

one host genus, and may be referred to several times on other hosts; it would have helped if page references had been included in the text.

For genera (or groups of genera, for plurivorous fungi) with numerous known fungal partners the entries are arranged by plant part affected. Where fewer fungi are known this distinction is not made. The potential fungi are listed in a pragmatic order, sometimes with systematic subheadings, where a number of fungi from one higher taxon are considered for any host. This approach can be confusing to the inexperienced user, as some previous knowledge of fungal systematics and symptom structure is necessary to find one's way around. This is exacerbated by the lack of even common synonyms.

After the descriptions, and in this edition the additions and corrections, the book contains 213 plates of ink drawings by the authors. In my opinion, this is the strongest part of the publication although the scale of the drawings is not immediately obvious. The drawings are arranged in parallel order to the text, and my criticisms of this arrangement are the same as above. The book is concluded by some recommended books (unfortunately not including similar works by other authors), useful addresses, a glossary and both fungus and host-plant indices.

The relatively short time in which the previous edition has been in print is proof of the popularity and usefulness of this work. Anyone who works with plants or fungi on plants and has not already got the first edition will want to use this new enlarged 'Ellis'. People owning the first edition will probably wish to swap it for the new edition because of the additions, corrections, and the clearer print of the plates.

S. HELFER

John Lindley, 1799–1865, Gardener-Botanist and Pioneer Orchidologist. Edited by W. T. Stearn. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Antique Collectors' Club with the Royal Horticultural Society. 1999. 232pp, 43 colour plates, 29 b/w figures. ISBN 1 85149 296 8. £29.50 (hardback).

This handsome book makes no claim to be a scholarly biography, but presents a fascinating series of articles about the life and work of a remarkable 19th-century botanist in the year of the bicentenary of his birth. Although Lindley's achievements and energy make almost exhausting reading, the production of such a popular account is long overdue, because he is by no means as well known (to non-orchidologists) as contemporaries such as Robert Brown or the Hookers.

The topics covered are diverse. The ever-productive Professor Stearn starts with an admirable outline of Lindley's life and work – an expansion of an earlier article in the light of significant new material recently discovered in British Columbia in the family archive of one of Lindley's daughters. Two lectures given by Lindley himself are reproduced: the first his inaugural lecture as Professor of Botany at University College London. He was appointed to this chair in 1828, the same year

in which he was elected FRS, at the age of only 29. An 'address' on botany and medicine, given at the opening of the Medical Session of the same institution in 1834, is included for less obvious reasons, but gives an idea of Lindley's broad range of scientific interests and his knowledge of historical botanical literature.

Three authors elaborate on specific aspects of Lindley's work. Phillip Cribb describes Lindley's 'life-long love affair with orchids', the group with which he is most closely associated, and whose classification of which can still be seen 'embedded' in modern treatments of the family. His enormous efforts on the family can be judged from the 286 genera he described and his *Genera and Species of Orchidaceous Plants* covers all the orchids then known – some 1980 species in 301 genera. Chris Brickell describes Lindley's work as a horticulturist, including his role in plant introduction via the Horticultural Society's collectors; his work in horticultural education and the writing of textbooks; and his promotion of horticultural shows and competitions. Professor Chaloner draws attention to a rather overlooked aspect of Lindley's work – palaeobotany. His three-volume, illustrated *Fossil Flora of Great Britain*, written jointly with William Hutton, 'should be judged more for the authors' perception of what palaeobotany held for the future, than in the value of their catalogue itself'. Nonetheless, Lindley and Hutton speculated on interesting matters such as whether or not the (then neglected) plant-fossil record held evidence of morphological evolution and climatic change, and if the differential survival of different plant groups might give rise to misleading fossil assemblages.

A chapter by Brent Elliot describes the history of the Lindley Library of the Royal Horticultural Society and Lindley's own collection that forms its core. The book concludes with short articles on the Lindley documents in British Columbia (by K. Bridge), the Lindley Medal of the RHS (by W.L. Tjaden) and a bibliography of Lindley's published works, covering some 283 items. This last is by Marguerite Alford, who was at one time librarian of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh.

As explained in the Preface, there is overlap and occasional repetition between the first and some subsequent chapters, but this does not become irritating and there are only very minor discrepancies (such as the date of Kew's acquisition of Lindley's pre-eminent orchid herbarium, and the identities of the various forms of the sexually dimorphic orchid *Catasetum*).

It is difficult to pick out things of particular note, as the subjects and range of Lindley's activities are so extremely interesting and diverse – his long association with the Horticultural Society; his role as a botanical 'politician', including his report which resulted in Kew becoming a national botanic garden with an international remit; as a horticultural journalist and popularizer who brought botanical matters to a wide audience (notably through his editorship of the *Gardener's Chronicle*) – to say nothing of his academic role as teacher, professor and prolific author of monographic and encyclopaedic works. Of course he was not always right, as in his explanation of the cause of the Irish potato famine. His passionate advocacy of a Natural System of classification (he advised W.J. Hooker on the one to use in *Flora Scotica* as early as 1821) did not mean that his own system was other than seriously

flawed. In this, however, he was not dogmatic and relished the idea of changing and perfecting it in the light of new knowledge. He could evidently be overbearing, but this is an almost inevitable concomitant of such phenomenal energy and talents. It led, however, to unpleasant fallings-out with contemporary journalists and with his one-time mentor Robert Brown, with whom he had started his career in Banks' library in 1819. There was a price to be paid for this energy in terms of health, and the great man seems to have 'burnt out' at what was, for a botanist, a comparatively early age. It is also sad that he seems constantly to have been in a precarious financial state.

One of the greatest attractions of the book is the large number of beautifully reproduced colour plates, mainly of orchids, and mostly by Miss Drake. More has now come to light about this previously enigmatic artist. These include her Christian names, though she was affectionately known as Ducky when she lived with the Lindley family while drawing for the *Botanical Register* which Lindley edited. On the subject of botanical illustration it should be noted that Lindley himself was a fine artist and, in the account of his descendants, it could have been added that some of these artistic genes passed to his great great grandson Rory McEwen.

The Antique Collectors' Club is to be congratulated on continuing its series of collaborative botanical publications in lavishly illustrated volumes at affordable prices.

H. J. NOLTIE

Psilocybin Mushrooms of the World: an identification guide. Paul Stamets. Berkeley, California: Ten Speed Press. 1996. 245pp. ISBN 0 89815 839 7. \$24.95 (paperback).

For those who have met him, Paul Stamets comes across as an interested and enthusiastic mycologist. He has previously written two books on mushroom cultivation and one on *Psilocybe* mushrooms and their allies, and currently runs a large mushroom-related business. This work is a distillation of a twenty-year love affair with psilocybin-containing mushrooms.

The main part of the book is an identification guide. Prior to this there is an introduction to many aspects of this group of fungi. For those unfamiliar with fungi the psilocybin-containing mushrooms are hallucinogenic fungi, the most well-known example being the magic mushroom. At several points suitable warnings about the danger of picking and eating mushrooms are given, including a description of a poisoning from the death cap. Having said that, this book is quite clear in its aim – people do eat hallucinogenic mushrooms, so surely it makes sense to show them how to safely identify what they are going to eat.

The first few pages of the book are taken up with a rather cursory look at the history of the usage of hallucinogenic fungi. Included are various descriptions of the