



See article by
Dale Martens who
supplied this picture and
the one below

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Newsletter

Chairman's Comments

Welcome all members old and new into 2006. Can this be an even more successful year than 2005? Prizes, medals and accolades of one sort or another, at the entire major shows exhibited at including the prestigious gold at Tatton Park. Growing the plants, breeding and exhibiting society wise we could not have a harder working secretary than Frank! And Mary his wife who also so does a lions share as well, very ably assists him. As always thanks to everyone else on the committee and all those who assisted at the shows. My own thanks to our long-suffering editor Tom who has to put up with us bring late for the deadline. One day I'll catch up Tom honest!

My last growing season was a little fraught with problems whereby I could not always give the plants the attention that they would normally have. One thing will stick in my mind about this; amazingly they came through this and sort of flowered away quite happily without much attention from me. Having thought about this I came to the conclusion that I had influenced this in some way. At the time they were being rooted and then initially being potted on they were receiving all the attention in the world necessary to produce a good quality young plant, good compost, the right plant food, the correct temperature light levels and water. Having started off well this then was just enough to sustain when I could not be there and I'm proud of them for it. I would not want to grow plants in this way for very long or I think you would soon find problems creeping in. Things like Powdery Mildew would quickly spread given no attention; greenfly infestations plus any one of a number of other little nasties could creep in. Hopefully this year will allow me to spend my normal time with my plants and give them that little extra TLC. My cuttings for the new season are doing fine, as always I'm way behind Frank but they always seem to come on later.

I have a couple of interesting seedlings from last year that show great promise, both of these were crossed with a seedling from Franks, a very pretty patterned but it had the type of growth to be released in its own right, so we are hoping for the best with this cross, 2 big seed pods but they are taking forever to ripen! Have a good growing season in 2006.

Ken Jones
Chairman

Seasons Greetings from South Wales

by Gordon Long

Well here we are again, the turn of another year a few weeks after the shortest day which for many gardeners heralds the start of another growing season. The weather down here is very unpredictable. Normally being on the coast we do not see a frost 'till after Christmas but this year, bitter cold nights, snow, severe winds, winter sun, we've had it all, so the greenhouses are looking quite sad.

We had a very quiet year gardening wise. Our old wood-burning stove come central heating boiler and cooker finally gave up the ghost, so I have been installing oil central heating and a new kitchen in my spare time and just in time for winter. So with Sue working too, not much done on the gardening front, but we did manage to give a few talks to gardening societies. However 2006 has arrived and in July Sue retires from work (no chance for me though). So one of us will be home full time to tend the plants, (that's after the housework has been done), says Sue.

So hopefully 2006 will see us with a stand at some of our local shows. As I said not a lot done last year, we (Sue and I) did Malvern Spring Show with our local gardening club and our own Pot Plant Society took a busload to the National Amateur Gardening Show at Shepton Mallet in September, where we met Frank and Mary on the Society stand. Great show, something for everyone, easy access (all on the flat), Local flower show, Giant Veg show, National Dahlia Show, Floral Marquee with all the usual traders and specialist growers , Theme gardens, ok! Ok! Gordon that's enough of the commercial!!

Autumn Malvern was the next big show with Frank and Mary doing their sterling work for the Society. It was a massive show but these shows are becoming very expensive especially as you are going through the gate to spend money!.

However back to our greenhouses. Gas is on most nights, although they have heavy bubble wrap plus green shading, temperatures can go down to zero especially in windy conditions, thus the need for the gas heating which works out cheaper than paraffin in the long run and is much cleaner, and watering is down to a minimum. We have left all the flowers to die back naturally, two reasons, we always like to have a bit of colour in the greenhouses at this gloomy time of the year plus we are setting seed for the society seed bank, which I might add has been well subscribed to in the last year, so stocks are a little low of some varieties so please be patient if you cannot always have the variety you would like a substitute can always be supplied.

Several growers I know, after the September shows as with fuchsias cut the plants hard back. All the flower stems are removed and large leaves trimmed back to a few inches of the pot. This makes for easier storage in the winter if you have limited room as they can be grouped together on a warm bench or you can make an insulated area out of polystyrene sheets (builders merchants) or cover with fleece. Remember to keep an eye on them! As ours die back to their dormant period the leaves will yellow and even go brown remove them as need be and if any leaves have turned mushy remove completely at the crown of the plant. Check that the plant is secure in its pot, if loose you may have the dreaded vine weevil!!!! So remove from the pot sift through the compost and destroy any white grubs you may find. Don't put compost on the garden or compost heap as there might still be eggs in the soil, best to put straight into the bin, plant and all. Check for mealy bugs which look like the tip of a cotton bud and are usually on the underside of leaves or close to the crown of the plant. Just touch them with a tiny paint brush dipped in methylated spirit and they are no more but do not touch the plant with the spirit. To combat the nasties we have been using Provado, excellent product, watered on to the compost as a drench but you don't know how far down the pot it goes and of course the grubs could

Seasons Greetings from South Wales (continued)

be below this level.

We are now using a product called Vin-Nil not cheap by any means. It is a granular product and must be mixed thoroughly through your compost, about 3oz? What's that in metric Gordon? ----I think its about 75 grams, but don't quote me on it, to an 80 litre bag of compost. This is used from leaf striking stage all through the potting on cycle so it's always present from top to bottom of the pot. Not cheap but it works --vine weevil free for 2 years.

We have lots of leaves put down on the hot bench, for new plants for this year. Some root easily others take longer or prove a real challenge. We used to set them in full trays, but sure as eggs with more than one variety to a tray sooner or later you get varieties mixed up so this year we have rooted our plants in strips like the ones used for bedding plants, and five strips fit well into a full seed tray. Simple effective 1 variety per strip so no mix ups this year! We hope.

Now the daylight is improving in about a month or so, the plants will start to perk up, smaller ones will be potted on and a high nitrogen feed (one only) will be given, this will kick start the plants into leaf growth. When they are underway and the weather is getting warmer we will revert to a weak high potash feed applied every watering. As our benches are covered in capillary matting the water is added to the surface and the plant takes it up through the bottom of the pot minimising the risk of crown rot and botrytis.

Sue is busy harvesting seed at the moment and packaging it for the seed bank,---the plants have been slow to ripen their seed as it has been such a mild Autumn. This is a time consuming job and she is grateful to members who have taken the time to send seed to the fund, many thanks.(**Me Sue**) If you do decide to send any seed could you please not send it in kitchen paper as it lodges in the tissue or cling film as this causes static to build up and is almost impossible to remove the seeds. Any body stuck for bags for sending the seed or seed pods let me know and I can supply you with the envelopes I use.

After each newsletter goes out members are stirred into action and seed requests flood in from home and abroad and as some members ask for the full 10 pkts allowed, 5 hybrid and 5 species or 10 of one kind processing the orders can take some time but all are pro-

cessed in the order that I receive them. We have had trouble receiving leaves and seed from the U.S.A. and wonder if this is because plant material is radiated in the postal system. Also some members across the pond seem to think that it affects the seed I send them, any one had any trouble with this. Someone asked that seed be wrapped in foil to combat the radiation or is the air-craft hold too cold .

Back to work tomorrow after the Christmas break, lovely afternoon, sun is out so out to the greenhouse to tidy plants.

Best wishes for a good growing season to you all home and abroad and hope to see some of you at the shows especially at our own show in July, which just gets better and better. We are always interested in your growing, Success or failure, so please put pen to paper and write to the newsletter.

All the best for now
Seedily yours
Sue and Gordon

Secretary's Report

First of all may we wish you a very Happy New Year and a very good growing season for 2006. Both Mary and myself thank all of you who helped in any way with the shows the society attended during 2005 they all proved to be worth while, our own show was I think as you will all agree a very big success your entries where up again despite one or two of you not being able to make it to the show owing to illness, we hope you have now fully recovered and will be able to join us this July.

The Society has now grown to a membership of 753 this is very good as society's go today most of them that I talk to seem to be on the decline and this is a great shame. We started off in 1999 and by December 2000 we had 322 this has gone up and up as we have progressed. Just a word about our membership numbers, we reuse the ones that do not renew each year this keeps the paperwork down and more important the paper use down.

We, that is the society collected a few awards during the 2005 season, our first one was at BBC Gardeners World where we had Com-mended, this was the first time that we had been given anything at this show.

The next show to put up any awards was RHS Tatton Park this one we had a Gold, August was Shrewsbury Flower Show at this one we had First and The Shropshire Star Golden Jubilee Trophy. The last show of the year at the end of September is RHS Malvern Autumn, this was a RHS Silver.

The other shows that we attend do not give awards to societies.

It will be February when you read this and the plants will just be starting to wake up in the greenhouse, those in the house will have already woken up and it wont be long before they will need a feed, first week in march would be ideal time to start. Give them a ¼ strength high pot-ash feed from now on every time they have a drink, Tomato feed is one of the best, we used this last season right through and found it much better than the one I was using before.

When you are looking at your plants make sure all the old leaves have been taken off to make room for the new ones that will have this years flowers on.

For pests I recommend Provado any of the prod-

ucts on the shelf are good for most things, read the label to find out which one suits your require-ments, Provado Fungus Fighter, for that white powder you sometimes get on the leaves that looks like talcum powder.

Last season during March and April when we were potting our own plants from the very small pots, Mary suggested that we put the faster growing ones into 11cm (4.1/4 inch) pots and miss out the 9cm (3.1/2 inch) ones, I said NO then we looked back to the time the year before when we had to replot them from 9cm to 11cm and this was quite a short length of time, so in the end I agreed. Well what a difference it made, they seemed to grow faster and they flowered a lot earlier with a good head of flower in fact some of them went on the stand at BBC Gardeners World Live and at Tatton Park. The water was kept to a minimum as we did not want the plants to sit in wet compost in the pots, we wanted them to put out root to find the moisture, we seemed to get it right, well Mary did as she looked after all the new season plants and as Ken said when he came down it showed that they had had the female touch, he was well im-pressed.

At this moment of time (Dec 28th) the young plants we are growing for you to obtain during March, April are looking very good, I seem to say this most years but they do look the best I have grown, still have some to take off the leaves and pot but they should all be done by the time you read this, Bob Counsell tells me his are doing well also he is growing mostly American Varieties for those of you who wish to try them, and this year he tells me they will not be in those jiffy pots.

We have one or two new ones this year, Kelly, Velvet Lady, Mulberry Lady and Isabella this one came out last year under the label LR1.

I am asking for help at some of the shows again this year, if you can help out on the stand we would appreciate it. The Malvern Spring Show has now an extra day, if anyone can do the Friday (may 12th) please let me now ASAP. We would set up on the Wednesday stay for Thursday but would have to return home that evening to spend Friday watering etc, back for Saturday, Sunday, so if you would like to help give me a ring an e-mail or drop me a line.

Ken would also like help at Kings Heath at the beginning of September please.

Continuing Odyssey of Hybridizing for Variegation

There is a strong demand from streptocarpus growers in the US and Canada for variegated foliage. After the close of the AVSA convention in 2005, Dr. Jeff Smith had a long line of people waiting for free leaves from his gorgeous, variegated show plants. He has created some variegated beauties, one of which is named, 'Very Nearly', referring to its lovely shaped flower being very nearly white. We are starting to see more variegated streps being shown in the US and Canada in competition either in full bloom or in the foliage classes without flowers. I'm hoping that Jeanne Krieger who creates the "Northwoods" streptocarpus hybrids will introduce her variegated hybrids at the AVSA convention in 2006. She and her mother, Marcia Belisle, are the team behind the commercial "Belisle's".

Hybridizing streptocarpus for variegation has been an ongoing adventure. Unlike African violets where all you need is a variegated seed parent to get a variegated seedling, producing variegated streps with decent blossom counts has presented some challenges! Initially hybridizers were selling the "Ice" and "Iced" named variegated hybrids I created in October, 2000, when I crossed two variegated streps: S. 'Canterbury Surprise' x S. 'Winter Dreams'. These include 'Iced Pink Flamingo' and 'Iced Texas Twilight'. I warned people that all they would get were look-alikes with only one or two flowers per peduncle. In addition, the in-breeding would cause flaws like weak peduncles and misshapen flowers to dominate. That's exactly what happened. I challenged hybridizers to cross those variegates with green leaf hybrids that were heavy bloomers, like 'Gloria' and 'Joker'. Since the first generation produces solid green leaves, the goal was to self those seedlings to get back variegation as well as increased blossom count. Selfing a green leaf seedling with parentage of variegation x green leaf seems to result in about 25% of the seedlings having variegation. Keep in mind that solid white seedlings die, so perhaps only 15 out of 100 seedlings were variegated and grown to maturity. I've also had no variegation in some of my containers!

The selfings have produced variegated foliage with some very nice flowers and with a variety of colors. Unfortunately, the blossom count remains quite low. Another hybridizer has some hybrids with yellowish variegated leaves producing pink flowers and yellow

throats. Again, only one or two flowers per peduncle. Unfortunately, these unnamed, variegated seedlings appear to lack pollen and refuse to be mothers. Just another dead-end!

I crossed one of the "Iced" hybrids with the variegated *Streptocarpus candidus*. The variegated *S. candidus* has yellowish variegation. My goal was variegation and scent, as well as lots of flowers. Two of those goals were met. All of my seedlings have green leaves! It turns out that the genes for white variegation and yellow variegation didn't match! I did get the mild, honey scent on a couple of the seedlings along with 5 to 7 flowers per peduncle. Now I need to self this seedling and see if I get back variegation and see if the variegation is white like the "Iced" parent or yellowish like the *S. candidus* parent. Of course, I also want to keep the scent!

We have a long way to go in our adventures! If you are hybridizing for variegation, please write to me and share your experiences.

Dale Mar-

DaleMar-



Variegation. Nearly there says Dale



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Back to Africa

by Frank Davies

During March Brian Grieve paid me a visit for one or two plants, also some pots and compost, just before going he showed me a leaflet regarding the charity Wilmslow Wells for Africa. This entailed having gardens open for the public to visit, buy plants and whatever else was available on the day.

Having been away for quite a long spell to visit his son in Mexico Brian had not got a large quantity of young plants, so I offered to let him have any spare ones I had when your orders had been fulfilled, this I did later towards the end of April.

The October 2005 edition of Cheshire Life carried a three-page article including a photo of Brian in his greenhouse surrounded by Streptocarpus. The open day in July covered 19 gardens that were open for public viewing. Visitors to Brian's greenhouse were amazed at the colourful display.

The Strep Society had a small water feature; this was going to be used at the Tafton Show, but owing to the restrictions on running water re "Legionnaire's Disease hazard" we did not use it.

As Brian had this to bring to the show he fixed it up in the greenhouse with some species placed around it, this proved a real magnet, as most people had not seen wild species streps before. As always the single leaf, unifoliate species were a special draw.

Having visited the garden and greenhouse, interest in streps was high and the sale of surplus plants made £320.00 towards the grand total of £5000.00 raised on the day.

It seemed very fitting that plants that had arrived here from Africa during the 19th century should help raise money to provide clean water for a Children's Hospital in Zambia in the 21st century.



Brian Grieve in his greenhouse

Seed List

STREPTOCARPUS SEED HYBRID LIST 2006.	STREPTOCARPUS SEED HYBRID LIST 2006
Sophie x Athena	Amanda
Weismoor Red	Athena x Marie
Bethan.	Beverley Ruth.
Beryl (s.a.)	Blue Skies.
Australian Hybrids No 2	Bluebird
Concorde.	Bristol's Hobgoblin (s.a.)
Blue Ice.	Bristol's Petticoat. (s a)
C.S.W. x Winter Dream (u.s.a)	Cynthia
Bristol's Popsicle (s.a.)	Dainty Lady.
Ruby River.	Ella Mae.
Elegance.	Ella.
Crystal Beauty	Elsie
Garnet.	Emily
Mary.	Falling Stars.
Charlotte	Franken Charlotte
Izzy.	Gillian.
Maiden's Blush.	Gloria.
Festival of Wales x Sandra	Heide x Daphne
Fricker Frack (s.a.)	Heidi.
Athena x Lynn's Ruby	Ice Castle.
Georgette	Ice Iced Baby
Hannah Ellis.	Ida. {s.a.}
Texas Seed	Jane Elizabeth.
Jennifer	Joanne
Susan x self.	Joshi
Laura. {s.a.}	Kens Yellow Centre Mxd.
Heide x Lynette	Laura x Nicola
Judith.	Maggie.
Lynn's Ruby Red	Marie
Melanie.	Megan.
Midnight Flame.	Midnight.
Sue's Min's	Mixed Seed.
Moonlight.	Modbury Lady.
Nerys.	Passion Pink.
Patricia.	Paula.
Tartan Blue.	Purple Haze.
Samantha.	Raspberry Dream.
Gower Daybreak	Ruby Anniversary.
Sheila Emily.	Ruffles.
Nicola	Sandra
Sandra x Festival of Wales	Something Special x Lynn's Ruby Red
Brimstone.	Spectacular Velvet Midnight
Terracotta.	Stacey.
Tanga	Texas Sunrise.
Vanessa.	Wendy.
Maassens White.	White Wings.
Karen	Kim
Kerry's Gold	Kissie
Lemon Ice	Paper Moon
Susie	Mulberry Lady
Gower Summertime	Pink Sprite (small flowered)
Pink Panther	Phoebe (u.s.a.)
Dainty Sprite (small flowered)	Blue Sprite (small flowered)
Stella	Bristols Tye Dyed
Orchid Lace	Something Special
STREPTOCARPUS SEED HYBRID LIST 2006	STREPTOCARPUS SEED HYBRID LIST 2006
'Royal' Red Strain	'Royal' White Strain
Strawberry Red	Ruby
Blue Beryl	Carolynn Ann
Carys	Purple Ripples
Misty Pink	Misty Blue
Red Seedling SG6	Pink N'Stripev

Seed List

STREPTOCARPUS SPECIES SEED LIST 2006	STREPTOCARPUS SPECIES SEED LIST 2006
Cyaneus. {s.a.}	Baudertii.
Buchananii. {s.a.}	Caulescens. {s.a.}
Caeruleus. {v.s.a.}	Cyaneus ssp Polackii {v.s.a.}
Cyanandrus. Small pale purple veined	Cyaneus. Rosette Blue form long flowers.
Cooperi.	Confusus x Polyanthus x Verlandus.
Daviesii. Violet bell shaped flower.	Dunnii. Large single leaf, tubular red flowers.
Dracomontanus.	Eylesii.
Trabeculatus	Fasciatus. Rosette whitish with violet lines. {s.a.}
Formosus. {s.a.}	Galpinii.
Gardenii Rosette, flowers whitish with an unusual green in the tube.	Goetzeii. Single leaf or two, flower violet-ish narrow tube one for the enthusiast.
Grandis. Single leaf, white to pale violet.	Fanninia.
Glandylossimus.	Kirkii.
Mixed Species.	Meyeri Dk flowered {s.a.}
Meyeri Lt. Flowered. {s.a.}	Primufolius.
Polyanthus x Dracomontanus.	Polyanthus.
Pentherianus. Rosette, one to three leaves, flowers white/violet, pale yellow in the throat	Porphyrostachys. Single leaf these are beetroot purple on the underside, flowers violet.
Pusillus (v.s.a.) Monocarpic. White. flowers.	Rexii x Gardenii Rosette.
Rexii Grassland form. Mauve, purple stripes.	Roseo-Albus {v.s.a.} Rosette, rose pink flowers
Thompsonii.	Variabilis. {s.a.}
Vandeleurii {v.s.a.} Large leaf, scented white.	Wilmsii.
PolyanthusxDracomontanusxProlixus	Haygarteii
Rexii	Unnamed Monocarpic
Cyanus	

A Short Article

by Peter Brownlow

I owned just two *Streptocarpus* for a number of years, one of which was 'Elsi', the other being an unknown mauve specimen, possibly one of the Weismoor hybrids.

One September, I harvested one seedpod, believed to be from 'Elsi' which may or may not have been the result of hybridisation between the two plants or simply a 'self', and subsequently sowed the seeds. I was amazed at the variety of flower colours produced from this cross, varying from pale pink, through deep red, to velvet purple, almost black, and royal blue, with variations in throat patternation and internal tube colour and markings. This sparked an interest, which threatens to take over!

A second generation cross between two of these offspring produced further variations both in colour and markings. Of ~150 of these seedlings, two were observed to display one flower with six petals, whilst also having flowers with the normal five, produced from different leaves on the same plant (see photo). These six petalled flowers had no apparent stamens, and so no possibility of selfing for further work. Whether they will prove to be a genuine 'sport' is doubtful, but I live in hope!

I am informed that this is not unusual behaviour in *Streptocarpus*, and await production of further flowers.

I would be interested to learn of other people's experiences of such behaviour, and also the reason for the production of such abnormalities, (presumably some genetic mutation), if anyone has any ideas.

Peter.Brownlow@corusgroup.com



Six Petals!

SHOWS THE SOCIETY HOPES TO ATTEND 2006

May 11th to 14th.

MALVERN SPRING SHOW.
THE SHOWGROUND.
MALVERN. WORCESTERSHIRE.

JUNE 14TH to 18TH.

BBC GARDENERS WORLD LIVE AT THE NEC BIRMINGHAM.

JULY 8TH & 9TH.

SHUGBOROUGH HALL GARDENERS WEEKEND.
SHUGBOROUGH. Nr. STAFFORD.

JULY 19TH to 23RD

RHS FLOWER SHOW.
TATTON PARK. CHESHIRE.

JULY 29TH.

SOCIETY'S OWN SHOW.
MEMO HALL. LICHFIELD ROAD.
BROWNHILLS STAFFS. Open 7.30am Close 3.30pm.

AUGUST 11TH & 12TH.

SHREWSBURY FLOWER SHOW.
SHREWSBURY.

SEPTEMBER 2ND & 3RD

KINGS HEATH GARDENERS WEEKEND.
KINGS HEATH PARK.
BIRMINGHAM.

SEPTEMBER 1ST 2ND & 3RD

NATIONAL AMATEUR GARDENING SHOW.
BATH & WEST SHOWGROUND.
SHEPTON MALLET. SOMERSET.

15TH to 17TH SEPTEMBER.

HARROGATE FLOWER SHOW

SEPTEMBER 23RD & 24TH.

MALVERN AUTUMN SHOW.
THE SHOW GROUND.
MALVERN. WORCESTERSHIRE.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO HELP ON THE STAND AT ANY OF THE ABOVE SHOWS PLEASE LET ME KNOW, ESPECIALLY MALVERN SPRING, NEC AND TATTON, THANK YOU.

JIM ELLIS WILL BE AT THE FOLLOWING SHOWS.

LINCOLNSHIRE SHOW. 21ST & 22ND JUNE.

MARKET BOSWORTH 9th July.

BAKEWELL SHOW AUGUST 2ND & 3RD (DERBYSHIRE)

EDENBRIDGE & OXTED SHOW AUGUST 27TH & 28TH (KENT)

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If you have pictures you want printed in the Newsletter please send photos, 35mm negs or slides to Tom Causer or Ken Jones these will be returned after publication.

Many thanks
Tom
The editor