

The International Phalaenopsis Alliance

THOMAS ALLEN ODER reveals what will be on offer at the IPA's upcoming Symposium and discusses the history of the Alliance



Phalaenopsis Talin Gold 'Fangtastic', HCC/AOS won Best in Show at the 2008 IPA Symposium in Texas, and an American Orchid Society Highly Commended Certificate with 78 points. It is owned by Norman Fang of Norman's Orchids

John Stubbing

THE PETERBOROUGH International Orchid Show in June will provide an ideal venue for the International Phalaenopsis Alliance's milestone 15th Symposium. Symposiums are the Alliance's annual signature event. They help the IPA fulfil its core mission of education about *Phalaenopsis* through a lecture and workshop programme; bring the membership together in a spirit of camaraderie at social events; and raise

operating funds through silent and live auctions of *Phalaenopsis* plants and memorabilia.

It was decided to schedule this year's Symposium as part of Peterborough International Orchid Show, which is held in conjunction with the East of England Agricultural Society's hugely popular East of England Country Show, because it meets many of the IPA's goals for its flagship event.

• It gives the IPA an opportunity to

extend its global outreach. The event attracted more than 100,000 visitors in 2008, including vendors from Asia and many countries in Europe.

• The lectures and workshops give orchid growers in the UK a chance to hear speakers from the United States.

• The programme topics, banquets and social functions give UK orchid growers who specialise in cool-growing genera a chance to learn about warm-growing *Phalaenopsis* from specialists. ►

• Meeting in Peterborough recognises the efforts of a small but dedicated group of members in the UK who promote the IPA and its mission.

Expert speakers

The Peterborough International Orchid Show has been extended by a day this year. It will open on Friday 19 June and continue through to Sunday 21, along with the rest of the East of England Country Show.

The Symposium has attracted some of the most knowledgeable experts in the world. Michael Ooi will talk about *Phalaenopsis violacea* and *Phalaenopsis bellina*. He is the world's foremost expert on these species. John Stubbings, immediate past president of the IPA, will discuss

multiflora *Phalaenopsis*. Tom Harper, a founder member and past president of the IPA will lecture on the 12 most important species used in hybridising. Russ Vernon, the current president of the IPA, will give an overview of Harlequin *Phalaenopsis* breeding, and from England, Peter White will talk about orchid cultivation in Holland.

Workshop topics include polyploids by the Eric Young Orchid Foundation; naming of orchids; a panel discussion on hybridising; and a chance to observe RHS orchid judging.

Visiting nurseries

Tours of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, and the Eric Young Orchid Foundation are also scheduled for an additional fee (see www.phal.org).

Show planners have secured the attendance of Jaiho Nursery from Taichung, Taiwan, who are one of the few Taiwan nurseries that specialise in *Phalaenopsis* species. Two other vendors of special interest at the show will be Ooi, owner of Ooi Leng Sun Orchids, and V-Flora, a Taiwanese company that is building up business outlets in England and France.

Symposiums outside the USA

The Symposium in Peterborough will be only the second that the IPA has held outside the USA, where the Alliance is based. The Taiwan International Orchid Show hosted the first Symposium outside North America at its 2007 show at the Taiwan Orchid Plantation in Tainan County. Taiwan is recognised as the world's leading centre of *Phalaenopsis* breeding. At that Symposium, the IPA honoured two of Taiwan's most respected hybridisers, Yung Yu Lin of Brother Orchids and Ching-Hsien Jian of I-Hsin Orchids, with the IPA's Award of Distinction. This award has been presented since 1994 to honour hybridisers, authors and ambassadors for the genus for their lifetime contributions to increased understanding and appreciation of *Phalaenopsis*.

Other projects

The IPA actively promotes *Phalaenopsis* in other ways. In 2001 the Alliance sponsored a revision of the genus by taxonomist Eric A Christenson. His work, *Phalaenopsis: A Monograph*, published by Timber Press, is the first revision of the genus since Herman Sweet's landmark 1980 work.

The IPA also helped establish a *Phalaenopsis* species collection at the Atlanta Botanical Garden, Georgia. The collection, which the IPA co-sponsors with the garden, is held with the garden's other orchid species in the Fuqua Orchid Centre, which at maturity will house the largest collection of



Phalaenopsis Star Orange 'Sunglow' on David Stead's stand at the 2009 RHS London Orchid Show



Linda White

species orchids under glass in the world.

The Alliance's education mission is also fulfilled at local meetings planned by regional directors, which focus on cultural programmes and sharing knowledge. The quarterly flagship magazine, *Phalaenopsis*, publishes new updates by Christenson on developments in *Phalaenopsis* species, along with cultural articles by amateur and commercial growers and scientific and scholarly articles from contributors worldwide.

Humble beginnings

The IPA has been one of the world's most active speciality orchid groups since its founding 19 years ago. It began simply enough when four growers – Tom Harper, Bob Gordon (author of several books on *Phalaenopsis* culture), Carlos Fighetti, now President of the American Orchid Society, and the late Arnie Linsman – met in the early months of 1990 in San Francisco. Their plan was to drive to Los Angeles and visit every *Phalaenopsis* nursery along the way. It did not take long for them to discuss the idea of an organization devoted to the genus. By the time they arrived in LA, they had the basics of the IPA in their minds. All they had to do was make the dream a reality.

SPECIAL REDUCED RATES

The state of the world economy has meant that fewer IPA members than expected will travel to the Symposium from abroad. As a result the IPA is able to offer the following Special Rates.

For those who have already registered appropriate refunds will be provided.

- **Attending the talks £10**
- **Attending the talks & Sunday lunch £20**
- **Attending the talks & banquet £40**
- **Attending the talks, banquet & Sunday lunch £50**
- **Traders attending the banquet £30**

Full Show admission can be combined with any of these prices for an extra £10. (Normal Show admission is £5 for adults on Friday, and £14 on Saturday or Sunday).

Please pay by cheque or money order made payable to IPA, Inc. in US funds drawn on a US bank, or by Mastercard or Visa. You can also register and pay online in advance at www.phal.org

For registration questions contact Lynn Fuller, Symposium registrar, email: mlfuller@comcast.net, tel: 001 302 594 0765.

For information about PIOS, visit www.peterboroughinternationalorchidshow.org.uk, or contact Brian Woodward, show manager, tel: 01709 790427, email: woodward.d@sky.com.

For information about the Symposium contact in the UK, Chris Barker, co-chairman, email: cjbndjb@ntlworld.com, or in the USA, Tom Harper, co-chairman, email: harper_sro@bellsouth.net.

SYMPOSIUM PROGRAMME

Events take place in the Showground Building unless otherwise stated.

Friday 19 June

7pm Welcome banquet and auction, Marriott Hotel, Peterborough.

Saturday 20 June

9am–9.15 Introductions

9.15–10.15 Speaker: Michael Ooi, Malaysia. Topic: *Phalaenopsis violacea* and *Phalaenopsis bellina*.

10.30–11.30 Speaker: John Stubbings, USA. Topic: Development of multiflora *Phalaenopsis*.

11.45–12.45 Workshop 1: Polyploids, etc. Facilitator: Eric Young Orchid Foundation, Jersey.

2pm–4.15 Workshop 2: Observation of RHS judging, RHS Marquee.

4.30 to 5.30 Speaker: Tom Harper, USA. Topic: The twelve most important *Phalaenopsis* species used in hybridizing.

Sunday 21 June

9am–9.05 Introductions

9.05–10.05 Speaker: Peter White, UK. Topic: Orchid cultivation in Holland.

10.05–11.05 Workshop 3: Naming orchids. Facilitator: Peter White, UK.

11.15–12.15 Speaker: Russ Vernon, USA. Topic: Harlequin *Phalaenopsis*: past, present and future.

12.15–12.45 Wrap-up roundtable discussion with Q&As from the registrants for all the speakers.

1pm onwards Closing lunch, auction results and IPA Trophy Presentation. Hospitality Marquee.

That happened in April 1990 when they joined other *Phalaenopsis* growers in Mt. Laurel, New Jersey for the Delaware Orchid Council's speakers' day, which was devoted to *Phalaenopsis* that year. On the Friday night before the Saturday lecture program, Gordon, Fighetti, Harper and Linsman shared their ideas with others and the expanded group decided to form the IPA. They announced the formation

of the Alliance the next morning at the speakers' day programme.

It is from these humble beginnings that the IPA achieved the rich history that it will celebrate and share at the 15th Symposium in Peterborough. ■

THOMAS ALLEN ODER is an IPA member and co-editor of their journal *Phalaenopsis*. He is a past president of the Atlanta Orchid Society, and a retired journalist. TODER@wwediting.net