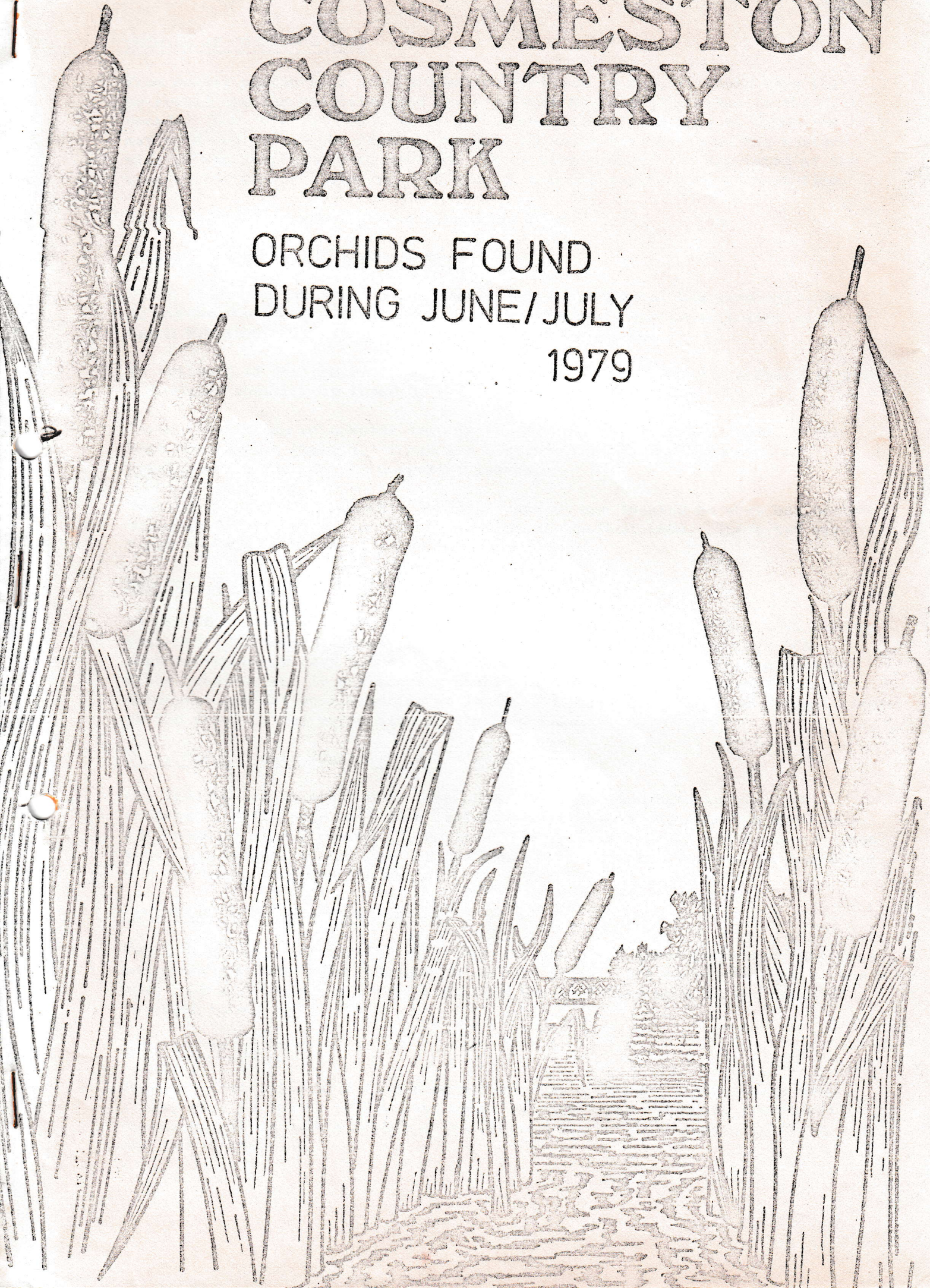


COSMESTON COUNTRY PARK

ORCHIDS FOUND
DURING JUNE/JULY
1979



ORCHIDS AT COSMESTON 1979

From aerial photographs and information received so far, it would seem that no orchid species has colonised any area that has been disturbed in the past decade. How "old" an area has to be before orchids will grow at Cosmeston may be found perhaps by finding the date at which the mounds on the western side of the West Lake were created. These were present and vegetated at the time of the Quarry's closure according to men who worked here at that time.

So far, only four species have been identified.

Common Spotted Orchid (Dactylorhiza fushii).

Found in most areas where a calcareous grassland habitat has developed, but is excluded with the development of scrub. A small scattered number occur in Cogan Plantation in areas free from Hawthorn dominance.

An estimate of the numbers at present would be 5 - 10,000 within Phase 1, with a few more thousand in Phase 2.

Seven individuals of a White Variety were located to the north-west of the West Lake within Phase 1. These are distinguished by a combination of totally white flowers and unspotted leaves.

Two individuals of a probably "Hybrid" variety are located on what has become known as Orchid Corner, on the south side of the West Lake. These two were first recorded and photographed three years ago.

Bee Orchid (Ophrys Apifera).

At present 58 are known to have flowered to the south-west of the West Lake on open short grassland. Another 15 were located this year under the LOCK sign on the north east boundary of Phase 1. These were further diminished after location and it now seems probable that less than 10 remain of a once extensive population (numbering at least 100) stretching from the present site to the trees on the north side of the East Lake.

Early Marsh Orchid (Dactylorhiza incarnata).

All individuals located so far are probably of the nominate species. D. incarnata. This year only four individuals were located, although another two are known to have flowered in previous years. If these two are included, then three are located to the west of the West Lake and three between the boardwalk and the Picnic area to the north.

Pyramidal Orchid (A. pyramidalis).

Two individuals were located this year and one other three years ago (which is now under the path going through the picnic area). One is to the west of the West Lake and the other a few yards from the bulldozed area to the north of the West Lake.

LOCATION OF ORCHIDS

Because of variations in flowering period, the different species have been fairly easy to locate during many hours intensive searching and individual checking. It is highly probable that no orchids were overlooked in Phase 1 and few in Phase 2.

Certainly then, for Phase 1 at least, suitable comparisons of populations from year to year may now be made of the rarer orchid species and varieties.

The information contained was obtained by myself and in consultation with Ivor Pemberthy of the Botanical Section C.N.S. Although this draft has been written alone and any mistakes are mine alone.

Ian Smith

P/EDC/PML/23.6.3