Newsletter of the Lepidopterists' Society of Southern Africa
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Editorial comment – disclosure of localities

The disclosure of localities for rare or elusive butterflies by their discoverers has always presented problems and in some cases has led to a lot of bad feeling between collectors. It is high time that this issue be brought into the open and discussed candidly so as to promote understanding between members on this very contentious subject. I have set out my personal views on the matter below and hope that the guidelines suggested will be of use to members as a basis for the exchange of information about localities.

Most of us know that it often takes much time, effort and money to discover new localities (or new species) particularly in the case of the lycaenids. This information is thus of considerable value. Although the person who discovers this data cannot lay claim to the butterflies themselves he has every right to regard the *knowledge* of the locality as his own property. There are a number of things he can do with this knowledge and these include:

a) keeping it to himself;
b) publishing it in a popular or scientific journal;
c) giving it to a friend or friends;
d) selling it.

I would like to consider each of these options in more detail.

Keeping the knowledge to himself

Since, as noted above, the information is the rightful property of the discoverer he is under no obligation to divulge it. One is, of course, at liberty to criticise such an attitude based on the grounds that such behaviour will prevent this data becoming a part of the store of scientific knowledge. Nevertheless, it is ridiculous to assert that such a person has a duty towards 'society' and should give this information up unconditionally (unless, of course, one does not agree with the principle of right to property). If someone does not wish to contribute his knowledge to the 'pool' as a gift, this is his right.

Publishing the knowledge

This is in effect the opposite of the above stance and such a course has as its rewards, credit for discovering new knowledge, enhancement of ones standing in the scientific community and respect from ones peers. In effect the person gives his knowledge as a *gift* to those who can use it and the receivers owe such a person only thanks and respect for his gift. No conditions can be attached to the use of this information since it is given to everyone in perpetuity.

Giving it to a friend(s)

As in the above scenario, knowledge is given as a gift but the recipient(s) in this case has been selected. Futhermore, whatever the motives of the giver (they are his concern only) in his choice of recipient, unlike in the case above, he can set conditions for the use of this knowledge. The most important condition in terms of this discussion is the proviso that the recipient not divulge the information to anyone else. This constitutes a perfectly legitimate verbal contract. Indeed, such a contract has legal force – should the recipient break the contract and divulge the information to a third party he can be sued for breach of contract in a court of law. Since in practice it would be difficult to prove such breach, the guilty party would in all likelihood (and with justification) forfeit his friendship with the wronged party. This sort of behaviour is probably the most important threat to the continued goodwill between members of our society – so important that I want to illustrate it with a personal example.

I was once told by a collector (A) of a locality for a rare butterfly and asked not to tell anyone else. Unbeknown to me collector A also told another collector (B) of this locality. B was also requested to keep this information to himself but told a friend of his (C). I inadvertantly learned of this when C told me of the locality and that he had got the knowledge from B. It does not require much imagination to realize that very soon nearly everyone would know about this locality. This is contrary to A's intention in telling me and B about the spot. The tragedy is that A will most probably be judged by other collectors as selfish (at the mildest) while B, who broke a promise, will most likely be praised for his altruistic behaviour. I personally find such a judgement reprehensible and disgusting. What this example illustrates is that we as collectors should be able to trust each other and, above all, should be trustworthy.

Selling the information

While many would find the selling of information distasteful it remains a fact that a trade in which value is exchanged for value constitutes the most objective and moral way of disseminating information. The person who discovers the locality may spend hundreds or even thousands of rands in terms of time and cash. Why should he not recoup his expenses (or even make a profit)? We do not begrudge the inventor the royalties he earns on his patents or the writer his on his books. I would presume that one does not expect ones employer to begrudge one ones salary if one has earned it. Is it moral to *expect* the discoverer to inform you of the exact spot he found a rare butterfly merely because you *need* specimens for your collection? Is your need a claim on his property (his knowledge of the locality)? In my opinion those whose answer to these two questions is "yes" are a menace to co-operative effort and don't belong in the Lepidopterists' Society.

In regard to the price to be paid for such information, let the market decide. The discoverer must set the price and decide upon the conditions of sale, e.g. he may stipulate that the information is for the buyers use alone i.e. in a sense 'copyrighted'.

In the final analysis the choice of whether to keep information about localities to oneself, publish it, divulge it to friends or market it, is the responsibility and right of the discoverer of such knowledge – it is he that worked for it and earned it.

Observations on the feeding habits of adult *Lachnocnema bibulus* (Fab.) (Lycaenidae)

G.A. Henning

(Received 22 January 1984)

During a recent visit to Margate on the Natal South Coast, I had the pleasure of observing a number of adult *L. bibulus* feeding on honeydew from scale insects (coccids) in a Kaffirboom (*Erythrina* sp.). The scale insect concerned was a very small species about 2 mm in length and pale green in colour. They were on the undersides of the leaves in small clusters of two or three.

The butterflies were observed standing over the clusters and stroking them with swift tongue movements at approximately three times a second. The *L. bibulus* also moved their forelegs in a slow drumming motion at approximately one leg every two seconds. The rapid licking action may possibly imitate the antennal action of the small brown ants which were also in attendance. The antenna movements of the ants were considerably slower than the tongue movements of the butterfly. The ants' antennal action stimulates both sides of the scale insect while the mouth parts imbibe the honeydew from the posterior honey gland. In the case of the butterfly both sides of the scale insect must be stimulated and the honeydew sucked up by the tongue alone. The drumming action by the forelegs could possibly have a soothing effect on the ants which formed a semi-circle around the front of the butterfly and apparently watched it intently. The action could also be soothing to the scale insects or it may serve as a deterrent to the ants, which might have tried to feed from the same scale insects thereby disturbing the butterfly.

L. bibulus is well adapted for interaction with ants in having very hairy legs which inhibit any attack which may be made upon it by the ants. The tongue and leg actions continued unabated for several hours and the *L. bibulus* spent the night in the same position and continued again in the morning. The specimens remained in the tree for several days and would not move unless forcibly disturbed. Even during bad weather they continued feeding.

Other lycaenid genera which have been observed to exhibit similar feeding habits to *Lachnocnema* are *Deloneura, Baliochila* and *Cnodontes*.

Letter to the Editor

Simon Hensman

Simon Hensman of Mutare, Zimbabwe, in a letter dated 17th March 1984 writes: "I have a series of *Eurema desjardinsii* in my collection which appear to be totally different from any described forms as shown in Pennington's book.

The uppersides of both fore and hindwings are pure white with only very faint yellow basal suffusion. All specimens captured are fresh and all show the white ground colour. Its flight period is from December to March and it

is locally common in the higher altitude montane forests of the Vumba in Zimbabwe.

If there are any readers who can shed any light on this form I would be grateful if they could write to me. (P.O. Box 873, Mutare, Zimbabwe).

Letter to the Editor

Julian Nagle

Julian Nagle, of 18 Murray Smith Road, Winklespruit 4125, in a letter dated 17th June 1984, writes: "My wife Margaret and I read with great interest in *Metamorphosis* **1** (6) of the localities of *Euxanthe wakefieldi* and wish to record the following captures of *E. wakefieldi* at Winklespruit on the S. Coast of Natal, approximately 40 km from Durban.

22-7-78: 1 male taken in a trap.
6-5-79: 1 female taken in a trap.
20-5-79: 1 male taken by Margaret in hand net.
10-6-79: 1 male taken in a trap.

Trap was baited with fermented banana. We have not seen any again. A friend of ours living about one km away sat in his garden one morning watching a male *E. wakefieldi* flying high in the tree tops. Eventually he became so frustrated that he tried to shoot it with an airgun!!!

Some other captures we have made, which, according to Pennington's and Swanepoel's books, have never been taken in Natal or Zululand before:

Spindasis apelles male taken 21-10-83 at lower Mkuze, Zululand by Margaret.

Acraea machequena female taken 12-2-84 at Eshowe, Zululand by my son Arthur.

Gegenes hottentota (skipper with black patch on forewing) (Pennington 781), 19-10-74, male, Nagle Dam (Umgeni River) by Margaret; 11-3-79, male, Winklespruit taken by myself; 22-2-81, male, Ladysmith (Military Camp) by myself.

Two unusual catches we have made which may be of interest:

Protogoniomorpha parhassus aethiops, female taken in a forest above Cathkin Peak in the Berg on 6-2-84. I was with Clive Quickelberge at the time and he mentioned they had never been found this high before.

Protogoniomorpha anacardii nebulosa (dry season form) was taken by Arthur on 5-6-77 at Greenpoint near Scottburgh on the Natal S. Coast. I believe this insect has not been seen here for many years."

Letter to the Editor

Robert Plowes

Robert Plowes of 1 Warren Lane, Hwange, Zimbabwe, in a letter dated 18th May 1984, writes: "In order to establish a value for my collection for insurance purposes, I estimated that it would take three years of continuous collecting to replace it. To cover the costs of my modest salary and travelling expenses, I arrive at a value for the collection for which I would struggle to pay the insurance premiums.

As an amateur collector I do not go out collecting with the cost of the exercise in mind. Considering that most people collect in their spare time and probably only purchase specimens to fill gaps in their collections, then is it realistic to assume that the commercial replacement cost should apply?

Perhaps other collectors, or someone in the Museums, can indicate whether their collections have been insured and on what basis. It is a subject that must concern most collectors at some stage."

Letter to the Editor

Alf Curle

Alf Curle of 14 Strandloper Road, Teremure, Kempton Park 1620 in a letter received on 10th July 1984 writes the following: "My brother Neville and I both realize that we do not have a very large collection when compared to some other private collections in Southern Africa. Nevertheless, it has occurred to me that one day some of the specimens in our collection may become valuable. We have, therefore, decided to place the collection and library in a Trust to be known as The Curle Trust. The purpose of such a trust will be to:

1. ensure that it is not included in the property of an estate. It will not then be sold at that time and attract Estate duty or Executors fees.
2. ensure, as far as is possible, that it remains in good hands. At present the beneficiaries are our children. Should none of them show sufficient interest in the collection then it will be donated to the Transvaal Museum.
3. ensure that no single member of the family may dispose of the collection merely for financial gain.
4. ensure, as far as is possible, that the collection remains intact and in South Africa.

Other collectors may have made suitable arrangements for the disposal of their collections. If they have not, and would like a rough draft of the Deed of Trust used by us, then they should contact Neville Curle, c/o
P. O. Box 16, Vryheid 3100 (telephone (0381) 2605).

We have seen collections neglected and even plundered to the point where they were lost forever. We believe it is important that the collections in private hands in South Africa do not simply disappear.

Letter to the Editor

Cyril A. Clarke

Sir Cyril A. Clarke from the U.K. is well known to many of us for the decades of pioneering research he has done in regard to the genetics of mimicry in butterflies, particularly *Papilio dardanus*. He urgently needs live material (eggs or pupae) of *Papilio dardanus cenea* for further research work and would be very pleased if any of our members could assist him. He has stated that he is willing to pay for reasonable expenses incurred in obtaining the material. Any member able to help can write to him at 43 Caldy Road, West Kirby, Wirral, Merseyside L48 2HF, Great Britain.

Aantekeninge oor *Uranothauma nubifer* (Trimen)

Johan Greyling, Posbus 199, Pietersburg 0700
(Ontvang 20/7/84)

U. nubifer is vir die meeste versamelaars ‘n baie unieke skoenlapper. Dit is byna heeltemaal swart met ‘n donker fluweelagtige kol op die voorvlerke wat die vorm van ‘n hart het; daar die dier se bekendste naam die ‘swarthart’. Die onderkant is ook heel besonders, die kleure varieer van wit na swart en bruin.

Van die oomblik toe ek my eerste eksemplaar gekry het, het dit my betower. Ek kan ook goed onthou toe ek my eerste eksemplaar self gevang het. Dit was ‘n warm sonninge dag in Desember, ongeveer 25 km wes van Pietersburg. Ek was besig om ‘n koppie te bestyg en ongeveer 2/3 van onder af het ek ‘n snaakse skoenlapper gewaar. Dit was gou in my net en nadat ek dit geïdentifiseer het, het ek met opnude vuur verder geklim op soek na meer. Die soektog was egter vrugteloos. Met die afkoms loop ek verby ‘n doringboom oortrek met wit blommetjies. Ek was byna uit my vel van verbasing oor al die *nubifer* wat om die boom gevlieg het. Dit het gelyk of hulle na ‘n spesiale partyjie genooi was. Daar was mannetjies and daar was wyfies in dosyne. Almal so opgewonde om aan die blommetjies te suig as wat ek was om hulle in my net te kan kry.

Die ‘swarthart’ se vlug is kenmerkend en kan maklik uitgeken word aan die baie swart op die vlerke. Dit vlieg taamlik warrelend en gaan sit nou en dan op ‘n doringboom se tak of vlieg weg na ‘n ander boom. As twee mannetjies mekaar ontmoet dan warrel hulle rond en bont voor hulle weer tot rus kom. Volgens my ondervinding speel die dier nie op koppies nie en daar is ander versamelaars van skoenlappers wat hierdie ondervinding met my deel.

Ek was eendag verras om baie eksemplare in ‘n tuin te sien wat op *Pelargonium* (malva) blomme kom sit het. Daar was ook ‘n hele paar op nat grond in ‘n bedding, iets wat hulle in meeste van hulle habitats lok op warm sonninge dae. ‘n Paar kilometer verder wes, by Ysterberg naby Pietersburg, het ek ‘n ander kolonie gevind – maar nie so volop soos die eerste nie. By Makapans grot waar D.A. Swanepoel hulle aanvanklik versamel het was ook heelwat.

Ek het die skoenlapper gevind van November tot Januarie. Die wyfie is aansienlik skaarser as die mannetjie en sy besit ook nie die donker fluweel

vlek nie. Sy kan nie spog met die elegante kleure van die mannetjie nie. Enkele eksemplare is gevang by Buffelsberg en in Fairlands, 'n voorstad van Johannesburg.

The life history and habits of *Acraea hypoleuca* Trimen from South West Africa (Namibia)

Stephen Braine, with Graham Henning
(Received 16/7/84)

The first specimen of *Acraea hypoleuca* was a male collected in 1871 but with no recorded locality. Trimen did his description in 1898 from this specimen. The origin of that specimen was a point of contention for many years; Eltringham came to the conclusion that it could be from South West Africa. The closest relative to *Acraea hypoleuca* is *Acraea chilo* Godman, which occurs from East Africa to Arabia. The second specimen was taken by Dr Brown at Maltahöhe in South West Africa; it was a female and was described by Dr Pinhey in 1972. This specimen is illustrated in *Pennington's butterflies of southern Africa* (1978) as No. 120.

In 1979 I collected a female at Rössing and in 1982 I found a male at the Ugab River. In January 1983 I collected six males at the Ogam Hills and another male at the Ugab River. All these localities are in South West Africa. This butterfly is not as rare as it was originally thought to be. It has been found at several other localities by myself and has been observed to fly from 10h00 to 18h00. It has been found to feed on the flowers of two *Psilocaulon* species, with a marked preference for the flowers of *Calicorema capitata*. I have recorded this butterfly from the Swakop River northwards to the Sechomib River in the central section of Kaokoland. It has been recorded flying from December to June with a peak in January/February.

On the 22nd of January 1984, while scouting about the granite hills south of a place known as Ogams Fountain on a patrol in Kaokoland, I came across several *Acraea hypoleuca*. The insects were feeding on flowers of *Calicorema capitata* and a few perfect specimens were captured between 11h00 and 12h30. After a short lunch break I returned to the area of granite outcrops to search for the foodplant of this "common" acraea! Luck was on my side this particular afternoon for the first specimen observed was fluttering about the large bulbous plant *Adenia pechuelli* of the family Passifloraceae, which grows fairly prolifically in the above-mentioned area. It seemed as if this particular insect was investigating the plant with the intention of ovipositing and on closer observation I found the 'ultimate sight', three large larvae peering at me from the top of the upright stems. After searching through several other plants, a few more larvae were collected. Only four of the larvae pupated and all emerged within ten days. No egg cases could be found, but small batches of newly hatched larvae of between 8 to 15 were found together on the buds and shoots of the foodplant, normally placed low down near the bulbous 'foot' of the plant.

The final instar larvae are pale silvery grey with four large purplish black spots across each segment. The spines arise from tubercles situated on these spots. The spines are quite long with small branches and are pale ochreous brown in colour with the branches being dark brown. The head is orange with pale ochreous marks dorsally and a small brown lateral dot near the

mouthparts, which are dark brown. The legs and prolegs are ochreous. The pupa is white. The abdomen has two dorsal and one lateral row of black-ringed ochreous spots connected by black marks. On the ventral surface are two closely aligned rows of black marks. The veins on the wing-covers and the markings on the thorax and head are black.

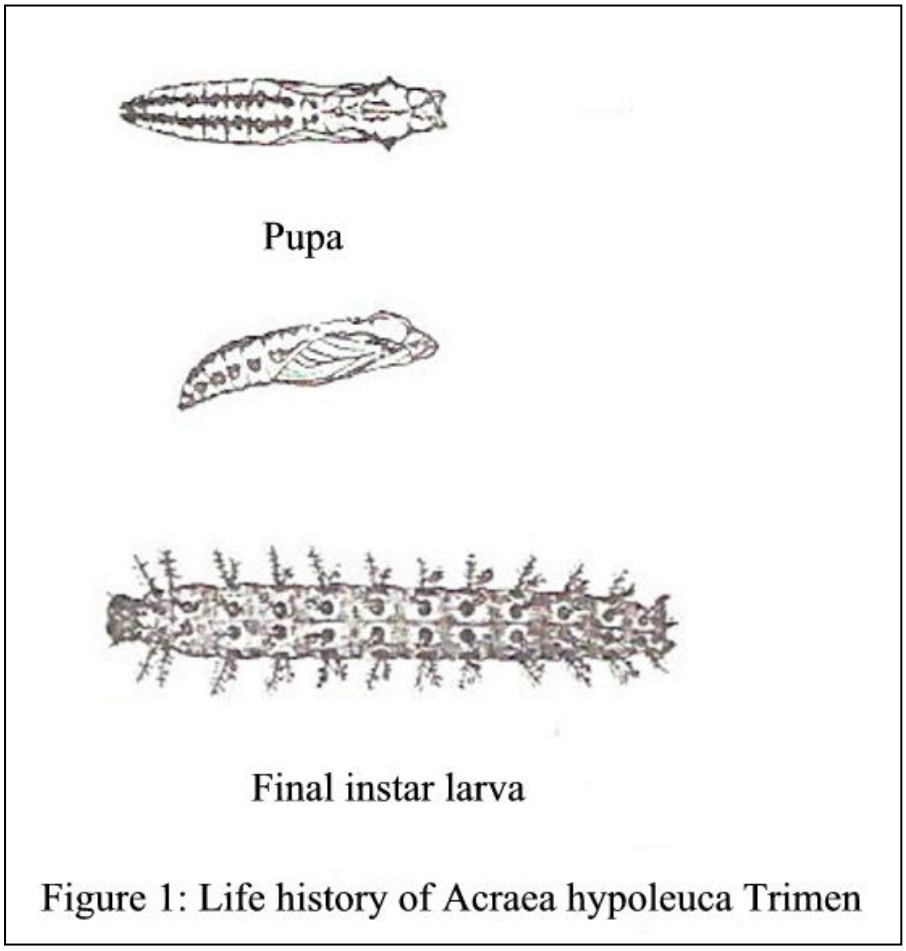

Figure 1: Life history of Acraea hypoleuca Trimen