



THE MONTHLY BULLETIN OF THE KU-RING-GAI ORCHID SOCIETY INC.

(Established in 1947)
A.B.N. 92 531 295 125

September 2016 Volume 57 No. 9
Annual Membership : \$12 single, \$15 family

Patron : Keith Irvine

web site : <http://kuringaiorchidsociety.org.au>

Committee

President : Kevin Crocker 9484 7072
Secretary : Bob Ellis 9987 4403
7 Meredith Avenue, Hornsby, 2077
Treasurer : tba
C. Member : Dennys Angove 9477 7689

C. Member : Pauline Onslow 9477 3516
C. Member : Trevor Onslow 9477 3516
C. Member : Cynthia Brydie 9476 3383
C. Member : Bernie Britton 9451 9144
C. Member : Graeme Mohr 9449 8127
C. Member : Rod Heydon 9498 8511

Membership Secretary: Angie Lyle 0418 963 164 mail subscriptions to 9 Kerela Ave, Wahroonga, 2076

Vice President & Editor : Jim Brydie 9476 3383 - email = jimbrydie@bigpond.com

Next Meeting : Monday, 19th September, 2016

Venue : The Lindfield Community Centre, corner of Bradfield Rd and Moore Avenue, West Lindfield.

The **Culture Class** this month (7.15pm) will be Seb Torrisi demonstrating repotting a Cymbidium. Seb is one of our best growers and a very thoughtful person who is sure to have some tips and tricks and sound practices that will benefit all who attend. You all grow at least one Cymbidium, so lets see a bumper crowd in there learning what you have to do to get fantastic Cymbidiums back on our benches. We certainly need more of them for our displays.

The main **meeting commences at 8pm**. After the tea break, our speaker this month will be Gary Hart, one of Sydney's best growers of all slipper orchids, and he will be talking about Phragmipediums. These are the American close cousins to the Asian Paphiopedilums and there are some beautiful types among them. Gary's talk is a special opportunity to learn more about growing Phrags. Don't miss it.

Our **super volunteers** for July are **Jenny Richardson** and **Nancy Yao**. Thank you both for helping yet again.

Best of Evening Hybrid – RYC Dundas 'Olga' - grown by Henri Choo

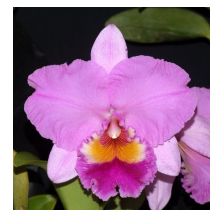


What a glorious orchid. RLC (or RYC?) Dundas 'Olga' was created and registered by H.E. Sheaves of Dundas right here in Sydney. It is the cross between what I would call LC Bonanza and BLC Sylvia Fry. It is hardly one of the most recent developments in the Cattleya alliance, as it was registered over 30 years ago (in 1983), but it still wins shows today.

Did you wonder what the RLC stands for? The confusion for orchid growers all started when the taxonomists decided that Brassavola digbyana, that gorgeous big green Cattleya like species that had been used in about half of all Cattleya hybrids, was no longer a Brassavola but instead should be called a Rhyncholaelia. More recently they added to the confusion when they decided that the Brazilian Laelias were all really Cattleyas. (Now why didn't I think of that? It now seems so obvious).

Anyway, in the genetic mix that makes Dundas, as well as many Cattleya species which gives us the "C" in the acronym, Dundas does contain some digbyana so that is what the "R" stands for. Finally, Dundas also contains a little Laelia purpurata – a species which is more recently designated as Cattleya purpurata. If you accept that purpurata is now a Cattleya, then Dundas contains two different genera – ie Cattleya and Rhyncholaelia. Surprisingly, the acronym for that two genera mix is "RLC", even though there is no Laelia in the mix. However, if you still think purpurata is a Laelia, then Dundas's generic acronym is "RYC", which by the way, does not stand for Royal Yacht Club, it stands for Rhyncattlaelia – ie the three genus mix of a Laelia, a Rhyncholaelia, and a Cattleya. Now that I have explained it, it just seems so obvious doesn't it? (aren't orchid names entertaining?)

RLC/RYC Dundas 'Olga' received an AM award of 80.8 points way back in 1983 which must have just about been its first showing. It strongly resembles its parent RLC Sylvia Fry although Sylvia Fry is a paler colour and has a slightly more open lip. The clone Dundas, which was owned and shown by H. Sheaves, has been awarded 5 times over the years and has an FCC award of 85.8 points in Victoria. Both are outstanding orchids and still winners today.



Henri's Dundas was grown superbly and presented in amazing condition. It was a worthy winner. RLC Sylvia Fry 'Dundas'
Congratulations Henri and thank you for sharing such a beauty with the rest of us.

The opinions and recommendations published in this bulletin are those of the authors of the various items. The Ku-Ring-Gai Orchid Society Inc disclaims responsibility for any losses or damages that may be attributed to the use or misuse of any material or any opinion published in this bulletin. The bulletin and its content are protected by copyright and no part of them may be reproduced or re-used without the permission of the author.

Society News (if anyone has a news item, please phone Jim on 9476 3383, or email at jimbrydie@bigpond.com)

1. New Members – Following our last meeting, Philip and Peng Toong, who were visiting for the night, joined our society. Welcome aboard Philip and Peng. I hope you enjoy all the lovely flowers we have at each meeting and that you make new friends. Would all members please go out of their way to say hello and make them feel at home.

2. Another new bark order – it seems as soon as one is over we start another. If you need bags of fresh bark to pot up your orchids, please contact Ann Byron (9449 6860) to place your requests. You know the deal, we buy one bulk pallet of 40 bags. A mixture of grades (coarse, medium, fine, Cymbidium etc) depending on what you ask for. We only place the order when member orders reach the full 40 bag total. Prices have gone up about \$1 per bag so should be around \$27 for bark and about \$21 for Cymbid mix. Don't delay your requests, the 40 bag total fills quickly.

3. A successful St Ives Fair – The fair was a huge success as usual. Thousands of growers and orchid lovers haunted the display hall and the vendors hall and everyone seemed to enjoy the event greatly. The standard of the displays was the highest I have ever seen at a show or fair. Kuringai came third this year, we scored 81.78 points and were only a whisker away from second. Our display (pictures) used every orchid we had to its very best effect and was a real tribute to Pauline Onslow and her set up team. I bet they were all pretty tired when they got home Thursday night after spending all day crafting it together. Wonderful work – we salute you.



Kuringai Orchid society display

Thank you also to the committee who organised it and to all those who volunteered to man the show over its 3 days. Events such as these don't just happen. It takes hard work both before the show and during it. It is amazing that it seems to go so smoothly. You all did a fantastic job. and did I mention its all on again next year?

4. Westfield Orchid Show – Our combined show with Berowra Society is set for Thursday 22 Sept through to lunchtime on Sunday 25th. Set up is the day before on Wednesday and those exhibiting must bench their orchids between 12.30 and 3pm at the show area outside David Jones on level 3. The set up team will begin just after that to build a display with all your lovely orchids. If you can't get your orchids there, but wish to enter an orchid into the show, contact one of the committee at their numbers on the front page of this bulletin, but please allow enough time. Now don't rest on your St. Ives laurels. We need your plants and physical help all over again for this next one. There is a show schedule and a nomination form being sent with this bulletin. The show prizemoney is modest but it might be something of a reward for those who do support the show. And by the way, we would really appreciate it if you did give us all your lovely flowering orchids to bench in the show. Those entering plants, do need to complete a "nomination form" as supplied with this bulletin. It is just a formality to help us manage what we have and what should be judged where. If possible, email your form by 5pm Tues (20th), to margaret.barrett@bigpond.com

There will be a members sales table operating during the show. The Societies takes a 15% commission on all sales but this is a great opportunity to move on some of those spare divisions, and to make way for a few new orchids. Make sure your sales orchids are clean, disease free, and well established. You don't need to provide a written list of sales plants, **just put a yellow price tag in/on each orchid, clearly marked with a sales price AND your name or initials.** We want your plants, but we must reserve the right to reject any plants that are not up to the required standard.

And finally, we need your help to man the show. Rosters will be circulated at the Sept meeting (which is just a few days before the show). Roster shifts have been defined in 3 hour periods but please don't feel that means we only want you for 3 hours. If you can possibly offer to help us for more than one shift we will love you to come for as long as you can offer. We beg you to be generous with your time. If you can't be at the meeting, but can volunteer, contact Kevin on 9484 7072.

5. Our Society AGM - our October General Meeting is also our AGM and this is your official notice. The minutes of last year's AGM are attached, as is a form for nomination to join the committee. We would love to see some new faces to join in the fun. The current committee are a great group and I can assure you that being on the committee doesn't unduly impose on other aspects of your life – expands your conatcts. **Please think hard.**

Orchid dates

15-17 Sept (Thurs to Sat) North Shore OS. St Ives Shopping Village, Mona Vale Rd, St Ives

15-17 Sept (thurs to Sat) Manly Warr. OS. Dee Why Grand shopping centre, Pacific Pde, Dee Why.

22-25 Sept (Thursday to Sunday), the combined Berowra and Kuringai Orchid society's show at Hornsby Westfield

7- 9 Oct (Fri, Sat, Sun) Southern Orchid Spectacular, Caringbah High School, 85 Willarong Rd, Caringbah

23 Oct (Sun) Species OS show and public auction day – Community Centre Phyllis and Central Aves Thornleigh

Ageing gracefully maybe?

1. You know that tingly little feeling you get when you really like someone? That's common sense leaving your body.
2. I don't like making plans for the day because then the word "premeditated" gets thrown around in the courtroom.

Best of the Evening Novice – *Oncostele Wildcat 'Bloodshot'* growers *Janine and Dennys Angove*



What impressive colour. But what is an Oncostele?

When this hybrid was registered back in 1992, it was a mix of one *Miltonia* species, seven different *Odontoglossums*, and one *Oncidium*. However, the *Oncidium* alliance was always a strange mix of genera where the boundaries between some genera were rather ill defined. Just one year after registration (in 1993), one of the *Odontoglossums* became a *Rhynchostele*. The name of the *Miltonia* (*Milt warscewiczii*) had always been in a state of flux and it was often alternately known as *Oncidium fuscatum*, a name which is accepted today. And, later DNA studies finally led, in 2008, to taxonomists totally dismantling the *Odontoglossum* genus and making all the *Odontoglossums* into *Oncidiums*. Thus, Wildcat was first a *Colmanara* (Odont+Milt+Onc), then an *Odyncidium* (Odont+ Onc+Rhynchostele), and now finally an *Oncostele* (Onc+Rhynchotele). Thankfully, the official *Odyncidium* name was for such a short time no one ever took any notice of it. Most labels for this lovely plant will either be *Colmanara* or *Oncostele*. I also see it sometimes benched as a straight *Oncidium* but that is not correct.

Whatever the genus however, this has been one of the most successful modern hybrids in the *Oncidiinae* family. The flowers are about 5 to 6cm across, the inflorescence is branched, can get up to 1 metre tall, and can carry about 40 to 50 flowers. The cross

has been amazingly productive and more than 60 different clones have been awarded. I can't recall any other orchid that has done that although that could be because I am slightly more interested in species than hybrids. Most Wildcats are just variations on a theme, a mix of blood red and burgundy with a little yellow thrown in, but some favour a lot more yellow. Some like 'Leopard' and 'Nippon Style' are lovely mottled mixes of burgundy and yellow. Among the blood red lip types, I think 'Bloodshot' is one of the best, although it doesn't seem to have been awarded just yet. Curiously however, there is a 'Dendi's Bloodshot' that got an AM in 2006 in NSW. Perhaps Dendi Orchid's Bloodshot was different to other Bloodshots. Clonal mutations do occur, just look at the *Oncostele Masai* group.

Wildcat and other similar crosses seem relatively easy to grow, so they are good prospect if you want a great splash of colour that will grow in a shadehouse. Peat and perlite or a bark mix with combination of medium bark and finer grades should work well. Like many *Oncidium* types, they don't like to sit in stale mix too long so it is probably safest to replot every 2 or 3 years to keep them moving along. They are also resting in the colder months so cut back the water and fertiliser to a bare minimum.

Congratulations on your third Best of the Evening in a row Dennys. An amazing effort.

Best of Evening Species – *Trichocentrum splendidum* - grown by *Henri Choo*



Trichocentrum splendidum is one of what were originally known as the 'mule ear' *Oncidiums*. It has a 30cm long, stiff, fleshy leaf on top of a much smaller roundish pseudobulb, and is clearly adapted to a dry growing environment.

Splendidum comes from an area in the middle of Central America. To be precise, from Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. In nature it occurs as a hot growing lithophyte on rocky hillsides, at an elevation of about 850 metres. The area of Central America involved is about 15° north of the equator so it is basically very tropical, although the temperatures would be mollified to some extent by the elevation where *splendidum* is found. Orchidwiz gives the minimum temperature in the middle of winter as 16°C and the highest temperature in Summer as 31°C, so you can see this is not an orchid to be grown in a shadehouse in Sydney. The climate in its particular growing areas has quite low rainfall but it is still distinctly seasonal. There is practically no rain for the 6 months centred on winter, and higher rain for the other 6 months although even the wettest month gets only about 170mm. Hence the cactus like leaves, and the intolerance for wet feet in pot culture.

Splendidum is a magnificent orchid when grown to suit its requirements. It can have over 50 big, bold, yellow flowers on an upright, 180cm tall, branched inflorescence. Generally however, a more usual spike is about 120cm, and the flower count more like 20 to 30. The flowers are large, measuring about 5cm wide by 7cm tall, and are distinctly *Oncidium* like. This is a really eye catching species that always draws growers to it when it is benched. Even without the flowers, the massive triangular cross section leaves are an amazing sight on a well grown plant.

As usual, there is some controversy over the correct name. The species was first defined as *Oncidium splendidum* way back in 1862, and it stayed an *Oncidium* right up until 2001 when Chase and Williams published a paper arguing that it, and all the other 'mule ear' *Oncidiums*, should be moved to the genus *Trichocentrum*. This seems to have been fairly widely accepted and most growers have begun using 'Trichocentrum' for the mule ears.

However, a bit earlier, in 1983, Guido Braem analysed the same group and also suggested that the mule ears (and some others) should be split off *Oncidium* and moved to the genus *Lophiaris*. At the time it didn't get much support, but in 2006, eminent taxonomist Eric Christenson proposed once again that all the mule ears should be moved back out of *Trichocentrum* to *Lophiaris*. I think that change has considerable support but the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) in London are the accepted ruler on orchid names and presently they still have *Trichocentrum* as the genus for this group. Orchidwiz also gives *Trichocentrum* but that is based on the RHS position. The other major online public orchid reference source: the Internet Orchid Species Photo Encyclopedia (or IOSPE) recognises *Lophiaris* for the group, based on the Braem/Christenson position. Perhaps the RHS will eventually change their mind some time.

The point is, if you are looking up reference books, or internet sites to find out about or perhaps buy these orchids, you might find them under any of *Oncidium*, *Trichocentrum*, or *Lophiaris*. Personally, I favour *Lophiaris* because the mule ears seem rather different to the other *Trichocentrums*. Some say that *Trichocentrum* has just been used as a catch all for various species that all agree should be split off *Oncidium*.

I have never grown *splendidum* successfully, but I have grown its primary hybrid Florida Gold which looks quite similar. The other parent of Florida Gold is *Lophiaris bicallosa* which is from slightly higher elevations making it a slightly cooler grower. Florida Gold grew in my roofed shadehouse but I had to grow it hanging up near the fans 2 metres off the ground. Dryer atmosphere, higher light, air movement, fast drying conditions. These are the needs demanded by mule ears. I grew Florida Gold in one of those squat terracotta pots with the holes in the side. I used big chunks of bark and a few rocks. Just a place for the roots to grow in an airy space.

Of course, that was me trying to grow them. Henri was doing a much better job. He lives in an apartment and I think the orchid gets to grow outside sometimes and inside others. He is an absolute master grower. I have no idea how he does it but it does prove it can be done, so don't let the many I have killed put you off giving it a go.

Another amazingly well grown orchid Henri. Bravo. You are a marvel.

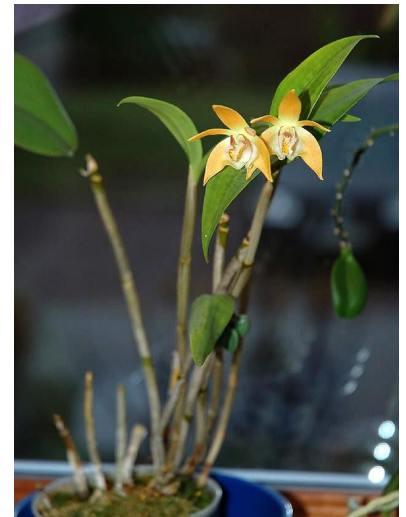
Dendrobium fleckeri --- Jim Brydie

When I first began growing orchids some 40 years ago, Australia's native *Dendrobiums* were one of my favourite interests. I wasn't such a species buff in those days, but I was drawn to learning about the species to guide me in buying the hybrids. When you were buying seedlings back then, the parents of most crosses were either a species, a primary hybrid, or were only a few generations on from species. You needed to know all the most sought after parents and their backgrounds to imagine what the cross might produce. Thus it wasn't long before you got to know them all.

Hybridisation of the Australian native *Dendrobiums* has come a long way since then, as can regularly be seen from the magnificent native Den. displays put on by Henk van den Berg at the St Ives Fair each year. I only rarely buy native seedlings these days, but when I do I find that nowadays the parents have so many



generations behind them that unless you know key parents you have no idea what you are buying without someone with more experience guiding you.



But none of that was what I started out to write. Over the years I began to acquire some of the nicer native Australian species whenever I saw them available. And one of the species I admired the most was *Den. fleckeri*. This lovely species has uniquely coloured Apricot orange flowers and has been used to create some lovely hybrids which pass on the genes for this colour.

Dendrobium fleckeri comes from a small area in northern Queensland, more or less the SE base of the Cape York peninsular, from about Innisfail on the coast (south of Cairns) to Cooktown in the north. However, it is restricted to the elevated areas on the slopes and peaks away from the coast, at elevations between about 900 metres and 1600 metres. These are rainforest areas where there is plenty of air movement, and where clouds, mists, and fogs are frequent. In these favourable areas I understand that it is relatively plentiful.



I have never seen it in the wild personally, but I have been in that area, and as I understand it, it would be about where the red circle is on this map. There are also two closely allied species (*Den. adae* and *Den. finniganense*) which grow in roughly the same area.

To give you some idea of what these areas are like, I found this wonderful description in an article by Ian Walters of Burleigh Park Orchids in Queensland, concerning an expedition he did into the mountains looking for the habitat of Jewel orchids, but where he mentions finding *fleckeri*'s sister species *Den. adae* among other things. "..... *Our second*

foray was a creek on top of the range, threading its way through rainforest and then down to the drier flanks of the range, where casuarina replaced the rainforest. The creek was rich in ferns, and *Bulbophyllum* species, including the strange plant of *Bulbophyllum evasum* which was abundant, with plants of *Dendrobium adae* and *tetragonum* var. *hayesianum* growing in the trees along the banks. *Calanthe triplicata* grew in the leaf mould on the forest floor.

Deep in the rain forest, miles from human activity, it was a surprise to find an old tin mine race, cut through the rock bed of the creek, the rocks lined up along the banks like some fortress wall. As visitors to the rainforest, looking for 'Jewels', we could only contemplate the lives and work of the long ago miners, scratching out a living in the green and wet and almost silent rainforest." (JB: how lovely, why is Ian growing orchids, he should have been a writer)

Den. fleckeri has particularly slender pseudobulbs which can be anything from 10-15cm or to 40cm with two or three leaves at the top of the stems. It can grow as a lithophyte on exposed rocks (where its stems are short) or as an epiphyte on trees in the rainforest (where its stems are longer). The stems are only about 30mm thick. It often grows among mosses. The flower spike is short and generally carries only 2 or 3 flowers which are about 30mm diameter. Like most orchids, the colour is slightly variable. Most are a deep apricot colour but some are lighter tones, and in rare cases it can be much more green. The pictures below give some idea of the potential range.



Now having given you all that information, why was I talking about *Den fleckeri*? Oh, that right. This is one of those species I acquired way back and have always loved. It isn't perfumed to any great extent (an advantage in my mind) but oh that colour. How delicious. Doesn't it make you want to go and eat some cheese, biscuits, and dried apricots?

My plant of *fleckeri* grows to about 25-30cm tall. It seems to grow easily enough in my roofed shadehouse and tolerates near 0°C when it gets down to the worst of our winters. I grow it in peat and perlite (1 peat, 5 perlite, 1 or 2 crumbled foam) and that seems to suit it well enough. The books tell me that it likes to be evenly moist throughout the year. Not too wet but not dry either (now how many orchid articles have you seen that in?). Anyway, mine grows hanging about 1.2 metres above the ground where the pot can swing and move about somewhat. I don't know if that makes any difference but I have always grown it that way and the books says air movement is important for *fleckeri*. So, I say if it ain't broke, don't fix it. My plant also keikis quite regularly which I believe is common for the species, so from time to time I have little babies to share with friends or put on the club sales table. How cool is that.



Dendrobium adae

Den. finniganense

The sister species *Den. adae* grows in much the same areas and conditions. It is also a lithophyte or epiphyte. In nature it tends to grow semi pendulously but in culture it grows upright perfectly well, much the same as *fleckeri*. It also has slender stems but can have up to 6 flowers, similar in size to *fleckeri*, being about 3cm dia.

The other relative, *Den finniganense* is found mostly on Mt Finnigan toward the northern end of the same range. It occurs as a terrestrial or lithophyte at approx 1100 metres, in open exposed areas among rocks and boulders. Like the other two, it has tall slender stems. It has 3 to 7 yellow green 3cm flowers. I have grown a nice largish plant of this species for more than 5 years, the same conditions as *fleckeri*. It grows really well for me but I have never flowered it. I suspect it needs more light. Maybe I will try that this year. We never stop experimenting we orchid growers.

Fleckeri is a really lovely species. If you see a plant of it about about, I recommend it to you. At present (2016) I think both John Woolf in Toowoomba, and the Australian Orchid Nursery in Victoria have seedlings available.

A strange Calochilus ????

----- Jim Brydie

While searching through the 'web' for something else the other day, I came cross an amazing picture of something I had never seen before. That is, a picture of a mutant Calochilus that was clearly petaloid in the same way that we have seen in a variety of other orchid genera over the years. Calochilus is a genus of terrestrial, tuberoid species, most of which are endemic to Australia but with some species occurring in New Zealand, PNG, and New Caledonia.

Depending on which expert you consult, there are either a dozen or so species in total, or 27, or about 30. I suspect that there is probably some debate to come, over which name applies to which official specimens.

Calochilus are know as the "beardies", which you will understand is a perfect name as soon as you ever see one. When I first moved into our new home at Hornsby about 40 years ago, my wife and I used to bush walk regularly as the house borders on major areas of bushland which are now preserved as a National Park. Calochilus were one of the first treasures we found in the bush no more than 100 yards from our side fence. I haven't seen one recently, but then again I haven't really gone looking for some time either. I think the species near our home was Calochilus robertsonii but I wasn't into checking species at the time so I cant be sure. That species occurs in all states, so it is a possibility.

David Jones magnificent book "A complete guide to Native Orchids of Australia" gives a terrific insight into the genus, including the following extracts : "... they grow in forested habitats, shrubland and heathland, mostly in well drained soil. ...in temperate regions, flowering plants have a fully grown, thick, channelled leaf, usually three sided, with a red base. The labellum, which can be flat or curved in profile, is the largest part of the flower and in most species is covered in colourful calli, plates and coarse hairs, imparting the impression of a beard. ... The short column often has spots that resemble eyes (sham eyes) and a colourful frontal ridge. the genus are related to the sun orchids (Thelymitra) .. but do not close at night. ...The flowers usually last only a few days. ... many species are self pollinating but some are pollinated by wasps. ... They are very difficult to grow."

The essence of the last note is please look, see, and enjoy, don't try to dig them up and grow them.



paludosus



platytilus?



campestris



robertsonii



The above give you a look at what some of the species of Calochilus that occur in NSW look like. The eyes are more prominent in some species than others obviously, but on those where they stand out like paludosus, don't they make the flower look like a little bearded 'bushie' with a long nose? Amazing.

And then at the left there is this mutant species they found in Tasmania. You can see that it is a Calochilus all right but with the petals looking like lips, it is hard to tell which species it is.

But what an amazing flower? It looks like some kind of bird of prey in flight. If this was a commercially available orchid it would be sold out overnight.

Satnav – A poem attributed to Pam Ayres but I believe Pam says it isn't hers

I have a little Satnav, it sits there in my car. A Satnav is a driver's Friend it tells you where you are.
I have a little Satnav, I've had it all My life. It's better than the normal ones, my Satnav is my *wife*.
It gives me full instructions, especially how to drive "It's sixty miles an hour", it says, "You're doing sixty five".
It tells me when to stop and start, and when to use the brake, and tells me that it's never ever, safe to overtake.
It tells me when a light is red, and when it goes to green, it seems to know instinctively, just when to intervene.
It lists the vehicles just in front, and all those to the rear. And taking this into account, it specifies my gear.
I'm sure no other driver, has so helpful a device. For when we leave and lock the car, it still gives its advice.
It fills me up with counselling, each journey's pretty fraught. So why don't I exchange it, and get a quieter sort?
Ah well, you see, it cleans the house, makes sure I'm properly fed.
It Washes all my shirts and things, and keeps me warm in bed!
Despite all these advantages, and my tendency to scoff,
I only wish that Now and then, I could turn the bugger off!!!!!!