

Dorothy
Jenkin's
Stewart
Island
orchids



compiled by
Ian St George

Cover

Thelymitra cyanea: "Is quite common, found growing on banks and in clumps on bush tracks; this group was brought in from Masons Bay; it flowers throughout the summer."

Dorothy Jenkin's Stewart Island orchids

watercolours c. 1960

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Dorothy Jenkin with her Christmas lily

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to her son, Michael Jenkin of Dunedin, who sent me details of his mother's life for another publication in 1984. I am grateful to Rakiura Museum for permission to publish the watercolours.

Dorothy Jenkin 1892–1994

Dorothy Jenkin (née Venning) was born in Paddington, London. She attended the Royal College of Art before and during World War I, and took a special interest in floral art. She and fellow student Thomas Hugh Jenkin ARCA were married in 1918. Tom was invited to Dunedin by WS La Trobe in 1922 to revitalise the Dunedin Art School, and within months of the family's arrival he was petitioning the Board of the School to purchase an etching press. For Dorothy Jenkin there were commissions for work in Dunedin, and they exhibited at the Dunedin and South Seas Exhibition in 1925.

Tom, however, disliked being closely supervised by the School's managers, and by 1925 had resigned.

They moved to Invercargill where he became head of the Art Department at the Southland Technical College. From the late nineteen-thirties Dorothy taught art at Southland Girls' High School and in the 'forties, at Gore High School. She was a foundation member of the Invercargill Art Society and exhibited often there; still lifes were a specialty. She was fully involved in the acquisition of Anderson Park as Invercargill's Art Gallery.

In retirement in 1952 she moved to Stewart Island, and so began her interest in native orchids and fungi. During the nineteen-sixties she produced a series of watercolours of these for Cedric Smith, first Curator of the Rakiura Museum, a task she said provided much pleasure and excitement.

There is a letter dating from the nineteen-sixties in Rakiura Museum to Arnold Wall. She wrote,

... I am submitting for your perusal a collection of water colour drawings with descriptions & in some cases a small history of the plant locality. As you know the Island is a tourist attraction & I thought a small book dealing with a section of its life might be saleable. I would be most grateful if you would advise me on possible publication, perhaps a book the size of Nancy Adams' Mountain Flowers or Molly Falla's Birds might be possible. As it is my first venture towards printed expression I await with anticipation your much valued comments.

His reply is not known, but the book was never published.

She wrote some text for this proposed book—an introduction as well as brief descriptions of the orchids and fungi. Those for the orchids are reproduced under the illustrations here. Her introduction follows this.

The Museum made prints of her watercolours available to the public. When her sight failed and she could no longer paint, she still revelled in her magnificent bush and garden on the Island, and remained active in the Forest and Bird Protection Society.

Her paintings hung in her home, and in the homes of her family. They are skilful, delicate things.

Ian St George,
December 2012.

Dorothy Jenkin's introduction to her proposed book on Stewart Island fungi and orchids

On my husband's retirement we decided the Island was the place for us, having spent so many happy holidays here with our family of five. First a house had to be built, fortunately my husband's art training included architecture so the design was soon made & with the help of the family & friends a shell was constructed. We moved in with the idea of a five year plan to finish building at our leisure. After weeks of climbing over packing cases & sleeping on camp beds in odd corners we decided to go up to our bed room, which was floorless, however a few boards over the joists & our beds were soon set up. The old saying "She must have got out of bed on the wrong side" came home to me as I looked through to the floor below & hoped for the best. That night we retired to bed up a ladder to be wakened early next day by a row of birds perched on the rafters singing their morning song. Life was good, the Island full of beauty, ever changing lights & shades, bird song & the scents of mosses & native flowers. We had certainly chosen well.

After my husband's death six years later it was a great comfort to me when the Curator of our museum asked if I would make water colour studies of some of the Island's fungi as these were collected so I painted & have now over 150 which are the property of the museum & exhibited there.

The painting of these plants provided much pleasure & excitement, the 'phone would ring & a voice would say there's another fungus for you, so down to the Bay I would go to see the latest find & afterwards the same thrill came with the orchid collection.

Many visitors (we had 7000 this season) have asked if they are for sale, this gave me the idea of a small book, something for them to remember their visit by. I am not a botanist but have always loved the little things, nature's treasures, found on long walks through bush tracks, on banks & in the case of orchids hanging from the branches of trees. Some I have tried to give you for your pleasure & hope you too will enjoy the quiet bush, the bird songs & the swish of the sea that surrounds & preserves for us this peaceful & lovely Isle. "Rakiura" is its Maori name.

Her acknowledgements

Most of the specimens in this book were enthusiastically collected by many helpers, chief among them being the late Curator Mr Cedric Smith who asked me to make these studies &, when drawn, sent them to the Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew, for identification.

To Mrs E. Willa, our present Curator, well known for her herbarium work for American universities, who has kindly allowed me to use these drawings & checked my work.

To Gertrude Dempsey, author of "The Little World of Stewart Island," for her help & encouragement.





Tom and Dorothy Jenkin
at about the time they came to live on the Island



Aporostylis bifolia and *Caladenia lyallii*

"These little white flowered orchids like the roadside and cleared ground, where sun can open their petals"



Caladenia minor



Chiloglottis cornuta

"Small plants with two leaves only;
can be found in open bush at Leask's and Jensen's Bays"



Corybas acuminatus

"with its long feelers and beautiful arrow-shaped leaf
and erect stem is in flower in October"



Corybas macranthus

"1 and 2 are two of the most colourful spider orchids, one finds them growing on banks by track and roadside. They first appear in September at the time of the children's flower show; usually wild flowers look sad when picked, but not so these small orchids, sharp little eyes see them, and nimble fingers arrange them in moss filled paua shells, and hand made flax baskets."

Corybas oblongus

Another spider orchid hard to find, but usually in close bush.
Time in bloom October and November.



***Corybas trilobus* group**

"Another of the tiny spider orchids found in deep bush in July and August. Ulva is a favourite place for these"



Dendrobium cunninghamii

"Grows on banks, rocks, and trees in great profusion in hanging position, and flowering in January. It is commonly known as 'the lady's slipper'"



Drymoanthus flavus

"This interesting specimen, one of the aerial rooted orchids can usually be found growing on branches of trees overhanging beaches; its roots gather moisture as it drips from trees"



Earina autumnalis

"... or the Easter Orchid, blooms in April hence its name. It is very sweet scented and will reveal its growing place by its perfume; can be found growing over rocks and trees, its roots matted together to form a woven covering, with its flowers standing up to the sun"



Earina mucronata

"The creamy coloured sweet scented flowers can be found hanging from trees like a fringe in late spring"



Gastrodia sp.

"Or the black orchid will grow to a height of 4 ft., it is rather a sinister looking plant when seen in deep bush. It is said its roots were used by the Maoris for food."



Gastrodia sp.



Gastrodia sp.



Microtis unifolia

“Has a large root for so small a flower; it looks rather lonely on this page, but that is how it grows, singly dotted about in rock crevices, or pops up amongst flowers in our cleared bush gardens”



Prasophyllum colensoi and *Microtis unifolia*



Prasophyllum colensoi

“October to February one finds these graceful little yellow flowered orchids growing singly in cleared bush on the way to Ringaringa”



Prasophyllum colensoi



"Pterostylis montana, banksii, patens and australis"

"or Parrot orchid as it is commonly called, often grows on mosses by the roadside, and on shady bush tracks from November onwards. Three are shown here, and there is another smaller plant, not yet drawn"



Thelymitra cyanea



Thelymitra cyanea

"Is quite common, found growing on banks and in clumps on bush tracks; this group was brought in from Masons Bay; it flowers throughout the summer"



Thelymitra hatchii

"Found growing in drifts on a cleared hillside overlooking Golden Bay;
their pinkish petals open only in full sunshine.
The broad bronze leaves are a feature of this plant"

Stewart Island orchids

The current names of orchids known from Stewart Island.

Acianthus sinclairii,
Adenochilus gracilis,
Aporostylis bifolia,
Bulbophyllum pygmaeum,
Caladenia chlorostyla,
Caladenia lyallii,
Caladenia minor,
Chiloglottis cornuta,
Corybas oblongus,
Corybas acuminatus
Corybas trilobus,
Corybas iridescens,
Corybas macranthus,
Corybas orbiculatus,
Dendrobium cunninghamii.
Drymoanthus adversus,
Drymoanthus flavus
Earina aestivalis,
Earina autumnalis,
Earina mucronata,
Gastrodia cunninghamii,
Gastrodia minor,
Gastrodia molloyi
Microtis oligantha,
Microtis unifolia,
Prasophyllum colensoi,
Pterostylis auriculata
Pterostylis australis

Pterostylis cernua,
Pterostylis graminea,
Pterostylis banksii,
Pterostylis montana agg.,
Pterostylis venosa,
Thelymitra cyanea,
Thelymitra formosa,
Thelymitra hatchii,
Thelymitra colensoi,
Thelymitra longifolia,
Thelymitra pulchella,
Townsonia deflexa,
Waireia stenopetala,





Birches, etching by Dorothy Jenkin, 1914, *Art in New Zealand* 1929; 1 (4: June): p.249. In 1914 Dorothy Jenkin was aged 22 and attending the Royal College of Art. She must have brought the etching to NZ in 1921. It may have been exhibited at the Dunedin and South Seas Exhibition of 1925.

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