

NORWICH

City is abuzz after rare orchid found

Some unusual orchids are growing in the shadow of Carrow Road in Norwich – and the weather could be the reason.

Three years ago, several bee orchids popped up out of nowhere at a plot of land on the Big Yellow Storage site in Canary Way.

Since then, a temporary wildlife oasis has been created in the heart of the city and Big Yellow's area support manager Rob Harley has made sure that the grass remains uncut in the area. While no bee orchids have been spotted on the site for the last two years, Chris Durdin, former RSPB press officer at the Norwich regional headquarters, counted 29 flowering spikes earlier this week and Mr Harley counted 37.

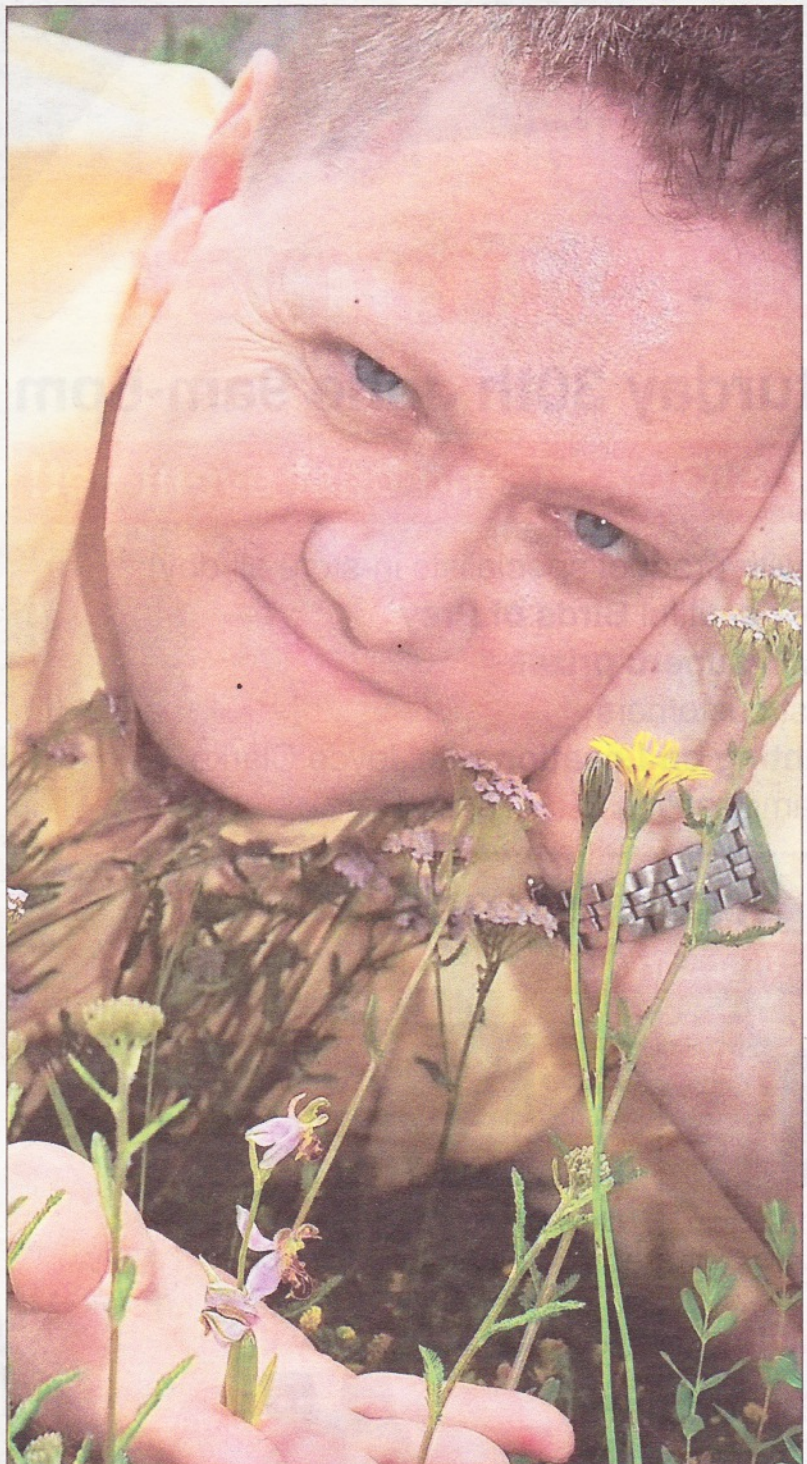
The orchids are predominantly found on sunny, well-drained areas, so the recent sun combined with rain may be behind their arrival.

However, Mr Durdin said the orchids were already past their best and he said there would probably not be any in flower in a week's time.

He said: "I've encouraged Rob to leave the grass after they finish flowering so they can set seed, and to enable people to also enjoy the ox-eye daisies, yarrow and other flowers there. Looking at the grass there, I am fairly sure it was sown with a wild flower mix suitable for free-draining soil."



He added that it was unusual to see bee orchids in areas not normally associated with unusual flowers. Each flower looks like it has a female bee or wasp resting on it, see picture, left.



RARE FIND: Rob Harley with the rare bee orchid near Carrow Road.