets in a humid atmosphere about 70 deg.F. until they are well established and then harden them off slowly. Using these Methods, I have grown most species from Arils to Setosa, and I am currently very happy to have my first Louisiana flowering. Grown From Seed.

(Thanks Ray. Please give Ruth and Donald Conley our best wishes. Ed.)

Regional Report for the South.

Adrian Whittaker.

Unfortunately Adrian has been called away on business, and has been unable to send in his usual Report. He writes to say he is expecting his Spurias to flower soon. Some Louisianas he has grown from seed, will probably receive the hydroponic treatment, or maybe in peat, in tubs. Let us know Adrian how they fare (Ed.)

Regional Report for the West Midlands.

By Philip Allery.

My comments on our Spring and early Summer weather, are best left unsaid, but the Irises in which we are interested did not appear to suffer unduly. In fact, Sibiricas obviously relish a cool, wet Spring, it seems to have a beneficial effect on bud

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formation. This phenomenon was remarked upon last Spring (1986) by Harry Foster, who had an excellent display of Sibiricas. The same was true of Jennifer Hewitt's garden display, but the Clive Hills environment caused bloom to be a week late.

The two short spells of warmer weather we experienced this year were just sufficient to prevent bud malformation, so we have a lot to be thankful for.

My Japanese Irises withstood the severe Winter weather conditions here, far better than in previous years: when I suffered severe losses of imported plants. On reflection I think my over-wintering care was at fault, because, despite the colder Spring the blooms have not been unduly delayed. The same can be said about the few Spurias I grow, and from which I am expecting good quality blooms. My present re-planning programme will give me an opportunity to add to my Spuria collection this year.

The West Midlands Group extended its activities this year to include the provision of a Stand at the Malvern Hills Spring Gardening Show, held during the three days of the May Bank Holiday weekend. The Three Counties Showground at Malvern is an ideal location, because the permanent nature of the site permits most of the Show to be staged indoors. This guarantees, both the Exhibitors and Members of the Public excellent facilities and shelter from inclement weather.

The Stand was continuously manned by Members of the Group. They had good support from B.I.S. Members outside the West Midlands area, who gave plants for sale and practical help in other ways. Although the profit was modest in terms of effort over a three-day period by the Group, the initial cost of a very attractive display was covered also this can be used in future years. A very creditable effort, and a resounding success in terms of public relations, when Show attendances of 24,000 are taken into account.

A brief reference, at this stage to the B.I.S. 65th Birthday celebrations, held at the Somerset College of Agriculture and Horticulture at Cannington from Wed. 27th May to Sat. 30th May inclusive. I thoroughly enjoyed this friendly, well-organised Conference, which gave me the opportunity to meet many overseas Members. Six countries were represented. Of particular interest to the S. S & J. Group were talks given by Tomas Tamberg on 'Aspects of Apogon Iris in Germany', and by Dr. Currier McEwen on 'Aspects of Siberian & Japanese Iris in U.S.A.'. These talks alone made the trip worthwhile.

My next Report concerns the West Midland Group's Annual Show on the 20th. June: Held by kind invitation at the Nurseries of Treasures of Tenbury Wells, adjacent to Burford House Gardens, an ideal location, in lovely countryside, with excellent facilities. With June rainfall, in the West Midlands, almost twice the average; hours of sunshine halved and temperatures down, on average, by 3 degrees C., the number of entries and quality of the blooms surprised me!

Judges at this Show included Mr. Ray Jeffs, our B.I.S. President, and two welcome visitors, Mrs. Frances Love and Mr. Paul Richardson, President and Past President (now Treasurer) respectively, of the New Zealand Iris Society.

In Class 8 - 1 vase containing 4 spikes of hybrid Sibiricas (28 - chromosome)
1st. Harry Foster with 'Creme Chantilly', 'Ruffled Velvet', 'Dear Dianne' and 'Ruffles Plus'
2nd. Margaret Owen with 4 spikes of 'Navy Brass'. 3rd. Jennifer Hewitt with 2 spikes of her attractive seedling R781/1, 'Soft Blue' and 'Navy Brass'.

In Class 10 -- 1 vase containing up to 5 spikes of beardless hybrid Irises, not eligible for Class 8 (excluding P.C.I.'s) the winner was Margaret Owen, with Jennifer Hewitt in 2nd. place.

In Class 15 --- 1 spike, raised by the exhibitor (beardless Iris). I took 1st and 2nd. places, but the spikes were not considered of sufficient merit to gain a B.I.S. Seedling Commendation. The Seedling Sibirica which took first place was from a B.I.S. Seed distribution, so the parent plants are unknown, but there is a marked 'Mere' influence. The 2nd. place was awarded to an *Ensata* Single seedling (1983/H6/10/AY) from a KASAGA-GANA (Hirao) cross. This seedling shows promise as a garden plant, but it is difficult to prepare for the Show bench.

Although there was an attractive Flower Arrangement exhibit by Mrs. Vera Hemmings, I thought it was a pity that space precluded the excellent displays mounted last year by Harry Foster (Siberians) and Ray Wilson (Seed Germination). Both were of considerable public interest.

The Group's plant stall (for Irises only) had many visitors, and the Members of the Public seemed well pleased with their purchases. Profits are down on last year, but they are considered to be quite satisfactory.

On July 4th, I hope to visit Jennifer Hewitt's garden to see her Sibiricas. Another event in the busy West Midland Calendar. A report in the next Newsletter.

***** Happy Iris gardening *****

A Visit from our New Zealand Members.

by Joan & David Trevithick

It is not often that we have the opportunity of meeting our Members from Overseas, so we were very pleased to welcome Mary and Paul Richardson from New Zealand, who made a detour on the way back from visiting the West Midlands. Of course it poured with rain, as Paul said the worst day they had had to date, so to have a quick look at the garden we 'dodged the spots'. Looking more like a jungle, more leaves than flowers, Paul remarked 'how clean they were!', (courtesy of my flock of well-trained birds). They too are in a high rainfall area, but normally we are very dry at this time of year. The size of the slugs! Mary said 'they are much larger in this country, than in New Zealand. The frogs, who normally see most of them off, were caught in a very sudden sharp frost and are now deceased, apart from a lone one who keeps popping up. My seedlings were much in evidence, Paul agreed they were looking well, they liked all the rain.

Disaster had overtaken the *I. Chrysographes x Forrestii* which has flowered for the past two years, and which had grown well from seed Paul sent over in 1985, a slug had a good meal, leaving only one leaf, despite vigilance. However it is recovering now and looks well. 'Gerald Darby' was beginning to show colour, and *Sibirica* 'Swank' also 'Friendly Welcome' flowered for the first time. Of the others, 'Dreaming Yellow', 'Orville Fay', 'Silver Edge', 'Ruffled Velvet', 'Blue Burgee' and others, plenty of leaves -- no flowers. I think I split them up too well last year. There was nothing for it but to adjourn and look at slides of past glories. Paul had some slides too, so we looked at those as well.

Time flew by and soon it was time for them to wend their way back to London via the M.1, later on to fly to New Zealand. We hope they enjoyed their stay and had a good journey home. Nice to see you!

The Group Library.

Copies of the following American Books and Publications are obtainable from the Hon. Librarian:- Mrs. Jennifer Hewitt, 'Haygarth', Cleeton St. Mary, CLEOBURY MORTIMER, KIDDERMINSTER. Worcs. DY14 0QU.

Siberian Irises by Currier McEwen.

The Spuria Irises-Introduction and Varietal Listing-1985. Editor James.J.Forman. Newsletters 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 the Species. B.I.S.

Please include Postage when requesting items.

Treasurer's Report

At the Annual General Meeting, I promised to explain the purpose of the Reserve Account. It is two-fold --- our finances fluctuate, some years we do not have the opportunity to make any money in order to subsidise the subscriptions, also quite a few Members are now paying commuted Subs., which have to be covered. I could easily make an extensive book-keeping job of this, earmarking funds etc., and having separate account books, but in the interests of costs, and not to make the job too daunting for a future Treasurer, I try to keep things as simple as possible, using 3 bibles, the Account Book, the Receipt Book and the Building Society Books (2 now that we have the Res. A/c.). It works for me and it can be easily explained. I have had experience of these complicated Accounts.. they need a year's instruction to be mastered. Of course Computers make a big difference, but they are very expensive, and when they went wrong just recently, everyone was at 'sixes and sevens', having to use their mental arithmetic I just plod on, in the way I have been doing since 1978. At least we can say 'we are solvent', thank goodness. But.. there are several Subscriptions overdue, so PLEASE help us to keep this so.

Back Numbers of the Newsletters.

Copies of Alex back's Original Newsletters. Price 20p. per copy plus 13p. Postage
 Newsletters:- July 1981.. February 1982 and February 1983. 30p. plus 13p.
 do February 1985... February 1986... 40p.plus 13p. July & Feb/86 70p + 13.

Member's Letters.

Norman Payne writes in to say how well his Japanese Irises have bloomed this year..

Mary Fraser, who has had a very busy year, with new duties for the B.I.S. Show Reporting and Editing Newsletters etc., writes to say, how much she enjoyed Currier McEwen's talk at Cannington.. really delightful! Several of the *I. Cartholinae* from the Seed Distribution have germinated. Her *Sibiricas* have grown well this year, enabling her to exhibit them.

(Nice to hear from you both. Mary, I am trying to persuade Eberhard Schuster, from whom the seeds came, to write about them, but he does not have a lot of time, however we do not give up hope that he will have a few minutes, later this year. Perhaps also Currier will send us some details of his lecture. I was so very sorry not to be able to go to Cannington, as I expect quite a few of you were also.)

Eberhard Schuster was kind enough to send Irises for the Plant Sale, but due to unforeseen circumstances (namely Industrial Action by Customs and Excise) they took over a month to reach me. Despite his excellent packing, they had overheated and the leaves rotted away. I have tried to do my best for them, but things do not look promising. Thank you Eberhard, I feel very sad about it, they would have been very welcome indeed.

New Members and Change of Address.New Members.

Mr. Martin Barber, 7, Eastwick Rd., WALTON-on-THAMES. Surrey. KT12 51AW.

Mr. V.F. Richardson, 32, Derwent Bank, SEATON. WORKINGTON. Cumbria. CA14 1EE.

Change of Membership.

John Taylor's Membership transferred to Mrs. C. Taylor, 47, Harestock Rd. WINCHESTER.
Hants. SO22 6NT.

Change of Address.

Prof. D.A. Dixon, Walnut Cottage, 3, Newark Drive, WHITBURN. SUNDERLAND. Tyne & Wear.
SR6 7DF.

Mr. R.J. Dunning, 3, Waveney Ave., LONDON SE15 3UF.

Member's Wants.

Anne Blanco White (address on front page) is still looking for *I. Spuria* 'Wadi Zem Zem'
V.H. Richardson (address above) will be pleased to hear from anyone who has a plant of Japanese Iris 'The Great Mogul'.

Plants for Sale.

I. Pseudacorus Bastardii..... Price £1.25 (including Postage).

Seedlings of *I. 'Gerald Darby'* (2 years old) please send 6..13p stamps. (includes postage).

Seedlings of *I. Pseudacorus 'E. Turnipseed'*..... please send 5..13p stamps.

I. Wilsonii Hybrids. do.

I. Setosa. do.

I. Chrysographes x *Chrysophor*. do.

(all include Postage).

There will be other seedlings and Plants have been promised, if you like to send a Stamped addressed Envelope for list. Plants and seedlings will be despatched later in the year.

I will be parting *I. 'Gerald Darby'* later. Plants will be £1.25p (including Postage).

It is hoped the use of stamps in payment will help you when sending in, also the inclusion of Postage will make ordering more simple. Our one aim is to see more of these beautiful being grown, so I hope you will avail yourself of our Plant Sales.

send to:- Mrs. J. Trevithick,
86a, Grantham Road,
RADCLIFFE-on-TRENT.
NOTTINGHAM. NG12 2HY.

The Seed Distribution.

Packets of seeds are 10p each plus Postage according to quantity. 13p. 26p. etc.
 Seeds are accepted from Donors, exactly as they are sent, they come from many areas
 some from Overseas. The usual rules for Distribution apply.

We have a few still available as follows:-

Section Laevigatae.

I.Pseudacorus Bastardii. I.Pseudacorus 'Golden Queen' syn. var. 'Superba'.
 I.Pseudacorus 'E.Turnipseed'. I.Pseudacorus.
 I.Versicolor. I.Versicolor 'Stella Main'. I.Versicolor Kermesina.

Series Tripetalae.

I.Setosa 'Savill Garden Form'.

Series Sibiricae.

I.Chrysographes x Chrysofor. I.Wilsonii Hybrids.
 I.Sibirica. I.Sibirica 'Orville Fay'. I.Sibirica 'Outset'.

Section Xyridion.

I.Orientalis.

Please send to:- Mr. David Trevithick, 86a, Grantham Rd. RADCLIFFE-on-TRENT.
 NOTTINGHAM. NG12 2HY.

Contacts in Societies.

President of the B.I.S. Mr. H.R.Jeffs, 'Nutfield Nurseries', Crab Hill Lane, S.Nutfield
 Surrey. RH1 5PG.

Secty. of the B.I.S. Mr. P.R.Maynard, 43, Sea Lane, CORING-by-SEA, Worthing Sussex
 BN12 4QD.

Secty. Of Species Group. Mrs. M.Fraser, Barsham House, 'ROUNDWOOD', Buckler's Lane,
 Kings Langley. Herts. WD4 8BE.

U.S.A.

Editor of Spuria N/L. Gordon Green, Box 301, BONHAM. TEXAS. 75418.

Editor of 'Siberian'. Mrs. Judy Hollingsworth, 1015, Windwood Lane, WEST LAFAYETTE. IN.
 47906.

Editor Japanese IrisReview.

Leland M.Walsh, 7679, West D.Ave. KALAMAZOO. MICHIGAN. 49009.

Groups.

Kent Group..... Mrs Mary Tubbs, 9, Lingfield Rd., WIMBLEDON COMMON. LONDON SW19 4QA.

Mercian Group..... Mrs. Eileen Wise, 197, The Parkway, IVER HEATH. IVER. Bucks. SLO ORQ

West Midland Group. Mrs. Pat Foster, 76, Peachfield Rd. GREAT MALVERN. Worcs. WR14 4AP.

Remontant Group. Mr. P.Allery, 199, Walsall Rd. ALDRIDGE. Nr. Walsall WS9 0BE.

B.I.S.Publications. Mr. N.Watkins, 31, Larkfield Rd. FARNHAM. Surrey. GU9 7DB.

List Of Plantsmen and Women in our Group.

Mr. & Mrs. N.Colborn, 'Careby Manor Gardens', CAREBY. STAMFORD. Lincs. PE9 4EA.

Mr. V.H.Humphrey, 8, Howbeck Road, ARNOLD. NOTTINGHAM. NG5 8AD.

Mr. H.R.Jeffs, 'Nutfield Nurseries', Crab Hill Lane, S.NUTFIELD. REDHILL. Surrey RH15PG.

Mr. & Mrs. H.Morris, 'Pine House Nursery', Rearsby Rd. GADDESBY. LEICESTER.

Mrs. H.Geeson, 'Coach Gap Nursery' LANGAR. Notts.

Overseas.

Mr. & Mrs. T.Abrego, P.O.Box 693. NEWBERG. OREGON. 97132-0693. U.S.A.

Mr. Ben Hager, 309, Best Road South, STOCKTON. CALIFORNIA. 95205 U.S.A.

Dr. Currier McEwen, SOUTH HARBORWELL. MAINE. 04079. U.S.A.

Mrs. Lorena Reid, 'Lauries Garden', SPRINGFIELD. OREGON. 97478. U.S.A.

Herr. Eberhard Schuster, Post Gadebehn, 2711 AUGUSTENHOFF. D.D.R. East Germany.

A reminder, if you have plants to spare, we will refund Postage, when you send them in.

A FURTHER REMINDER.... SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE NOW DUE PLEASE.