

## Orchid Research Newsletter No. 50 (!) (July 2007)

### Your ORN

After 25 consecutive years of serving the needs of the orchid community, the *Orchid Research Newsletter* continues to be a major source of useful information according to our readers who responded to a recent poll. Here is a sampling of their comments:

"I think *ORN* is very, very useful. I look forward to its release every January and July and check almost every day [to see] if it is there from the beginning of each of these months. It makes [it] much easier to keep track of new names and proposals of changes. Is there any other place where we can get a list of orchid publications sorted by date?" -- Brazil

"I find *ORN* a valuable resource since it keeps me informed of what my colleagues are doing. Even some of my correspondents can't be bothered sending reprints or telling me of their publications." -- Australia

"It is often difficult to keep abreast of the great strides that are currently being made especially in the fields of orchid phylogeny, taxonomy and molecular techniques and this is especially true for those of us who do not live in London and who cannot easily reach the Kew or Natural History Museum libraries. Moreover, with the decline in the teaching of botany in our universities, these institutions no longer subscribe to many of the botanical journals that were formerly available. Consequently, for researchers who fall into this category, and there must surely be many, the *Newsletter* is an essential tool. It keeps us informed of progress and current trends in orchidology and keeps us in touch with other researchers who share our interests." -- United Kingdom

"Being engaged in European orchid research, and considering the recent interruption of Willing's bibliography, in my opinion the *ORN* publication is essential to orchidologists, even in the presence of [numerous] (but distracting and time-consuming) websites." -- Italy

"I realise that the *Orchid Research Newsletter* is meant for scientists. However, I am a hobby orchid grower, and I have found the newsletter useful, particularly in helping me to find out about serious references on orchids, especially Mexican orchids. Lists from booksellers do not indicate which books contain serious detailed information, and, if questioned, a lot of booksellers will tell you what they think you want to hear. Since orchid books can be very expensive it is useful to have the newsletter as a filter." -- Australia

We also received letters of unqualified support from Denmark, France, Belgium, Singapore, and many others from Australia and the UK. Many thanks to all for taking the time to write.

The *ORN* has always been and will always be YOUR newsletter, and its editors are only conduits for relaying information about and for orchid science. We therefore welcome any news about your research (see below), which is important to publicize in this depressing era of shrinking habitats, global climate change, and aggression and war but also in this invigorating era of rapid technological advances and exponential increases in our knowledge of nature within and around us. If you are the author or editor of a new publication, please send it for review to me or to Dr. David Roberts at RBG Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 3AB, UK. Any books reviewed here will be donated to Kew's Library.

All the best in your current research projects,

**Alec Pridgeon**

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### News from Correspondents

Please submit any news about newly completed research, future research plans and needs, change of address, upcoming or recent fieldwork, etc. to David Roberts (d.roberts@kew.org). Graduate students are especially encouraged to share the subjects of their thesis or dissertation with the international community. We will print submissions in the format used in prior issues of the *ORN* (sample below from January 2001).

**Oakeley, Henry F.** (77 Copers Cope Road, Beckenham, Kent, BR3 1NR, UK) has finished his revision of *Anguloa* and is on the verge of completing a revision of *Lycaste*. He will make a field trip to Venezuela in 2001. Toward work on these two genera, he would like plant material and data on herbarium specimens held. He offers to identify same.

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### Upcoming Conferences

#### 31 October-2 November 2007

In association with the year-long celebration of the Linnean Tercentenary, an orchid conference titled 'Orchid evolutionary biology and conservation - from Linnaeus to the 21st century' will be held at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, on 31 October-2 November 2007 (an extra day of talks has been recently been added). Details are now posted on the RBG Kew website ([www.rbgkew.org.uk](http://www.rbgkew.org.uk)) and also the Linnean Society of London website ([www.linnean.org](http://www.linnean.org)).

### 15-17 November 2007

On the heels of a most successful First Scientific Conference in Gualaceo, Ecuador, the Second Scientific Conference on Andean Orchids will convene in Loja, Ecuador, at the Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja (UTPL) on 15-17 November 2007. The university has a state-of-the-art convention center that can seat 800, with three huge video screens and a professional sound system. Part of the hall will be sectioned off with a modular wall for a poster session, too. Pre-conference and post-conference tours throughout mainland Ecuador with Ecuagenera are also planned. Further information is now online at [www.andeanorchids2007.org/](http://www.andeanorchids2007.org/).

### 23-27 January 2008

The 19th World Orchid Conference, to be held in Miami, Florida, is now six months away. The slate of speakers, online registration, exhibitor and vendor information, and all the opportunities for sightseeing in south Florida are available on the impressive website ([www.19woc.com/home.htm](http://www.19woc.com/home.htm)). Whether you are a scientist, horticulturist or both, this is one event you cannot afford to miss. The 11th WOC, also held in Miami, in 1984, will always be remembered as one of the most successful. Make those flight reservations now and register early.

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## Phillip Cribb Awarded Linnean Medal

On 24 May 2007, Dr. Phillip Cribb was awarded the prestigious Linnean Medal for Botany. The following citation was read aloud with the presentation of the Medal:

“Dr Phillip Cribb retired from the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew in March 2006 after completing 32 years’ service. During that time he was extremely successful in undertaking key roles at Kew, notably as Head of Orchids, Assistant Keeper for the Monocots and, latterly, Deputy Keeper of the Herbarium. He also played a leading role in establishing and maintaining Kew as a world leader in monocot systematics.

Phil is very well known and respected in both plant systematics and horticultural communities. He has had an outstandingly productive research career resulting in 30 books and over 350 papers, with more on the way. His principal focus has been the systematics of Old World orchids, particularly from tropical Africa and Asia. His monographic work has concentrated on genera of importance to horticulture and conservation (e.g. *Paphiopedilum*, *Cypripedium*, *Pleione*, *Cymbidium*, *Dendrobium*) and the classification of the family as a whole through

the *Genera Orchidacearum* project. Floristic work on tropical Africa has been completed; China and Madagascar are current foci with the English edition of *Flora of China: Orchidaceae* and a *Field Guide to Madagascan Orchids* in preparation.

At a broader level Phil led the development of the *World Checklist of Monocots*, which is now available on the web. This is a monumental achievement, providing the accepted names and synonyms of all known monocots with information about their distribution and life-form.

Phil has received a number of awards for his work, including the RHS Westonbirt Medal in 2001, the Orchid Society of South-East Asia’s Gold Medal and Fellowship in 2005, the American Orchid Society’s Gold Medal of Achievement in 2005, and the Orchid Digest Foundation’s Meritorious Service Medal in 2005. In 2006 he was awarded the Royal Horticultural Society’s prestigious Veitch Memorial Medal for his scientific research into orchids.

Phil has been instrumental in developing orchid research at Kew and beyond, being very adept at obtaining funding from a wide range of sources. He is a leading light at international orchid conferences and is often involved in their organisation. He has served in various capacities with a number of other organisations including the IUCN/SSC/ Orchid Specialist Group (Co-Founder and Chair), Orchid Conservation International (Co-Founder, Chair and Trustee), the Gilbert White and Oates Museum, Selborne (Trustee), and the Spelthorne Natural History Society (President).

In view of the exceptional service that Phil has given to systematics and natural history, and the fact that he is actively continuing his research, we should like to nominate him for the 2007 Linnean Medal for Botany.”

Congratulations, Phil, from all your friends and colleagues around the world.



Dr. Phillip Cribb (far right) received the Linnean Medal for Botany on 24 May 2007. To his immediate right are Professor Grenville Lucas, Treasurer of the Linnean Society and recipient of the Linnean Gold Medal, and Professor David Cutler, President.

## ***Orchid Research Newsletter* – A Brief History**

It seems scarcely possible that the first issue of *Orchid Research Newsletter* appeared a quarter of a century ago. However, its genesis predated its appearance by some years. In 1976, I started to produce a series for the *Orchid Review* entitled "Recent Taxonomic Literature" (the first appeared in *Orchid Review* 84 (1998): 242-244), inspired by Bob Dressler's 1960s' series in the *American Orchid Society Bulletin*. In preparing this, I had to hand the *Kew Record of Taxonomic Literature*, published quarterly and which I searched for orchid-related articles, commenting upon each to produce the article for the *Orchid Review*. By 1981, ten parts of "Recent Taxonomic Literature" had appeared, and feedback suggested that readers found it useful, especially in sourcing orchid books and orchid-related articles in obscure journals.

In discussions with colleagues, particularly Jana Stirton who was working with me on contract at the time, I decided that an *Orchid Research Newsletter* might be a useful means for researchers around the world to access the copious literature on orchids, request materials, discuss taxonomic techniques, and establish productive collaborations and networks. It was obvious that some genera were attracting the lion's share of interest among orchid scientists and dedicated amateurs, leading to potential, and occasionally real, conflicts of interest. Thus, type specimens were often impossible to access because they were on long-term loan to a specialist, even though that person may not have published on the genus for years. As often as not, the problems stemmed from a lack of information as to who was working on a particular group, rather than any intention of excluding others from working on it. I felt that the information about who was working on what might spread the thin expertise on orchids further, allowing genera that had not received a monographer's attention to benefit. Another feature of the *Newsletter*

was to be articles on techniques, such as the long-term liquid preservation of orchid flowers and the techniques to re-hydrate dried flowers from herbarium specimens. Articles on any aspect of orchids were also solicited from readers, although, as all editors find, it is easier to ask than to receive!

The first *Orchid Research Newsletter*, compiled by Jana Stirton and edited by her and myself, appeared in July 1983. I cajoled and bribed my eldest brother, Steve, to draw the front cartoon. Five hundred copies were printed and distributed free, courtesy of The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. Sufficient interest was generated for the series to continue, Steve providing cartoons for the front cover until issue 10. The front cover of later printed issues was a line drawing of an orchid, different for each issue.

Joyce Stewart compiled and co-edited it from issue 11 in January 1988 until issue 26 in July 1995, as part of her post as Sainsbury Orchid Fellow at Kew. Alec Pridgeon replaced her as both Sainsbury Orchid Fellow and compiler and co-editor in January 1996 and is the current senior editor. Sarah Thomas (nee Robbins) helped to compile the *Newsletter* from 1997 until she left Kew in 2000. Andrew Newman replaced her for issues 37 and 38. In 2002, Dave Roberts joined the editorial team from issue 39 and, in 2006, I stood down on my retirement from Kew.

The most significant change in the *Newsletter* has been its publication in electronic form only from issue 41 in January 2003 onwards. Today, parts 29 to 50 are available electronically on the Kew website.

On my retirement, Mark Chase asked Alec to solicit views on whether the *Newsletter* should continue. The response, I am delighted to report, was positive. I hope that the *Newsletter* continues to thrive, but it will only do so if users and readers continue to respond and participate, increasing the utility of what must be one of the longest-lived, most persistent, and regular of all newsletters devoted to a taxonomic family. I would like to take this opportunity to thank my several colleagues who have helped contribute to, compile, and edit the *Newsletter* over the years and wish the current editors every success in the future.

**Phillip Cribb**

## **Recent Orchid Nomenclature**

New orchid names may now be accessed on the IPNI website:

[www.ipni.org/ipni/plantsearch?request\\_type=search&output\\_format=query&ret\\_defaults=on](http://www.ipni.org/ipni/plantsearch?request_type=search&output_format=query&ret_defaults=on)

Click on "Show additional search items" on the right-hand side of the screen. After the search page appears, type in **Orchidaceae** under family name and (for example) **2005-11-30** under "Record date" and "Added since." This will pull up a list of all names added to the IPNI database since 30 November 2005.

## Recent Literature

We are grateful to Ann McNeil, compiler of the Kew Record of Taxonomic Literature, and to Anna Lynch and Margaret Ramsay for drawing our attention to the following publications from 22 December 2006 to 1 July 2007.

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