

A New Orchid Species from Tasmania

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(WITH ONE TEXT FIGURE)

SUMMARY

Prasophyllum buftonianum, of the section *Micranthum*, is described as a new species, apparently endemic in Tasmania. Only the type material is known—collected at Port Davey in 1893.

During the early 1890's the Rev. John Bufton, F.L.S., sent large suites of dried botanical material from Tasman's Peninsula to Baron von Mueller. These were put aside in the Melbourne Herbarium for further examination, and many of the specimens have never been determined. In the beginning of 1893 Bufton visited Port Davey and collected, among other plants, some interesting mosses and orchids which were also submitted to Mueller. W. A. Weymouth dealt with the mosses in these *Papers and Proceedings* (1894, pp. 200-210; 1896, pp. 106-120); but the orchids remained unidentified until July 1949 when the late W. H. Nicholls was persuaded to look them over.

Four plants of a small *Prasophyllum* could not be matched with any available herbarium specimen or description and Mr. Nicholls considered it to be undescribed. I endorse that view, and now publish the plant as a new species under the name *P. buftonianum* (in honour of its discoverer). The following diagnosis is accompanied by an excellent sketch which Nicholls made on 26th July, 1949—from two whole plants and a softened flower.

Prasophyllum buftonianum *J. H. Willis*; species nova (Sect. *Micranthi*) habitu, statura, ciliorum in perianthio absentia *P. ansatum* R. D. FitzG., *P. densum* R. D. FitzG. et *P. albiglandem* H. M. R. Rupp accedens, sed praecipue differt sepalis lateralibus multo latioribus, glandum apicalium absentia, columnae alarum appendicibus duobus valde longis ($\frac{3}{4}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ sepalis dorsalis longitudine attingentibus).

A dwarf slender herb up to about 8 cm. high. Leaf lamina narrowly lanceolate, 1-2 cm. long, arising immediately below the inflorescence and sometimes exceeding it. Inflorescence very short (1-1.5 cm.) and congested, greenish brown; flowers about 10, small (2-3.5 mm. long), gibbous and deflexed, not expanding much. Sepals acute with indurated glandless tips, all very broad, the laterals connate at their gibbous base and particularly broad for the section *Micranthum* Rupp. Petals narrow and slightly shorter, acuminate, glandless. Labellum on a stout claw, oblong, more or less auriculate at the cordiform base, slightly contracted toward the acutish apex, with entire or subserrulate whitish margins and a prominent fusiform callus plate (extending to the apex). Column wings very prominent and bilobate with two equal, exceedingly long, acuminate appendages which may attain $\frac{3}{4}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ the length of the dorsal sepal. Anther acuminate at the apex.

Tasmania.—Port Davey (Bathurst Harbour), early 1893, *J. Bufton* 60 HOLOTYPE in MEL, ISOTYPES in NSW and HO.

The new species is close to *P. ansatum* R. D. FitzG. and *P. densum* R. D. FitzG. (both originally from Mt. Wilson, about 3000 ft., in the Blue Mountains, N.S.W.) and to *P. albiglans* H. M. R. Rupp (1950) from the outer suburban area of Sydney; but from all these it differs in having no apical glands on the perianth segments (at least in the material at present available), wider lateral sepals and much longer sharper appendages to the column wings. The basal auricles of the labellum are less pronounced and the flowers more congested than in *P. ansatum*, its nearest ally. Nothing is known concerning the edaphic conditions under which the plant grows and, as it is a noteworthy addition to the seven pygmy prasophylls already recorded for Tasmania, fresh material from the vicinity of Port Davey (or other parts of the State) is most desirable.

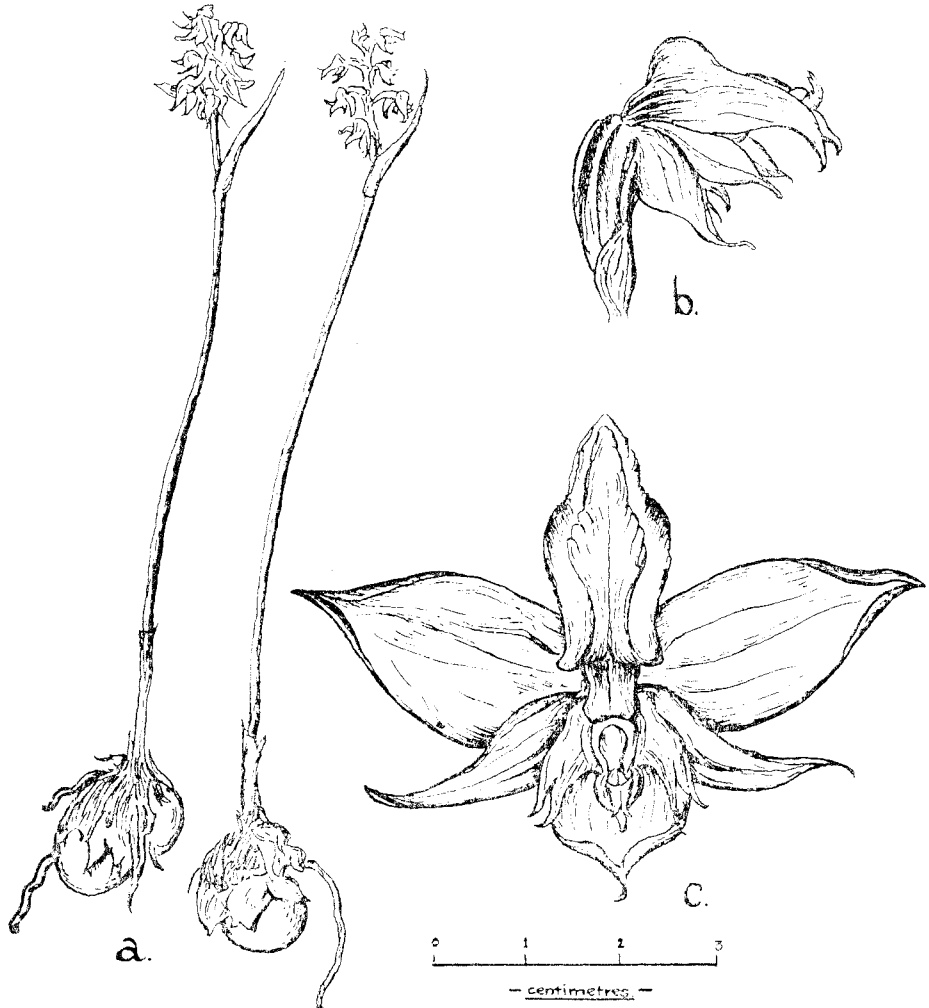


Fig. a—Two plants (to scale provided). Fig. b—Individual flower, lateral view (much enlarged). Fig. c—Flower opened out to show labellum and column details (much enlarged).
[Drawing by W. H. Nicholls, 1949.]