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Author(s): Ashley R. Field and Frank A. Zich

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SHORT COMMUNICATION

Types of enigmatic north-Queensland Orchids from the Dockrill herbarium

Ashley R. Field^{1,2} & Frank A. Zich¹

¹Australian Tropical Herbarium, Sir Robert Norman Building, James Cook University Cairns Campus, PO Box 6811, Cairns, Queensland 4870 Australia.

²Queensland Herbarium, Department of Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts, Brisbane Botanic Gardens, Toowong, Queensland 4066 Australia. E-mail: Ashley.Field@science.dsitia.qld.gov.au

Alick William Dockrill (1915–2011), author of the classic work *Australian Indigenous Orchids* (Dockrill 1969, 1992) donated his personal orchid herbarium of approximately 1600 specimens to the Australian National Herbarium – Atherton (QRS) which is now integrated with the Australian Tropical Herbarium – Cairns (CNS). A number of duplicates of types have been recovered from this material including those for five poorly known taxa: *Dendrobium masonii* Rupp, *Dendrobium baseyanum* St.Cloud, *Dendrobium* × *foederatum* St.Cloud, *Eria intermedia* Dockrill and *Oberonia attenuata* Dockrill. These five taxa are enigmatic because they have not been re-recorded in the wild at or near their type localities since they were described and also because two of them are considered to be extinct in the wild under State and Commonwealth legislation.

We review the status of these five type specimens and provide a current interpretation as to their correct taxonomic placement. All specimens have been seen unless indicated as n.v. Accepted names are given in **bold** type. Type specimens originally accessioned at QRS are cited with their QRS numbers, whereas the recent duplicates are accessioned with CNS numbers.

1. *Dendrobium masonii* Rupp, *Austral. Orchid Rev.* 18: 18 (1953); *Diplocaulobium masonii* (Rupp) Dockrill, *Orchadian* 1(11) (1965). **Type citation:** “Cape Tribulation, North Queensland, 1950, W.W. Mason,

Junr.; flowering in Sydney, N.S.W., in early November, 1952”. **Type:** Queensland. COOK DISTRICT: Cape Tribulation, 1950, *W.W. Mason s.n.* (holo: NSW 22393, *vide* M.A. Clements 8 May 1986; iso: CNS 137337 [“conveyed by St Cloud” hand written on Dockrill’s original folder]).

Dendrobium masonii Rupp has not been re-recorded in the wild since it was described, despite subsequent exploration of the type locality (Lavarack & Gray 1985). Dockrill (1992) reported that the type locality had been cleared for grazing whereas B. Gray (pers. comm.) reported that the host tree for the plant from which the type specimen was prepared had fallen into Bailey Creek.

Upon accessioning the Dockrill herbarium a duplicate of the W.W. Mason Jnr. collection was located (CNS 137337). This specimen appears to be the basis of the habit illustration in Dockrill (1965), whereas the flowers in the illustration appear to have been redrawn from Rupp’s original 1952 figure (Dockrill 1992). Dockrill’s specimen is annotated as having been ‘conveyed by S.F. St Cloud’ who was one of Rupp’s correspondents, known to Rupp as his ‘Cairns huntsman’ (Gilbert 1992).

Rupp recorded the type as having been sent to him by W.W. Mason Jnr. from Cape Tribulation in 1950 as a sterile living plant which he presumed was a *Bulbophyllum* (Rupp 1953). Rupp lodged the living material at the Sydney Botanic Gardens glasshouse in 1951; it was sent on to Mr & Mrs Loader of Castlecrag in 1952 and then returned to Rupp when it flowered (Rupp 1953). The holotype

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is therefore a fifth-hand collection that passed through several glass-house collections of cultivated plants. This raises the possibility that a mix-up occurred in cultivation and that this taxon is a spurious record for Australia.

Dendrobium masonii was transferred to the genus *Diplocaulobium* by Dockrill (1965) and is currently considered to be a synonym of *Diplocaulobium stelliferum* (J.J.Sm.) A.D.Hawkes from Malesia (Lavarack *et. al.* 2000). The species is considered to be extinct in Australia.

It is possible that W.W. Mason Jnr. supplied Rupp with a specimen of a similar orchid such as *Abaxianthus convexus* (Blume) M.A.Clem. & D.L.Jones, a species that is abundant at the type locality but was relatively unknown in Australia at the time *D. masonii* was described. Specimens collected by W.W. Mason Jnr and A.W. Dockrill when they returned to the type locality in 1962 clearly belong to *A. convexus* (CNS 137455 & CNS 137456).

2. *Dockrillia baseyana* (St.Cloud) Rauschert, *Feddes Repert.* 94: 446 (1983); *Dendrobium baseyanum* St.Cloud, *N. Queensland Naturalist* 23(110): 1 (1955). **Type citation:** "Type in North Queensland Herbarium, Cairns. Habitat, Kings Plains [south west of Cooktown], N.Q. Coll. *F.L. Basey s.n.*" **Type:** (holo: QRS ex CAIRNS, not found; iso: CNS ex Dockrill herbarium, destroyed; lecto: 'Kings Plains, North Queensland', F.L. Basey *s.n.* original illustration, *vide* Clements (1989: 46).

The F.L. Basey holotype of *Dendrobium baseyanum* St. Cloud said to be at CAIRNS (integrated into QRS in 1971, now integrated into CNS) was reported missing by Clements (1989) who nominated the original illustration as lectotype. Flowers from the F.L. Basey 'Kings Plains' specimen were located in the Dockrill herbarium; however, this duplicate is an insect-destroyed fragment and no material remained that was suitable for a type specimen. Dockrill annotated this specimen that one of the two flowers was inconsistent with the description.

This taxon is currently recognised as a synonym of ***Dockrillia calamiformis***

(G.Lodd.) M.A.Clem. & D.L.Jones (Clements & Jones 1996).

3. *Dockrillia* × *foederata* (St. Cloud) Rauschert, *Feddes Repert.* 94: 446 (1983); *Dendrobium foederatum* St.Cloud, *N. Queensland Naturalist* 23(111): 2 (1955). **Type citation:** "Type in North Queensland Herbarium, Cairns. Growing on *Heritiera littoralis* in mangrove swamp, Aeroglen, near Cairns, leg. J. Dyson-Holland, September, 1954, flowering in cultivation, October 1954 to January 1955." **Type:** Queensland. COOK DISTRICT: Aeroglen, Cairns, 28 December 1954, *J.Dyson-Holland s.n.* (holo: QRS 44141; iso: CNS 137336).

The holotype of *Dendrobium foederatum* St.Cloud lacks flower parts and roots. A duplicate of this collection was located in the Dockrill herbarium (CNS 137336). Although this isotype specimen is insect-damaged it includes a number of flowers and roots and thus remains useful for research. A third more complete specimen (CNS 44140) collected by L.J.Brass from cultivation may be descended from the type (i.e. a clonotype).

This taxon is thought to be a natural hybrid between *Dockrillia rigida* (R.Br.) Rauschert and *D. calamiformis* (Lodd.) M.A.Clem. & D.L.Jones (the latter originally as *Dendrobium teretifolium* R.Br. [= *Dockrillia teretifolia* (R.Br.) Brieger] in St Cloud [1955]). The describing author was of the opinion that "evidence is against a natural hybrid" (St Cloud 1955); however, subsequent authors have all listed it as a naturally occurring hybrid species (Rauschert 1983; Clements 1989).

4. *Eria intermedia* Dockrill, *Austral. Pl.* 120 (1964); *Bryobium intermedium* (Dockrill) D.L.Jones & M.A.Clem., *Orchadian* 15(2): 88 (2005). **Type citation:** "Whitfield Range, North Queensland (A.W. Dockrill 26/12/1961 – Herb. BRI)." **Type:** Queensland. COOK DISTRICT: Whitfield Rge [Range], 26 December 1961, *A.W.Dockrill s.n.* (holo: BRI [AQ279580]; iso: QRS 129124).

A duplicate of the holotype (QRS 129124) and a cultivated specimen of *Eria intermedia* (CNS 132279) were located in the Dockrill

herbarium. These collections all originate from the Dockrill type collection from the Whitfield Range, Cairns on 26 Dec 1961, which remains the only authentic herbarium record of this taxon in Australia.

This taxon is currently recognised as a synonym of *Eria dischorensis* Schltr. (Dockrill 1969), a species that has a distribution primarily in Papua New Guinea, although Jones & Clements (2005) recognised it as *Bryobium intermedium* and endemic to Australia.

5. *Oberonia attenuata* Dockrill, *N. Queensland Naturalist* 29(126): 4, figs A–I (1960). **Type citation: “North Queensland, Mossman River 12–6–1960, Leg. A.W. Dockrill”. **Type:** Queensland. COOK DISTRICT: Mossman River, 12 June 1960, *A.W. Dockrill s.n.* (holo: BRI [AQ279632]; iso: CNS 137338).**

Oberonia attenuata has not been recollected in Australia since it was described in 1960 and is listed as Extinct under State and Commonwealth legislation. Duplicates of the holotype and two previous unrecorded collections were found in the Dockrill herbarium, greatly adding to the known material of this species. *O. attenuata* is unique among Australian *Oberonia* in having long (up to 160 mm) and narrow (4–8 mm) pendulous falcate-subulate leaves and flowers with a labellum bearing deeply bifid or trifid side and front lobes. The cause of the apparent extinction of this species at the type locality is poorly understood. Further searches for this species are needed over a wider range than previously surveyed.

Additional specimens examined: Queensland. COOK DISTRICT: Mossman River, Jan 1960, *Archer et al. s.n.* (CNS 137339); Babinda, May 1956, *Wilkie s.n.* (CNS 137340). Additional replicates of these specimens will be distributed to BRI and CANB.

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