

Editorial

Newton famously wrote: “If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.” This expresses the fact that science is cumulative; it builds upon the work of predecessors. In orchid systematics, one of those giant predecessors is John Lindley (1799–1865). His orchid herbarium is only a few steps outside of my office in the Orchid Herbarium at Kew (Lindley’s herbarium material from other plant families is kept at Cambridge University). As I related in issue 80 of the Orchid Research Newsletter (January 2023), the entire Kew herbarium was going to be digitised, with the notable and regrettable exception of the Lindley Herbarium.

In this regard, I can now share good news. Those in charge of the digitisation project agreed with me that it would be a missed opportunity not to digitise the Lindley Herbarium, so it was decided to include those precious sheets after all. The initial reasons for not doing so were of a logistical nature. First, as I mentioned in ORN 80, the Lindley herbarium sheets are of a different size from the regular Kew herbarium sheets, which means that the camera setup had to be recalibrated (we are using 100 megapixel medium-format cameras). But perhaps a more serious issue was that, unlike in the main Herbarium, the Lindley sheets are not arranged in folders that have the names of the areas of origin on the cover. This made databasing the images more involved because the geographical information on the Lindley sheets ranges from non-existent to relatively detailed, often without explicitly mentioning the country of origin. A typical example is shown on page 3.

As you can see, this sheet has no annotations apart from the name of the species, *Laelia anceps*. It only has a hand-coloured engraving of this orchid, as well as two dried flowers. The engraving was printed as Plate 1751 with the first publication of *Laelia anceps* by Lindley in an article published in 1836 in vol. 21 of *Edwards’s Botanical Register: or, Ornamental flower garden and shrubbery: Consisting of coloured figures of plants and shrubs, cultivated in British gardens; accompanied by their history, best method of treatment in cultivation, propagation &c.* In short, in *Edwards’s Botanical Register*. In his article, Lindley mentions that the drawing was made “last December” in the collection of Messrs. Loddiges, who had imported the plant from Mexico. As there is no other sheet of *Laelia anceps* in Lindley’s herbarium, except for one with a named variety, we may safely assume that the two flowers were donated by Messrs. Loddiges. As an aside, this commercial tropical plant nursery must have been quite an establishment because according to Stearn (1999) as early as 1839 they listed 1,600 different named orchids. Not many orchid nurseries today would be able to do so, especially if they had to exclude hybrids, as these would not have been available to Messrs. Loddiges.

Evidently, databasing this specimen would require some literature study, as well as some sound judgement, to reach the conclusion that this sheet of *Laelia anceps* shows a species originally collected in Mexico and cultivated by Loddiges. Moreover, because it is the only sheet of *Laelia anceps* in the Lindley Herbarium, and as there are no duplicates anywhere else, and since there is no indication that Lindley had seen any other material at the time of first description, we may also assume that this is the holotype specimen.

This is one of the more straightforward cases. Not rarely, Lindley mounted two or three, or even more specimens from different sources on the same sheet. In such cases he would usually add the name of the collector and/or the geographical origin next to each specimen. But sometimes, when there are more specimens than there are names of collectors or localities, it can be hard to decide which specimen is part of which collection. In addition, as each collection should get a different barcode, it can be hard to decide how many barcodes are needed, and it can also be difficult to determine which specimen(s) belong(s) to the type material.

I should point out that a collection, which is a gathering made by the same collector(s) on the same date at the same place, can consist of multiple specimens. Lindley himself never indicated type specimens on the sheets; this was in many cases done much later by Robert Allen Rolfe. Rolfe's annotations signed with his initials are seen on numerous sheets in the Lindley Herbarium. But even today, many of Lindley's type specimens are not yet marked as such, and for some it will be almost impossible to do so.

This is why digitising the Lindley Herbarium is not as straightforward as it may seem. The good news is that all of Lindley's specimens have now been barcoded and photographed, thanks to Priscila Reis and her team. The bad news is that the huge task of annotating the images lies still largely ahead of us.

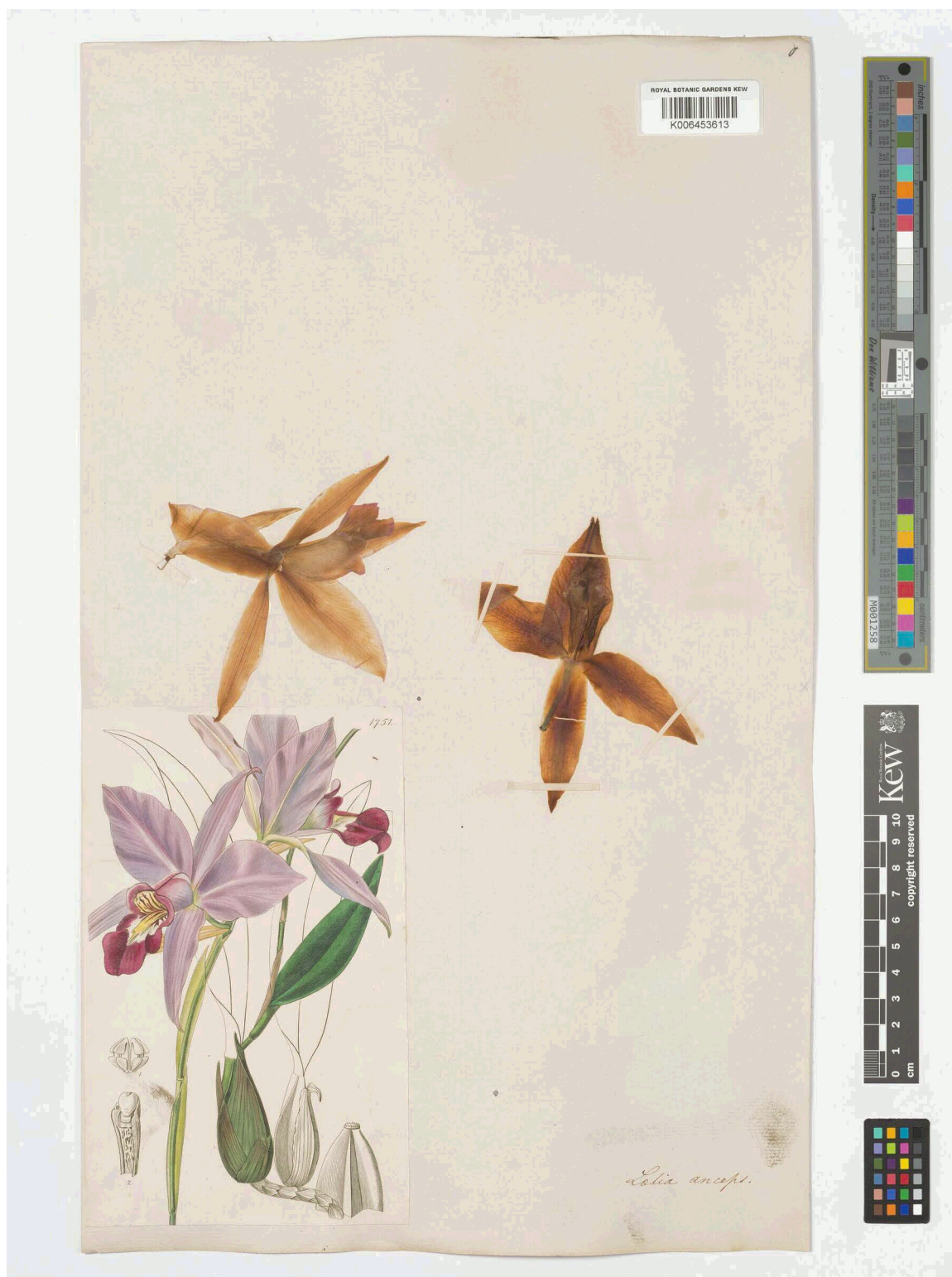
Perhaps I should end with another Newton quotation: "I do not know what I may appear to the world, but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the seashore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me."

Reference

Stearn, W. T. (ed.) 1999. *John Lindley 1799–1865. Gardener-Botanist and Pioneer Orchidologist*. Bicentenary Celebration Volume. Antique Collectors' Club, Woodbridge, in association with The Royal Horticultural Society, London.

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Please click [here](#) for the Repository of past issues of the Orchid Research Newsletter, starting with issue 39 (2002).



Laelia anceps Lindl., digitised specimen from the Lindley Herbarium, barcode K006453613.

Upcoming Conferences

We welcome any news about future orchid conferences for promotion here. Please send details to the editor as far in advance of the event as possible, remembering that the *Orchid Research Newsletter* is published only in January and July of each year.



The **23rd Australian Orchid Conference (AOC)** will be held from 1 to 5 October 2025 at Woolgoolga, New South Wales, Australia.

The conference will take place at the **Wiigulga Sports Complex**, located on Solitary Islands Way, Woolgoolga.

In tribute to the area's First Nations clans, there will be an interactive Bush Tucker display and a collection of indigenous artifacts. Additionally, Woolgoolga's rich multicultural heritage will be celebrated through a special display of *Callista* dendrobiums, as well as a focus on the town's beautiful Indian temples, reflecting the area's significant Sikh (Indian) community.

The theme of the 23rd AOC, **“Orchids from the Mountains to the Sea”**, promises to be a spectacular experience for orchid enthusiasts, collectors, experts, and nature lovers alike. The conference will feature:

- An incredible exhibition showcasing the stunning diversity of orchids.
- Engaging expert lectures and presentations.
- A dedicated educational wall with photographs of over 250 native local orchids.
- A separate display highlighting Western Australian native orchids.
- A pictorial booklet showcasing the region's native orchids.
- A sales area featuring 25 of Australia's premier orchid nurseries.
- A comprehensive show with 199 separate classes and 26 displays from orchid societies, plus individual and commercial growers.

The conference will also feature eleven presentations by world-renowned experts, both Australian and international guests. The speakers include:

- Dr Fred Clarke (SVU Orchids, California, USA)
- Wenqing Perner (Sichuan, China)
- Chu Xuan Canh (Vietnam)
- Ximena Portillo (Ecuador)
- Scott Barrie (Barrita Orchids, Australia)
- Chris Cobb (Northern Queensland, Australia)
- Dr Ashley Field (University of Queensland, Australia)
- David Banks (Hills District Orchids, Australia)
- Michael Coker (Melbourne, Australia)

The presentations will take place at the Woolgoolga High School Auditorium, just 400 meters from the Wiigulga Sports Complex, accessible by mini-bus, private car, or on foot. For further information, visit the official AOC 2025 website at www.aoc2025.org.au.



The **24th World Orchid Conference** will be held in Dresden, Germany from 26 to 29 March 2026. The conference website can be found at <https://www.woc-2026.com/>.

Please see [the article](#) by Clare and Johan Hermans in this issue for more background.

Jobs

We will be happy to announce job opportunities, provided they explicitly involve orchid research or conservation. Please send details to the editor.

Funding Opportunities

We will be happy to announce funding opportunities, provided they explicitly involve orchid research or conservation. Please send details to the editor.

The **American Orchid Society** is soliciting grant proposals for orchid research. Deadline is 1 March of each year. For application instructions see <http://www.aos.org/about-us/orchid-research/application-guidelines.aspx>

News from Correspondents

Please submit any news about recently completed research, future research plans and needs, change of address, upcoming or recent fieldwork, etc. to the editor. Graduate students are especially encouraged to share the subjects of their thesis or dissertation with the international community.

A Dresden rehearsal—Preparing for the 24th World Orchid Conference, Dresden, Germany, 26th to 29th March 2026

The 24th World Orchid Conference will be held in Dresden, Germany in March next year. It is organised by the German Orchid Society (Deutsche Orchideen-Gesellschaft or D.O.G.) and will be held in conjunction with Dresdner Easter Fayre at the Messe conference and exhibition centre in Dresden.

World Orchid Conferences and shows are held every three years at locations around the world. It is more than 20 years since it was hosted in Europe (Dijon, France) and over 50 years since one was held in Germany (Frankfurt); it may be some time before it will be back in Europe.



View of Dresden from the river Elbe. Photo Johan Hermans

The Dresden rehearsal

For over twenty-five years the D.O.G. has organised an orchid show associated with the Easter Fayre and it has grown into the largest in Europe. In addition, last year they hosted the European Orchid Council Conference, they have therefore a great deal of experience in producing spectacular events.

As a final rehearsal for the WOC, the 2025 show was held from 28th to 30th March and a Hall of Messe Dresden was filled with orchid exhibits and sales booths. The vast majority of the exhibits were by European orchid nurseries and societies. They were predominantly from Germany, including regional groups of the D.O.G., and were in a wide range of styles. However, the Hungarian Orchid Society's (Magyar Orchidea Társaság) display stood out and showed great flair. It was the tallest exhibit and themed around animals and birds and Easter complete with ducks, rabbits, eggshells, picture frames, bird cages, chandeliers and easter eggs, all illuminated by strategically placed spotlights.



The grand entrance to the 2025 Dresden show. Photo Johan Hermans

There was a broad range of plants from rare species to large specimens, enough to interest everyone as well as many cool growing *Cypripediums*, *Pleiones* and *Calanthes*. The Grand Champion plant was an enormous *Epidendrum parkinsonianum* shown by Akerne Orchids, Belgium. The species comes from Mexico to Central America and was described by Sir William Hooker in 1840. It was named for the then British Consul in Mexico, John Parkinson.

Orchid sales were brisk and there were over 50 traders from around the world and at times it was difficult to move through the sales area. Fortunately, the venue was vast, and one could escape to the somewhat quieter outer halls where there were market stalls, handicrafts, plant sales, kids play areas and numerous food and drink outlets. Something for all ages.

Plans for the WOC 2026

For the WOC, the show will be even bigger, to accommodate the planned 75 exhibitors, including more from overseas, and botanical institutions and therefore, a giant sales area will be expanded into one of the adjacent halls. It is anticipated that there will be a presence on site for issuing CITES and Phytosanitary Certificates.

Reminiscent of the great WOCs of the past there will be a separate Botanical Orchid Art Exhibition hosted by the Verein für Botanische Kunst Deutschland with over 50 original artworks including works by Deborah Lambkin (UK), Esmée Winkel (NL) and Carol Woodin (USA). Judging will be on Wednesday 25th March followed by the Welcome Party. Then, the show opens to the public the next day.

The state-of-the-art Conference Centre is located adjacent to the exhibition halls; registrants will have complimentary refreshments during breaks between sessions. The conference will open on Thursday 26th and continue until Sunday 29th March. An impressive number of international speakers are expected to participate covering all orchidaceous subject, including cultivation, travel, history, science, conservation and much more. There will be a large Poster display area and several specialist meetings.

Full Registration is €300.00 but at the time of writing is reduced to €270.00 and Day Registration is currently €100.00. Registrants will be entitled to early entry to the exhibition and vendor areas. The Proceedings will be digital and available to Full Registrants.

Various social events are planned: on the evening of Friday 27th March there will be the “Night of the Orchids”, a special romantic event with music, wine and dimmed lighting... The Gala Dinner on Saturday 28th March promises to be sensational and will be at Ball- & Brauhaus Watzke, a late 19th century restaurant with its own brewery, located on the river Elbe a short distance from the city centre. The €150.00 ticket price includes food and beverages, transfer from select partner hotels and entertainment. Awards will be presented during the evening. The Closing Ceremony will be held at 4pm on Sunday 29th March.

The venue

Messe Dresden is located just two miles from the city centre and has easy access by car with spacious parking and trams run at very regular intervals from the centre to Messe (line number 10). It was originally a slaughterhouse and the buildings have been greatly adapted. It was described in Kurt Vonnegut’s 1969 semi-autobiographical book ‘Slaughterhouse Five’. It avoided destruction in the 2nd WW and a few of the original buildings are still being restored.

The location

Dresden is the capital of Saxony located on the river Elbe and the city centre was significantly re-built after the 2nd World War. It is in the eastern part of Germany and has an international airport five and a half miles from the city centre. Although there are few direct flights, there are regular ones from Frankfurt, and Munich. There are frequent trains and buses from other parts of Europe to Dresden. The centre of the city is compact with an efficient and cheap transport system. A bonus for registrants is a complimentary Dresden public transport ticket which lasts for your stay. There is a wide variety of food and drink to be had; with restaurants ranging offering typical substantial German fayre to more sophisticated cuisine. There is a broad range of hotels to suit all budgets and a link on the WOC website to the Dresden Information booking portal where reservations can be made. We have stayed in the Holiday Inn Am Zwinger as it is close to the city centre and convenient for access to the Messe.

Other things to see in Dresden

The city provides many cultural highlights and is known as the ‘Florence on the Elbe.’ The world-famous opera house Dresden Semperoper was originally built by Gottfried Semper in 1841 in the Baroque Revival style and reopened after reconstruction in 1985. Both Richard Wagner and Richard Strauss had works premiered there. The famous eighteenth century Lutheran church the Frauenkirche also hosts concerts. After the war it was left as a memorial and only rebuilt following the reunification of Germany, it reopened in 2005. In addition, there are numerous museums in the city. The Grünes Gewölbe (Green Vault) in the Royal Palace is the oldest and richest treasury in Europe. It displays the treasures of Augustus II the Strong, ruler of Saxony and King of Poland and was built in stages by Augustus and incorporated the castle’s original vault. In 1711, Augustus created the Baroque Zwinger, comprising three pavilions with connecting galleries constructed from Elbe sandstone, an orangery and extensive pleasure gardens with pools, fountains, and numerous statues.

Furthermore, many eminent people are connected with the city. The author Friederich Schiller stayed two years from 1785 in Loschwitz, Dresden where he wrote the 'Ode to Joy'. The romantic painter Caspar David Friedrich settled in Dresden in 1798 and is known for large scale oil landscape paintings; his most famous is 'The Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog'. Many of his paintings are in the Albertinum in Dresden.

Pfunds Molkerei is located a short tram ride away from the city centre in the Neustadt situated on the opposite bank of the river. Neustadt was reconstructed by Augustus the Strong in the Baroque style and his statue the 'Goldener Reiter' is situated in Neustädter Markt. The Molkerei (Dairy) was founded in the late nineteenth century by the Pfunds brothers to provide fresh milk to the inhabitants and the current shop opened in 1892. The interior is covered in extravagantly hand-painted tiles. It was entered in the Guinness Book of Records in 1997 as the "Most Beautiful Cheese Shop in the World".

Other things to see in the area

On the eastern outskirts of Dresden on the bank of the river Elbe is the Baroque Schloss Pillnitz and park. From the eighteenth century it was the summer palace of the rulers of Saxony including Augustus the Strong. The extensive grounds contain a museum, orangery and a camelia planted in 1801 by botanist and gardener Carl Adolph Terschke, he later co-founded Dresden Botanic Garden. It is known to be one of the oldest Camelias in Europe and is reputed to be one of four *Camelia japonica* brought back from Japan by the Swedish naturalist Karl Peter Thunberg. Nowadays the *Camelia* is housed in a 54 ton moveable, heated, moisture and shade-controlled conservatory from October to May. The splendid tree's peak flowering time is March when you can climb the steps to the second storey to admire the abundant red flowers. Meissen a pretty town situated to the northwest of Dresden on the river Elbe is a thirty-minute train journey away. The gabled houses on steep narrow cobbled streets lead up to Albrechtsburg Castle and the Gothic Meissen Cathedral situated on a hill overlooking the town. Nearby is the famous Meissen factory and along the river are many vineyards part of the Sachsen (Saxony) wine growing region. This is one of the world's northernmost wine growing regions and is renowned for dry whites using Müller-Thurgau and Riesling grape varieties; some red wine is also produced.

An hours' drive away near the border with the Czech Republic is the Elbsandsteingebirge, a sandstone mountain range which overlaps both countries. It has been carved by nature into dramatic pinnacles often depicted by Caspar David Friedrich and part of it is a German national park popular for rock climbing and hiking. The river Elbe runs through and the surrounding area is known as Sächsische Schweiz (Saxon Switzerland).

Further afield, in the Mediterranean, European orchids will have started to bloom; it is hoped that tours will be offered to see them.

The 24th World Orchid Conference promises to be an unforgettable event. For more information see [Home | 24th WOC 2026](#).

We are most grateful to the D.O.G. and especially its President Bernd Treder for their kindness during our visits to Dresden and to Paul Upward for kindly allowing the use of some of his superb photographs.

Clare & Johan Hermans

Recent Orchid Nomenclature

New orchid names may be retrieved from the IPNI website: <https://www.ipni.org/>. Click on “Advanced search”; after the search page appears, type in **Orchidaceae** under family name and select a date in “Recorded after”. This will pull up a list of all orchid names added to the IPNI database since that date. Also be sure to check the Plants of the World Online website (<https://powo.science.kew.org/>) which provides more information with added synonymy, maps and illustrations.

Recent Literature

If you are aware of any relevant and recent citations that should have been listed here or in the previous issues, please send them to the editor for publication in the next issue (January 2026). Book citations should include author(s), year of publication, title, publisher, and place of publication (in that order). Journal titles should be spelled out in full.

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