

OBITUARY – PROFESSOR EMERITUS MARK CHRISTOPHER WILLIAMS

17 April 1950 to 10 September 2023†

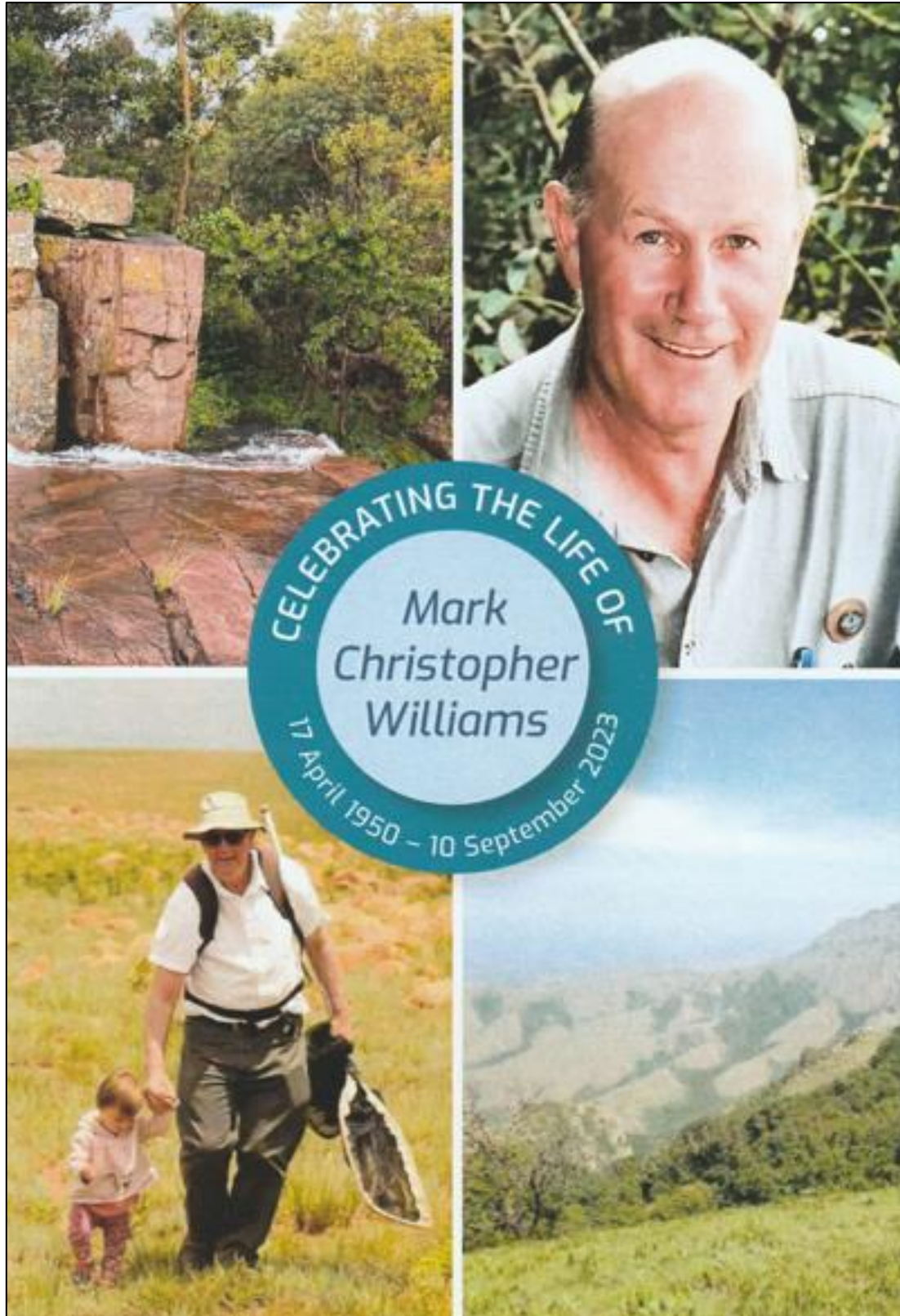


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section Title	Contributors
1. Family background and ancestry	Elise Andrach-Schaberg
2. Schooling	Elise Andrach-Schaberg and Graham Henning
3. Early passion for butterflies	Elise Andrach-Schaberg and June Williams
4. University and Onderstepoort career	June Williams and Sarah Clift
5. First marriage and children, with tributes	June, Bronwyn and Carmen Williams
6. Founding of LepSoc Southern Africa	June Williams and Graham Henning
7. <i>Metamorphosis</i>	Dave Edge and Hermann Staude
8. Second marriage and family, with tributes	Tildie, Gisela, Alex. Lionel and Neil Williams
9. LepSoc Africa and Afrotropical Butterflies	Steve Collins, Dave Edge and Jeremy Dobson
10. Butterfly conservation	Dave Edge
11. Reminiscences by Jeremy Dobson	Jeremy Dobson
12. Reminiscences by Steve Woodhall	Steve Woodhall
13. Reminiscences by Hermann Staude	Hermann Staude
14. Tributes from LepSoc Africa members	<i>African Butterfly News</i>
15. Publications – Veterinary Science	June Williams
16. Publications – Lepidoptera	Dave Edge

1. Family background and ancestry (Elise Andrach-Schaberg)

Mark had deep links with Knysna being descended from George Rex of Melkhoutskraal, the founder of Knysna. George Rex's daughter, Caroline, married Lieutenant Thomas Duthie in 1833, who acquired the farm Belvidere (previously Uitzicht) from his father-in-law. Consequently, many ancestral family graves are situated at the historic Belvidere Church built by Thomas Duthie. Caroline and Thomas had twelve children, the seventh of whom was John, who married Mathilde Mussman in 1885. They acquired a farm near Riebeeck East in what is now the Eastern Cape. The sixth of their children was Douglas Duthie (Mark's maternal grandfather), who married Laura Distin from a farm near Rosmead (also in the Eastern Cape) in 1922. Their fourth child was Barbara Duthie, Mark's mother (a nurse), who married Gerald Williams of Port Elizabeth (a civil engineer) in 1948. Mark was the eldest of their four children (siblings: Neil, Lionel and Debi) and was born on 17 April 1950 in Port Elizabeth.

2. Schooling (Elise Andrach-Schaberg & Graham Henning)

Most of Mark's primary schooling was at Monument Primary in Krugersdorp (1956–1962). He then proceeded to Krugersdorp High School, where he matriculated in 1967.

Memories from Graham Henning

From about 1966 Mark and Freddie Matthyse would cycle from Krugersdorp to our house at 1 Harry Lawrence Street in Florida Park, usually on a Saturday. We would spend the afternoon looking at butterflies and comparing notes. I visited Mark in Krugersdorp on my own bike a couple of times. One event comes to mind: Mark was at Krugersdorp High School, and I was at Florida Park High, and we had an interschool athletics meeting at Krugersdorp. Mark was boasting to me about his running the mile, but we had an excellent runner in that event. I was looking forward to seeing Mark being beaten and having told my friends about him, we awaited his come-uppance. The day arrived at the event and to our horror Mark won the event by a couple of hundred yards. After school Mark went to Wits University, and I followed him a year later. We were both doing Zoology, Botany, Physics and Chemistry. Mark went into Veterinary science, and I became an accountant.

3. Early passion for butterflies (Elise Andrach-Schaberg & June Williams)

His favourite aunt, not much older than him, was Elise Andrach-Schaberg from Gqeberha (Port Elizabeth), who recalls that his passion for butterflies was ignited at the age of four when his grandfather, Douglas Duthie, gave him a set of cigarette box butterfly cards.

While Mark was at Krugersdorp High School, he would wander alone in the veld for many hours around places such as Witpoortjie Falls where, at the time, there were lots of butterflies. Whenever the family went on caravanning

holidays to various places in South Africa, he would collect butterflies. and he soon knew all their names. He had a well-thumbed and memorised copy of the book *Butterflies of South Africa: Where, When and How they Fly* by the legendary and elusive D.A. Swanepoel, published in 1953, which was his go-to source for identifying butterflies and finding localities.

After obtaining his bachelor's degree Mark spent a full year alone, driving to various butterfly localities in South Africa in his little beige-tan VW Beetle, Eva (named by his father after Eva Braun, Hitler's wife), mostly camping, and observing butterfly behaviour. He would painstakingly follow laying females, identifying eggs, larvae and numerous foodplants while learning to identify several hundred tree species from Eve Palmer and Norah Pitman's *Trees of South Africa*. This gave him a good background for his later research on butterflies.

Mark began breeding butterflies in earnest in 1974 to 1975, and every one or two weeks he would return briefly to June's (his girlfriend and later his first wife) room in res at Onderstepoort with bags filled with fresh food plants as well as various live females, larvae or eggs, which she then had to feed, tend and clean daily until his next visit. In no time, she was accompanying him on butterfly catching trips, and he insisted she learn the Latin names of the butterflies (many of which have since changed). She accompanied him to exquisite unspoiled areas including Malta Forest, the Downs, Mariepskop, Eshowe Forest, Balgowan, Karkloof, Soutpansberg, the Saltpan crater, Thabazimbi area, Rustenburg Kloof, Berman Bush and La Lucia Forest remnants. They camped in his small blue pub tent traveling and living on a shoestring.

Mark was masterful and at home in nature with an uncanny sense of direction and never got lost. He was exceptionally observant of everything, from minute to large – a trait fostered in him from a young age by his mom who was wonderfully observant of nature, albeit just in her garden. Like many butterfly collectors, Mark and June had many adventures, some hilarious, some terrifying, and some creepy, including encounters with baboons, leopard, wasps, frogs, a falling tree, an avalanche, storms, swift-flowing rivers, barbed-wire fences, shady characters, snakes and a brief encounter with the enigmatic and reclusive “Swannie” (Dawid Swanepoel) in Eshowe Forest.

4. University and Onderstepoort career

June Williams

Mark enrolled for a BSc at Wits University in 1968. In his first year at Wits, he played bass guitar in a band, teaming up with three friends, of whom Glen van der Watt and the late Wolfie (Wolfgang) Wiessner became lifelong friends. He was also an ace table tennis player. Needless to say, he failed first year, much to the displeasure of his father. From then on, he had to find ways to fund his studies.

Another passion of Mark's in those years was running – at school he had become a good 400 m track and cross-country athlete. In the 1980s he took up long-distance running guided by Tim Noakes' and Bruce Fordyce's books running marathons and half-marathons. He actually won in his first full marathon, much to his and everyone's surprise

In 1970 he qualified for entrance to the BVSc degree at the Faculty of Veterinary Science at Onderstepoort. He completed his BVSc in 1973 and was awarded the Pig Prize. He was also especially adept at toxicology. He then went to work at the Johannesburg abattoir to gain practical experience and repay his student loan and did pig consultancy work. He rejoined the Faculty of Veterinary Science at Onderstepoort as a lecturer, diagnostic pathologist and researcher while studying for his master's degree in veterinary medicine (MMedVet Pathology). This eventually gained him a professorship. He retired as a Professor Emeritus in 2015.

Mark worked in the Section: Pathology at Onderstepoort from 1975 until 2014, as a diagnostic pathologist and lecturer, sharing his effective studying method with many struggling and grateful students. He was known among students for imitating the cry of the bushbaby and including butterfly tales during some lectures. He retired early due to *myasthenia gravis* affecting his speech. During his career, he authored or co-authored 184 publications on lepidoptera and pathology, as recorded in various online resources. I worked as a colleague in pathology from 1976 to early 1979 and again from 1999 to 2014.

Sarah Clift

Professor Mark Williams was a respected and beloved figure in the field of veterinary pathology. A true academic in every sense, he was known for his insatiable curiosity and commitment to the pursuit of knowledge. He was a mentor to many, always emphasising that the essence of academia lies in maintaining an enquiring mind and an unwavering dedication to truth.

Although he may not have published as prolifically as some, his influence was profound. Mark taught his students and colleagues that asking "why" was the cornerstone of intellectual growth. His passion for butterflies was legendary – somehow, he always managed to weave them into discussions, whether about pathology, science, or life itself.

Mark had an ability to engage people from all walks of life making them feel valued and respected. His conversations, though often lengthy, were always enlightening, covering a vast array of topics, from human behaviour (another one of his favourites) to the mysteries of the universe.

Mark was a scholar in the truest sense, inspiring those around him to embrace lifelong learning. He will be remembered not just for his expertise (also vast in the field of veterinary pathology), but for the way he made us all more curious, more thoughtful, and a bit more human.

5. First marriage and children, with tributes (June, Bronwyn and Carmen Williams)

I met Mark in my second year of vet science (he was in final year), on the veranda of the Onderstepoort Residence dining hall. We were married in mid-1975 in Durban: I had just turned 21 and Mark was four years my senior. We honeymooned camping at Sodwana Bay where the monkeys pelted us out of our tent with stones and cans and we ended up sleeping in the back of our Ranchero. Mark had gifted me with my first good camera, one of the first shots being a perfect *Euphaedra neophron* mud puddling in dappled sun. We invariably set up traps with fermented bananas to lure *Charaxes* wherever we went – checking traps was always exciting. He also introduced me to hiking; my first hike and several subsequent ones being to the top of the Drakensberg escarpment with work colleagues.

During my final year we bought a plot at Klipfontein, north-east of Rosslyn, Pretoria. We had two wonderful daughters Bronwyn (b. 1979) and Carmen (b. 1981).

Mark loved animals – the most notable being his Corgi, Bronwyn, while at high school. He trained her to do tricks and later our first daughter was named after his beloved Corgi. We also inherited his budgie Buddina when we were married. In recent years his little rescue dog, Babsie, and he loved going for walks in Rietondale, and his characterful cats were treasured by him.

I attribute and am grateful for much of my personal growth in character and individuality to my relationship with Mark – especially through the rough times. I gradually discovered my identity and differences after initially hero-worshipping him for his self-assurance and ability to logically win every argument, mostly ignited in him at the time by his complete admiration for and integration of Ayn Rand's philosophies. I was at that time painfully naïve and lacking in self-confidence. I am eternally grateful for all that I learned from and experienced with him in nature – he was a master biologist and teacher. I am, however, the most grateful for our two beautiful daughters and three exceptional grandchildren, and how mellow and loving Mark became to me and our daughters in the few years prior to his passing. I am so thankful that I had the opportunity to tell him this while he was in hospital.

We truly miss him.

From Bron

Dappled light dancing on water in the road
A flurry of phenomenally patterned wings
A green mamba slithers from a branch into
a silvery pool
The Place of Water – Lekgalameetse
Your most treasured of places
Your life – a collection of incredible memories
Your life's work – a legacy that will live on
forever
But it was those little moments;
Your tender hug when I grazed my knee
Your patience and love teaching me maths

Your gentle "I love you sweetheart" when we
said our goodbyes
Hysterical laughter at a shared moment of
hilarity
Your hand on my shoulder as we walked in the
veld
These are the moments that make my heart ache
with pain and love for you – all at the very same
time
May your spirit fly free now Dad. You were an
expert in so many things, but most especially in
nature, butterflies and the natural world.
We are so lucky to have had you as our
beautiful dad. And I am so lucky to have seen

you one last time. Saying goodbye on Saturday was the hardest thing I have ever had to do. You were a magnificent human being and our hearts are broken – but we will always celebrate you and the amazing life you lived ...

Love you forever and ever. Bron

From Carmen

Flutterbyman, lepidopterist of note, Veterinary Pathology professor, prog rock rocker, music lover, athlete, madman, gentleman, fun friend, confidante, listener, student and probably the best teacher I ever had, eternally fascinated boy, terrifying trickster “krokodil”, comedian, story teller, cook, man of the wilderness, and so much more. Daddy, you burned incredibly brightly and genuinely touched so many, in this beautiful glimpse that we call a lifetime. I'm so grateful to be your daughter, to have known your fiery heart, sweet soul and brave

spirit so well. Thank you for sticking up for me, being on my side and loving me unconditionally.

My love for you and the wonderful memories we share will continue and your granddaughter, Ylva, who entered this world so close to your departure, will know you through me. You loved the gift of life SO much with all its wonder and mystery, and managed to find the sweet spot in the balance of all things, the interplay between yin and yang, which brought you much peace. You gained vast wisdom, and I would consider your life, a life complete.

I hope that you're in peace now in the beyond. For me you will always be in your favourite place, the untouched wilderness of Africa, fluttering around in a kaleidoscope of butterflies, happy as a pig in mud, your voice and laughter singing through the echoes of my mind.

When I miss you, I can feel your big Dad hug and the firm grip of your hand holding mine.

6. Founding of LepSoc Southern Africa (June Williams & Graham Henning)

June Williams

At Klipfontein Mark created his deep, focused, far-reaching vision of creating a community of lepidopterists. Meticulous, left-handed and neat as always, he kept a box of cards with the details of everyone he knew who could possibly be interested and contacted them all. Other butterfly or moth enthusiast names that I recall from that time include Steve Woodall, Rolf Oberprieler, Jonathan Ball and Johan Greyling. Soon LepSoc was holding AGMs and went from strength to strength.

Mark's vision came to fruition when he established The Lepidoptera Study Group of Southern Africa (LSGSA) and became its first chairman (1983–1987). By February 1984 the membership of LSGSA had already grown from 80 to 125. By April 1984 it had become necessary to form a steering committee to assist Mark with managing the LSGSA. His school friends, Graham and Stephen Henning, were involved from the beginning and later Dave Edge joined the committee. These three are the only surviving members of that first steering committee. At the first committee meeting it was decided to change the name to the Lepidopterists' Society of Southern Africa.

Graham Henning

During the late 1960s and most of the 1970s our house was the meeting ground of the butterfly fraternity at the time with people like Bill Teare, Nolan Owen-Johnston, Lionel Schroeder, Russel Badham, Dawid Swanepoel, Izak Coetzer, Victor and Ernest Pringle, Norman Brauer, Danie Rossouw, Elliott Pinhey, Ivan and Ian Bampton, Doug Kroon, Clive Quickelberge and many others, including Arthur Allyn of the Allyn Museum in Florida USA who arrived in a Rolls Royce with a white chauffeur (his wife had a diamond ring the size of a dove's egg). Mark was introduced to many of these people at that time. We would sometimes have a gathering of a dozen people around our dining room table. That was the time, before Ken Pennington died, when the three kingpins of Pennington, Swanepoel and Charlie Dickson were often at loggerheads. It was after I did the plates of the first *Pennington's Butterflies* in 1975 and its subsequent publication that the situation was eased somewhat. I was not allowed to use specimens from Swanepoel's collection for the plates of *Pennington's Butterflies* due to the ugly letters Swanepoel had written to Pennington. A similar situation existed between Swanepoel and Dickson. It was this totally ambivalent situation that delayed any society or group getting together, and Charlie Dickson never allowed himself to join our subsequent study group or society even though he was invited. In 1983 Clive Quickelberge announced that he was going to start a Butterfly Group for the Natal collectors. Clive was the Lepidopterist at the Durban Museum. We heard about this, and Mark asked us if we should form a study group of our own. We started the Lepidoptera Study

Group of Southern Africa together with Mark taking the lead. The Study Group eventually evolved into the Lepidopterists' Society with my brother Stephen as the Secretary and myself as Treasurer. The rest is history. Mark and I only had a few trips together during our long association, but we met frequently at council meetings and at other LepSoc gatherings. In the later years I involved Mark in my study of the Acraeinae and we published several papers together.

7. *Metamorphosis* (Dave Edge & Hermann Staude)

Mark was the first editor of *Metamorphosis: Newsletter of the Lepidoptera study Group of Southern Africa*, first published in August 1983. In his first editorial he wrote: "It is my fondest hope that this first issue of *Metamorphosis* will live up to its name and progress in subsequent editions from an inconspicuous *ovum* to a beautiful *imago* that we can all enjoy". From this first issue there was a focus on butterfly conservation, descriptions of new taxa and accounts of collecting trips.

The first ten issues (up to September 1984) were produced on A4 paper using an old-fashioned typewriter to produce a stencil, which was then reproduced on a Roneo machine. June helped Mark during this complicated and sometimes messy process. The final page of issue 10 had the very first illustration – a line drawing of the life history of *Acraea hypoleuca* Trimen by S. Braine. Copies were mailed to all members of LepSoc. Issues 11 to 19 (up to June 1987) were copied by photostatic process and cut/folded to A5 size for ease and economy of posting. The evolution of *Metamorphosis* benefitted greatly from the ideas of the Henning family: Graham, Steven and Bill, who were doing incredible pioneering classification and taxonomic work. While Steven was studying for his doctorate at Wits University, he studied the genitalia of the lycaenid butterflies (blues and coppers) and began to uncover the intricate lifecycles of ant-associated butterflies, which were scarcely known.

By the time Mark handed over the editorial reins to Nolan Owen-Johnston in December 1987 the newsletter already had the look of the journal it would later become. Mark watched with delight as subsequent editors such as Bill Henning, Hermann Staude and Doug Kroon, under his tutelage, steadily improved and grew the journal. From March 2003 to December 2007 and in 2017–2018, Mark once again assumed the position of editor of *Metamorphosis*. His brainchild had become a fully-fledged scientific journal, and this gave him much pleasure and pride. He was always on hand, no matter who the editor was, to produce insightful peer reviews and could advise on scientific issues and dealings with difficult authors or critics (such as D'Abrebra)!

One of the things that Mark passionately believed in was that anyone who observed Lepidoptera could make significant contributions to science. Those who were not formally trained scientists just needed some mentoring for them to present their work in a way that it can be absorbed into mainstream science. He applied this philosophy in the creation and nurturing of *Metamorphosis* and indeed instilled this belief in subsequent editors of the journal. As a result, *Metamorphosis* is unique in the world of scientific publishing in that it has published over the years newer information on southern African Lepidoptera than any other journal, mostly authored by private, self-funded people who simply are curious about Lepidoptera.

8. **Second marriage and family, with tributes** (Tildie, Gisela, Alex, Lionel and Neil Williams)

To quote Julie Andrews in *The Sound of Music*: Let's start at the very beginning, a very good place to start ...

Mark and I met when I was assigned by Southern Book Publishers the task of editing the manuscript of *Butterflies of Southern Africa: A Field Guide*. Naturally he threw quite a hissy fit at the thought of a "hairy back" editing his English. I, on the other hand, had never received a manuscript that needed so little editing and was impressed by the Engelsman's meticulous attention to every aspect: language, numbering and headings of figures and tables, bibliography, glossary and various lists – the latter three all in alphabetical order!

At the time we were still working with hard copy, floppies and "stiffies", and so it happened that Mark had to bring to me at my mom's house (where Gisi and I were staying at the time) a stack of paper and several floppy disks. Gisi and I were sanding a table on the front stoep when he came up the driveway in his little Honda. He got out with his proofs and floppy disks, and that's when Gisi fell in love with him, I think. She ran down the driveway, launched herself in the air and cried out: 'Vang my!' [Catch me!] The poor man dropped everything and caught the little blonde toddler in his arms. And that was it – the start of an enduring relationship of love, caring, arguments and fun.

Like any proper Afrikaans woman, my mom invited him for tea and her legendary home-baked rusks. Gisi plonked herself on his lap and continued her charm offensive. I took advantage of the occasion to ask him if all the butterflies discussed and described in his book really exist (duh!) At that stage I was familiar only with the "big orange jobs"

that got stuck in car grilles. All other flying things, apart from aeroplanes, brown moths that fell into my bath water, mozzies and birds were “goggas” as far as I was concerned. And so it happened that Mark took me to Nylsvley to prove to me that there are indeed zillions of butterflies once one learnt to *look*.

What a fascinating day that was. I remember a *Charaxes* fell into the bottle of fermented bananas. Mark fished it out, washed it under a tap and put it on my hand to dry. And then, miracle of miracles, she flew off, still a bit drunk but none the worse for the wear. On the way home we stopped for coffee at a Wimpy and got chatting about things other than butterflies. When we got back into the car to drive home (and to this day I can't believe I did it), I took off my sandals and plonked my feet on the dashboard. That impressed Mark mightily – strange man. Six weeks later he asked me to marry him, and I said yes without hesitation.

Our relationship didn't go smoothly. I was still so divorce damaged (Mark's term) that I just couldn't commit myself to a second marriage (been there, done that, got the T shirt). Mark kept believing in me, that I would heal emotionally and function like a “normal” human being. I played the run-away bride so many times that in the end (three years later) I had to ask him to marry me. This I did after a double whisky on the rocks late one evening in my mom's lounge. He agreed on condition that he would book the first appointment he could get at a magistrate's court and that we would get married, come hell or high water. No wedding dress or cake, no reception, no nothing; just the two of us, the kids, two witnesses, my mom and my aunt who lived close by. The wedding took place at 14:00 on Tuesday, 25 March 1997 at Centurion Magistrate's Office. Mark was 47, I was 40.

When we got back to my mom's place, Gisi (then seven) raced to the telephone to call her beloved nursery school teacher: “Leonie, jy sal dit nie glo nie! Pappa en Mamma is uiteindelik getroud!” [Leonie, you won't believe it! Daddy and Mommy finally got married!]

Gisi and I moved into Mark's house in Rietondale where he was living with Bronwyn and Carmen (his daughters from his first marriage) and Marc Rolfe, Bronwyn's then boyfriend. Our ages ranged from forty-seven (Mark) to seven (Gisi). For me it was a mind-blowing change and adaptation. I grew up with only one brother and suddenly I found myself in a family of six! Bronwyn, Carmen and Marc eventually moved in with June (Mark's first wife), which left Mark, Gisi and I in our “renovator's dream”, our lovely old house with pressed steel ceilings and Oregon pine floors. Oh, and huge trees – all indigenous, of course. This is where I stay to this day, albeit all by myself. Yet, I feel safe and secure in what is now my house, and I sense Mark's presence, always watching over me. I still find it difficult to refer to *my* house, *my* cat (Kittos) and *my* dog (Babsie). For 26 years it was *our* house, *our* cat and *our* dog, but all that changed when Mark passed away on 10 September 2023, now almost a year ago.

Mark and I came from totally different backgrounds. He was English, agnostic, played bass guitar in a rock band, became a veterinary pathologist and was obsessive compulsive about butterflies. I am Afrikaans, a Christian, sang in choirs, played the piano, am fanatical about opera and art exhibitions, and obsessive compulsive about knitting and reading. Yet, we were happily married for more than 26 years – a record for both of us. We accepted each other, were too lazy to have serious arguments and gave each other lots of space. We also trusted each other 100 per cent and were true home bodies. Shortly after we got married, Gisi insisted on changing her surname to Williams because she regarded Mark as her daddy. This did not go down well with her bio father's family, but eventually they accepted it. Gisi's son Alex (always Lexie to Mark) is Alexander Christopher Williams. Mark often said he could not believe that he and Lexie are not genetically related because they were so similar in their interests and attitudes.

This brings me to a very funny incident. Before Alex was born, Mark told me emphatically that he was not going to say the baby is beautiful because all newborns are ugly, and he wasn't going to lie about it. Fine, no problem. What happened? When Gisi was wheeled out of theatre with Lexie in her arms, Mark raced towards her, looked at the baby and said to me with tears in his eyes: “Oh, Sweetheart, isn't he beautiful? He's perfect!” That was Mark – macho alpha male on the outside, but as soft as a marshmallow inside.

Mark took us to beautiful places including his beloved Lekgalameetse where he wanted his ashes to be scattered or buried in Cathedral Forest, The Haven, Mariepskop, Sabie, Jacobsbaai, Namakwaland, Bateleur, Brenton-on-Sea, Knysna, Ol Jogi (Kenya), Buzzard Mountain Retreat (Soutpansberg), and Cintsa – to this day my all-time favourite place in the world. Since Gisi and Lexie moved to Hartswater, we also became acquainted with the Northern Cape. Those are the places I can recall off-hand. Of course, his butterfly paraphernalia always went along. After Mark's diagnosis of muscle dystrophy in addition to myasthenia gravis, Lexie became his butterfly chaser and catcher, which suited them both.

I mentioned Cintsa, which we discovered when Jeremy invited Mark, Gisi and I to join him, Colleen, Chris and Michelle there one December. Jeremy (Mark always called him Matey) was Mark's go-to catching buddy on day

trips and further afield to inter alia Zim, Moz, Botswana, Malawi and Zambia. I was never worried when Mark went catching with Jeremy because I knew Matey would take good care of him. That was so reassuring to me, especially towards the end of Mark's life. So, Jeremy, thank you for still taking Mark on catching trips when he was quite weak, for enriching his life in so many ways, for your enduring friendship with both Mark and I.

We were a happy little family. Oh, we had our not-so-good times like any other family, but these were far outweighed by our good times of laughter, pranks and just being together. In fact, that is what I miss most about life with Mark: all the laughter and teasing. Over the years, he had lots of nicknames, but his favourite was Buddleigh-Bonobo-Bongani-Nutella-Bumphlaph, Buddels for short, concocted by Gisi and I yonks ago.

Mark's health started deteriorating rapidly from autumn 2023. He struggled to speak, chew and swallow. Towards the end, he spent most of the time lying on our bed reading, listening to podcasts and sleeping. Kittos always snuggled up against him and he would rest his hand on her soft, furry back. In mid-May last year, Mark, I, Johan Greyling, Andy Mayer and Paul van Eden visited Lekgalameetse (our special place) for the last time. Mark was already quite weak and didn't go out much but the five of us had a good time with lovely food à la Johan, as usual. We didn't know it would be the very last time we would be together in Mark's paradise.

These are just little snippets of our life with Mark. Just thinking about it, brings tears to my eyes. He left us way too soon.

From Tildie

Death is nothing at all.
I have only slipped away to the next room.
I am I and you are you.
Whatever we were to each other,
That, we still are.
Call me by my old familiar name.
Speak to me in the easy way
which you always used.
Put no difference into your tone.
Wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow.
Laugh as we always laughed
at the little jokes we enjoyed together.
Play, smile, think of me. Pray for me.
Let my name be ever the household word
that it always was.
Let it be spoken without effect.
Without the trace of a shadow on it.
Life means all that it ever meant.
It is the same that it ever was.
There is absolute unbroken continuity.
Why should I be out of mind
because I am out of sight?
I am but waiting for you.
For an interval.
Somewhere. Very near.
Just around the corner.
All is well.

From Lexie

Liewe Oupa
Ek onthou al die dae wat ons skoenlappers en vis
gevang het. Baie dankie dat Oupa so vol liefde en
grappies was. Ek gaan Oupa so baie mis en as ek
skoenlappers vang, sal ek altyd aan Oupa dink.
Liefde van Oupa se hart-se-punt
Lexie

From Gisela

Daddy,
How do I say goodbye? My heart is shattered; I
don't know how to carry on without you. The first
time we met, it was love at first sight. I ran to you
and flung myself into your arms shouting, "Vang
my!" You had to drop your manuscript, because you
realised this little Pink Angel wasn't stopping, and
you caught me. I adored you and loved you from
that day on. We've been through so much together.
Thank you for showing me what love and
acceptance are.
Thank you for taking me into your heart and life as
your own daughter and maintaining your bond with
me.
You took me to the most beautiful places and taught
me the best and the hardest lessons in life. I don't
know how I would've turned out if you never came
into my life. You were my teacher, my confidante,
my friend and above all the best father a girl could
ask for. Thank you for always standing by me, and
for loving me unconditionally, no matter what. I
can't bring myself to believe that I'll never see your
bright blue eyes again, hear your voice or your
naughty jokes.
You equipped me to be strong, and to be the best
person I can be. One day we'll be reunited, Daddy.
I love you with all my heart, and I'll always keep
your memory alive.
Fly with the angels. You are at peace, running
around in heaven, pain free, catching butterflies,
and keeping watch over us.

Love, Gisi XXX

From Neil

MARK - *Magnus frater*
"Butterfly Whisperer"

Mark – lepidopterist supreme, wacky pathologist, son, husband, father, grandfather, uncle and, above all, older brother to his three siblings. As first born, Mark was imbued with the innate qualities to be No. 1. His mission in life was to be the best at whatever he undertook, from athletics to butterflies, veterinary pathology to table tennis, water skiing to playing bass guitar.

His role as big brother allowed his siblings the opportunity to learn from his faux pas.

He was afforded the opportunity to repeat his first year at university at Dad's expense because he spent most of his time playing with his band at sessions and gigs, relying on his memory from the few lectures he attended, instead playing table tennis in the student union at Wits. My lesson – no *jolling* at varsity!

His brotherly love was obvious from the many times he had to come to our aid when we were being battered by the neighbourhood bullies and he often ended up being severely beaten himself.

He had a rather wicked sense of humour as was evidenced by the occasion we pulled a prank on our physics lecturer in first year at Wits. The young physicist would laboriously write his entire lecture on the blackboard. Mark decided we would hide his box of chalk, leaving a single chalk stick attached to a thin piece of nylon fishing line, which was draped over the blackboard lights, extending into the auditorium, where Mark controlled the line on a reel.

After a few minutes' search for chalk, the lecturer discovered the single piece on the blackboard shelf. He made a grab for it, but it flew up out of his reach. He made several attempts to snatch the chalk, with the same result, and to the obvious amusement of the students (who had no knowledge of the prank). Eventually the chalk broke in half and the lecturer gingerly approached the pieces on the floor and

discovered the attached nylon, which he started to pull in and tried visually to follow it into the auditorium. Mark simply let the nylon spin off the reel until the lecturer got frustrated by his inability to trace its source, whereupon he snapped the nylon and proceeded to write his lecture with a half piece of chalk. We delivered the box of chalk which was also attached to nylon, and it swung in an arc from its hiding place into the lecture theatre. At this point the physicist had had enough and stormed out of the lecture theatre to the applause of the students.

Mark's love of and for nature stemmed from our "playground" – Witpoortjie (and the origin of the Limpopo River), which we were allowed to explore unchaperoned from a very early age. His insatiable thirst for knowledge and incredible ability to learn and memorise the botanical names of the fauna and flora turned him into one of Africa's leading lepidopterists.

May his emergence from chrysalis to butterfly allow him to revel in his next spiritual journey.

From Lionel

A cameo in the life of a fallen giant

I was 15 and Mark 18. Mark had just got his driver's licence when we decided to go on a weekend trip to Lekgalameetse in his rusty VW Beetle, to catch butterflies.

On the first night of camping under the stars (tents were a no-go for Mark as tents were for sissies), we were settling down to sleep for the night, when we suddenly heard the coughing of a leopard on the fringes of our camp.

We both made a hasty retreat into the Beetle where we spent a restless night, as the leopard roamed around the car for quite some time. Fortunately, it was gone in the morning.

This was Mark's world.

Rest in peace Ouboet.

9. **Formation of LepSoc Africa and Afrotropical Butterflies** (Steve Collins, Dave Edge & Jeremy Dobson)

My first contact with Mark was in 1982 when he was breeding butterflies extensively and we acquired a gynandromorph *Ch. jahlusa* that he had bred. When I first met him, my initial feeling was that this guy thinks he knows it all. He was undoubtedly a leader in South African Lepidoptera, but he could see that opportunities for butterfly study stopped at the Limpopo River in the 1980s. When it became easier for South Africans to travel into Africa after 1994, the name was changed to the Lepidopterists' Society of Africa in 1996. We were then able to hold the inaugural International Lepidoptera Conference at the African Butterfly Research Institute (ABRI) in Nairobi in 1997, followed by a second one in 1999 at Kirstenbosch in Cape Town.

Mark made a huge contribution to African Lepidoptera. Information on African Butterflies was confined largely to Seitz before the war and then to D'Abrera in 1980. *Carcasson's African Butterfly Catalogue* was launched in 1995 by the staff of the British Museum of Natural History (now Natural History Museum). Their collection was

considered the largest of African butterflies in the world. The publication was a massive tome of 800 pages, published out of CSIRO Australia. Much of this material was not available either to the general public, or to students of African butterflies. Mark had the insight, commitment and passion to turn Carcasson's Catalogue into an electronic version *Afrotropical Butterflies* (ATB) with the early editions from 2004 published on a CD. He painstakingly copied work from other publications (with permission of the authors if extant) to make this source by far the most comprehensive on any continent. Mark trolled the private and museum collections in South African to photograph specimens he needed for ATB, using novel photographic techniques that showed the specimens in their full glory.

However, there were limitations because many type specimens were unmovable and he was unable to travel overseas to photograph them at the big museums in America, UK, France, Belgium or Germany where much type material was held. Fortunately, by this time ABRI had accumulated very significant holdings and LepSoc Africa sponsored Mark to visit Nairobi to photograph the butterflies he needed to illustrate ATB. Mark was already suffering from myasthenia gravis and muscular dystrophy and had to limit his trips to Kenya to two weeks, and his time in the collections so as not to overdo it. He photographed a lot of specimens but there is still an enormous amount to do.

ATB has now become freely available to the whole world via the Open Access *Metamorphosis* and LepSoc Africa websites. It contains articles on more than 330 genera articles as downloadable PDFs, covering all 5 500 Afrotropical butterfly species and their subspecies, and is lavishly illustrated with images of set adult butterflies as well as live ones from nature including, in many instances, all life stages.

In 2023 ABRI was doing a database of certain African Geography and groups of African butterflies. The Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) were clearly not up to speed on the African butterfly classification systems and have now accepted Mark's *Afrotropical Butterflies* as the international standard to be used for butterflies worldwide. I'm sure Mark will be quietly smiling at this. Mark mellowed considerably as he got older. His contribution to the knowledge of African butterflies and his enthusiasm are legendary. He has left a large void. It will be a huge challenge to finish the illustrations for ATB and keep abreast of the numerous nomenclatural changes largely resulting from DNA analysis, which was previously not available. LepSoc Africa has assembled a team led by Jeremy Dobson and Dave Edge, assisted by Thomas Desloges, to keep Mark's legacy up to date by revising the genus articles and checklists as new taxonomic articles on African butterflies are published. The longer-term vision is to transform the data contained in ATB into a searchable database.

10. Butterfly conservation (Dave Edge)

Mark made numerous contributions to butterfly conservation, beginning with his support for establishing a butterfly reserve at Ruimsig for *Aloeides dentatis dentatis*. In 1994, he and Martin Krüger came down to Knysna early on in the Brenton Blue campaign and contributed by helping to establish the host plant for *Orachrysops niobe*. Mark was particularly knowledgeable about ant associations following his trail blazing work of establishing Lepidochrysops life histories using ant formicaria to host the larvae. He also had a knack for rediscovering "lost" butterflies such as *Lepidochrysops lotana*, *Anthene juanita* and most famously *Erikssonina edgei*!

Mark was one of the driving forces behind the Southern African Butterfly Conservation Assessments – Red List and Atlas (SABCA) and participated as "taxon author" (taxonomic expert), proofreader of early species account drafts and the final chapters. His guiding hand as one of the editors helped to perfect this very high-quality publication when it was released in 2013. He played a similar role in the Southern African Lepidoptera Conservation Assessments (SALCA) between 2014 and 2020.

Mark was also an enthusiastic participant in the COREL (Custodians of Rare and Endangered Lepidoptera) programme as custodian of several taxa (species and subspecies). In some cases, he discovered new localities and changed the conservation status of COREL taxa from CR to VU or even LC. Since 2019 Mark compiled the annual COREL report from reports submitted by the various custodians.

11. Reminiscences by Jeremy Dobson

I first met Mark in (I think) March 2000. My wife – to her eternal regret – had bought me his book *Field Guide to the Butterflies of Southern Africa* a year or two earlier. I loved the book but was a real beginner when it came to butterflies. By sheer chance I happened to see a small notice in *The Star* newspaper, advertising a butterfly and moth workshop by Mark Williams and a certain Martin Krüger – Martin, I subsequently learned, was the curator of the insect collection at the Transvaal Museum in Pretoria (now Ditsong) and an internationally recognized expert on

African lepidoptera. The event was to be held over a weekend at Nylsvley Nature Reserve near Bela-Bela and, with some misgivings, I decided to attend.

I recall feeling a bit left out on my arrival – most of the other participants were couples – but as I was sitting on a bench under a tree, a dapper, bearded man came and sat down next to me, offered his hand, and said “Hello, I’m Mark Williams”. Mark and Martin gave talks that evening: I remember Mark’s entertaining presentation about butterflies, and Martin’s informative, but slightly less entertaining talk about moths. There was a quiz (I think I came stone last) and then the two presenters asked if anyone wanted to join them in putting up a moth light-trap down by the river. I was the only one to put my hand up and was rather star-struck as I accompanied these two Lepidoptera legends on a moth expedition. I don’t remember too much about it: Martin was driving a rather battered Mercedes and regaling us about moths in his clipped German accent. At some point Mark turned around and said to me, in a stage-whisper: “Don’t mention the war ...”

I immediately knew that I liked Mark and that we would get along and I’m pleased to say, 23 years later, that my instincts were not wrong.

The following December my son and I decided to catch a few butterflies at Cints Bay in the Eastern Cape and start a collection. Mark had demonstrated how to catch and set specimens at Nylsvley. As fate would have it, the ninth butterfly I ever caught – I kept records in a database from day one – was a small, dark, angular species that I couldn’t find in Mark’s book.

On returning to Johannesburg, I bought a copy of *Pennington’s* Second Edition (a large, very expensive book and a leap of faith at that stage) and browsed through it a couple of times before I found my butterfly: the Southern Purple (*Aslauga australis*) was apparently one of the rarest butterflies in South Africa, with a mere handful of records. I decided a kitchen cupboard wasn’t the right place to keep this specimen, so I phoned Mark – I had obtained his contact details at Nylsvley. Mark sounded a bit sceptical, but we agreed to meet at Mark’s house in Pretoria and I handed over my prize: a perfect male specimen of *australis* (females are more commonly encountered I discovered). I remember Mark shaking like an excited puppy, and we discussed a possible return to Cints Bay to look for more specimens.

The following December, Mark, his wife Tildie and daughter Gisela joined Colleen and I, plus our children Chris and Michelle at Cints Bay. We had a nice time and caught a few butterflies, but no *australis*. Mark took Christopher under his wing (Chris was nine at the time) and before long these two were conversing in Latin, while I was feeling a bit left out. I learned a huge amount from Mark on that trip and made a concerted effort to acquire a few scientific names.

On my return home I joined LepSoc Africa and attended a few branch meetings at the home of the Gauteng Branch Chairman at that time, Steve Woodhall. Mark invited me and Chris on a butterfly day trip to Hartbeespoort, and the rest, as they say, is history.

Despite his more than 50 years of butterfly collecting, Mark wasn’t exceptionally well travelled, and I like to think I helped him explore many new and exciting localities. I travelled with Mark on numerous local trips, and a few longer expeditions to places like Namaqualand, the Western Cape and the Karoo. There are too many expeditions to go through but, for better or worse, these are some of the more memorable.

June 2015 – Mozambique

I flew to Mozambique with Mark on a short, ill-fated butterfly trip. My son Christopher had been working in Mozambique and had been finding some good butterflies, so we decided to join him for a long weekend. I overslept and we had a desperate dash to ORT to make our plane. Things never really improved: my butterfly net poles never made it to Mozambique, our rental car frequently got stuck in the sand, the police fined me on two occasions, we found very few butterflies, Mark nearly choked to death in a restaurant, and I seriously damaged the car on an unplanned 4X4 detour.

March 2017 – Zimbabwe

I travelled to the eastern highlands of Zimbabwe with Mark and Raimund Schutte. Mark had done loads of homework and had obtained detailed locality information from people such as Johan Greyling. The butterflies were fantastic, and Mark’s maps and directions were invaluable.

June 2017 – Uganda

Mark joined Harald Selb, Raimund Schutte and I on a trip to Uganda. Our first destination, Semulike, was rather disappointing although we found some good butterflies in the adjacent savanna and on the higher slopes of the

Ruwenzori Mountains. We met up with Rogers Muhwezi at Mpanga, which was pumping. Mark said it was the best butterfly day of his life.

April 2018 – Madagascar

I'd organised the 4th Afrotropical Lepidoptera Workshop in Madagascar, which I'm pleased to say was very successful and passed without serious incident. Unfortunately, Mark fell ill on the second day and, possibly due to his medication, wasn't himself for much of the trip.

October 2019 – Zambia and Malawi

A mixture of some great butterflies and some hectic escapades.

October 2020 – Western Cape

This one stands out as the butterflies were fantastic.

Mark had a knack of finding rare butterflies. The most notable of these was probably the Waterberg Sunset Copper (*Erikssonia edgei*), a species that had not been recorded for almost 20 years and was thought to be possibly extinct. Mark found it, in the company of his wife Tildie, at Bateleur Nature Reserve in the Waterberg on 5 March 2013.

Not far behind was his discovery of the Lotana Giant Cupid (*Lepidochrysops lotana*) in the grassland above Lekgalameetse, Limpopo Province on 20 October 2008. This butterfly was previously known from the Wolkberg, but no one had ever found the butterfly in any numbers.

Other Lekgalameetse discoveries included the Dark Three-barred Hairtail (*Anthene crawshayi juanita*) and a dark *Platylesches* species (Hopper) that I hope to describe shortly.

Mark was diagnosed with myasthenia gravis in 2011. It affected him severely, some days more than others, but I never once heard a word of complaint. He remained reasonably fit and strong until the end and was almost always available for a butterfly trip.

After more than 20 years of being "butterfly buddies" a few people have noted that we made a rather odd couple. I like to think that we had a kind of symbiotic relationship, and I can certainly say from my side that I've gained a huge amount from Mark. Not merely related to butterflies, but in the field of science (especially biology), and, on our many journeys, sport, politics, and religion!

Farewell my old friend. Life will go on, but it won't be the same – it will be quieter for a start ...

Mark is survived by his wife, Tildie, and daughters, Bronwyn, Carmen and Gisela. I'm sure you will join me in extending our condolences and support to Mark's family.

12. Reminiscences by Steve Woodhall

Where to start? I see that my words of condolence were rather brief. Years of being an author have taught me to try and condense things that have deep emotional meaning. What I said was "One of the great ones has left us. Mark taught me how to be a lepidopterist and not just a collector."

Unpacking that, my first meeting with Mark was during the "early days", in 1986, which feels like a lifetime ago. I had rekindled my childhood passion for butterflies after a difficult start to life in a new country (that's a story for another day!) and it was Rudolph Mijburgh who enticed me to my first meeting with LepSoc ... the 1986 AGM and conference was when my life changed.

I had a bit of notoriety because of the way in which LepSoc found out about me (my wife's part sounds a bit like Colleen Dobson's part in Jeremy getting "bitten"!) and there were so many august personages at that first meeting that to me were just names in *Pennington's Butterflies*. So, I was a bit apprehensive when Mark came up to me and introduced himself. I sort of expected to get reamed for being a cheeky Pom who had the audacity to appear on TV purporting to be a "specialist" on South African butterflies. I needn't have worried. Mark greeted me warmly and made a comment along the lines of "now you can get to know all your fellow sufferers"!

Later, after a LOT of beers (Allesverloren Port hadn't made it onto the LepSoc radar in 1986), Mark and I were discussing the amazing prospects ahead of me (like where to catch *Aphnaeus hutchinsonii*, a childhood bucket list butterfly). I just wanted to travel Africa in my newly acquired company car and collect everything I could. Mark fixed me with a gimlet eye (he was good at that) and asked... "So, *jong*, what are you going to do with all those

butterflies? What's your long-term plan?" Those words struck deep. I *did* become a stamp collector of note, and as Mark and I clocked up thousands of kilometres in various cars I was lent by my supportive employers, we had lots of time to talk about Life, the Universe, and Everything. And all the time there was this thing at the back of my mind. There **MUST** be more to this than just amassing thousands of pinned specimens.

One of the first things Mark got me embroiled in was my first contact with the nature conservation fraternity. We had a stand at a wildlife exhibition at Wemmer Pan, and Stephen Henning had introduced me to John Ledger of the EWT. At the same exhibition there was a certain Clive Walker, whom Mark knew. To cut a long story short, we ended up doing butterfly surveys at Lapalala Wilderness in Mark's beloved Waterberg. I still had no idea about ecology and was only interested in rearing larvae to get perfect pinned specimens. Then we were walking along a trail with some other LepSoc members and some of Clive's students. I remember asking Mark what this *Ximenia caffra* looked like, which was the host plant of one of my bucket list specials, *Iolaus pallene*. Mark glanced around him, locked onto something, casually walked over to it, and plucked something off a very nondescript-looking little bush. "This is it," he said, "and here's a final instar larva".

Well, that *was* it. I spent the next few years picking Mark's brains wherever we went, and slowly I learned about host plants, "search images", etc. When I showed interest in using my camera equipment to capture this on film (remember film?) he introduced me to John Joannou, another mentor of mine who left the scene too early.

During all of this, Mark's earlier question to me was at the back of my mind. I was too busy building a career in chemicals marketing to be able to afford to go back to school and do the degree in entomology that I felt I needed to become an expert like him or Stephen Henning. This made me rather frustrated, which Mark obviously noticed. At one point he said something like: "You obviously love these things, you're a photographer and can write, so why not just teach people how to appreciate them?". Which is sort of why I am what I am now.

During all those "middle years", we travelled widely together and with many other "fellow sufferers". During that time there were moments I will never forget. Like the time we were driving hell for leather up Vanrhynspas intending to stop at the view site, and Mark suddenly called out "There's the turn!" as I whizzed past it to our right. I slammed on anchors and tried to turn in time, but I put my souped-up Mazda 626 into the ditch, much to Mark's amusement. We had to flag down a farmer to get towed out. Mark never let me forget that.

There was the time we had arranged to sleep over in the barn at Witwater, only to discover it was full of rats and fleas. Mark just said: "Fine, it isn't raining, let's put our tent up and sleep on the ground." And we were serenaded by the loudest frog chorus either of us had ever heard! It obviously had as much of an effect on Mark as it did on me, because Tildie mentioned she'd heard the same story from him many times ... Sani Top Chalet and the way Mark's sexually crazed Rock Hyrax impersonation silenced Jokey's pub ...

All those raucous post-conference parties in Rietondale with great music and well-lubricated company ... And the way he loved pronouncing certain words. Whenever I see *Pseudolachnostylis maprounefolia* I can hear Mark rolling that "r". There are lots of stories like that, but I promised myself I'd be brief. I'll never forget the help and support Mark gave me when I was president of LepSoc Africa. Without him (not forgetting Hermann) I could not have done it. Mark was an expert at making you think about things by asking you challenging questions.

Later in my career I found myself moving to Durban and saw a lot less of my Gauteng mates. But Mark and I stayed in touch by phone and email, latterly WhatsApp. We used to have LONG telephone calls, putting the world to rights. His *Afrotropical Butterflies* encyclopaedia was crucial to the various book projects I've worked on. Some of you may be unaware that the Field Guide was originally a collaboration between Mark and me, and for reasons I won't go into here it didn't work out. The fact that we remained firm friends ever since speaks volumes about him.

Talking of *Afrotropical Butterflies*, towards Mark's untimely end we were spending a lot of time on what became the database version. We sent it to iNaturalist who adopted it, and Mark's advice was invaluable in sorting out all the discrepancies they found. Having seen how poorly curated other disciplines' databases and taxonomic compilations are by comparison, I believe that Mark's contribution with his encyclopaedia was simply colossal! He left a massive legacy that the society will have its work cut out to maintain.

As long as there are lepidopterists in Africa, he will never be forgotten.

13. Reminiscences by Hermann Staude

Rarely, often by good fortune, one meets and gets to know someone who has a profound impact on your life. Mark Williams was such a person for me. Since childhood I was passionate about butterflies, which grew into a passion for moths. For years my brother and I were doing our own thing and we had no contact with like-minded people. Then my brother started studying to become a vet at Onderstepoort where he of course met Mark and introduced me to him at work. Mark took the time out of his busy schedule to chat to this random guy who likes butterflies and twenty minutes of conversation led to my attendance of the following LepSoc conference in 1989 ... the rest is history.

From the outset I was astounded by Mark's deep understanding of any subject I broached. I would start a discussion about an aspect of Lepidoptera that I had been thinking about for a long time and he would immediately understand what I was on about and offer his ideas on the subject. It was clear that he had already thought about this and had considered various hypotheses that could explain the phenomenon. When in discussion with Mark it was all about ideas and indeed, he introduced many novel ideas to us at LepSoc conferences over the years.

It is difficult to know exactly what influence anyone has on one's psyche, but I can without hesitation say that Mark, together with Rolf Oberprieler, by instilling a scientific way of thinking in me, had such a profound influence on me that it opened up many doors in my quest for understanding Geometridae. To this day I apply these principles every day to further my curiosity about these creatures.

Before Covid we used to have regular "buttermoothing" evenings. These meetings were designed to focus on a particular aspect of Lepidopterology, let our minds wander and pretend that we were the first to ever have an in-depth discussion on the subject at hand. Mark was an avid participant and freely shared his wisdom with us. Buttermoothing evenings will never be the same without him, that is if we ever resume these meetings which stopped abruptly during Covid.

The last time I met with Mark was at André's farm just over a month before his sad passing. The conversation led to speciation and I mentioned that species generally do not have a single common ancestor and immediately he said: "Of course not. Species arise from populations and not from an individual". As usual, he totally understood what I meant, that although we use dichotomous keys depicting common ancestry of individuals as an indication of species boundaries, species only in rare exceptional cases arise from a single common ancestor. Very few people I met understand this distinction.

Mark was a totally honest person – with Mark you always knew exactly where you stood, which I appreciated so much. Whenever I bounced an idea off him or asked him to critically provide feedback on something I was working on, I knew I would get an honest answer, perhaps not the one I wanted, but always critically uplifting. He often came up with an alternative hypothesis, which stimulated my thoughts on many subjects. I am unashamed to say that I often tapped into that brilliant mind whenever the opportunity arose. Not often enough is my only regret, time is so fleeting and before you know it is over.

14. Tributes and condolences from other LepSoc Africa members

Svenja Ahlborn

That's terrible news. I am so sorry to hear it! Please tell Tildie that I am so sorry for her loss! I wish her and her family lots of strength! I was very lucky to meet Mark in person last year and was really hoping to visit again to give an update on the progress of the Lepidochrysops group. He was a unique and fun person! The many exciting stories he had to tell added to the days spent with him. He will be greatly missed! Thank you for letting me know. I wish you all the best! Stay strong and healthy!

Naseem Ahmed

My sincere condolences to Mark's family and close friends of his. May he RIP.

Jacqueline Badenhorst

It is always sad to receive news like this, please send my condolences to his family.

Malcolm Bain

Our deepest condolences to Tildie and the girls. Our hearts are sad to lose such a special person. We treasure the fond memories of the times we spent with Mark and his beloved butterflies, and also the times with Mark and Tildie. All our love and prayers during this difficult time.

Jon Baker

That's so sad. My condolences to all concerned.

Jonathan Ball

So sorry to hear about Mark's passing. We were founder members of LepSoc & got on very well over decades.

Stephen Ball

Mark was a great mentor in the veld and excellent company! Andrew, Lourens, Jan and I went to Glen Harvey today and the last time I was there, Mark was with us. I can still remember his excitement at catching *Ernsta paula* and a possible new *Spialia*. He also found some wet season forms of *Ella's Bar* that day. Today we didn't see that many species, but it was still great to be in the veld!

Sophie Barrett

I am so sorry to hear about Mark's passing. I did not know him well, but Vaughan had many happy memories involving Mark and spoke of him very fondly. Please do extend my heartfelt condolences to Mark's family. Vaughan is currently in the wilds of Namibia and so may not pick up your message for a week or so, please forgive his slow response, I know he will be deeply saddened by this loss.

Thomas Baron

Very sorry I am to hear this. Of course, I will be pleased if you pass on the condolence message to his family also on my behalf. Very, very sad news indeed.

Julian Bayliss

This is very sad news indeed – my condolences to all who knew him. A great loss.

Justin Bode

Just shows us how a decision 40 years ago had impacted all of us. Some of us were not yet born when LepSoc was founded and yet here we are, a few generations united by a common passion. A great (green) tree has fallen. RIP Proffie.

Yolande Bode

So much is lost with the passing of Proffie. We will miss him dearly, his knowledge of butterflies and plants, as well as the wonderful stories he always blessed us with. He will always have a special place in my heart!

Magda Botha

Such sad news, my sincere condolences to Tildie, Bronwyn, Carmen, Gisela and the rest of Mark's family.

Thierry Bouyer

This is truly a shock. How painful this must be for his family, all his friends and colleagues ... I join you all in extending my condolences, especially to his family, his wife Tildie, and daughters Bronwyn, Carmen and Gisela. I also have to extend condolences in the name of all entomologists and members of our society SEA.

We will miss Mark greatly. I'm sure he's now in good company and discussion at the Entomology Hall of Fame.

Bennie and André Coetzer

What a sad day and what a loss. But what a remarkable life, lived fully. Fortunately, Mark left us each with fantastic individual experiences, left us with a lot of knowledge. But very few people will have had the privilege of leaving us with a legacy that gave us the opportunity to have met kindred spirits, undertake voyages we could only dream of, learn about nature at a very deep level. My list can go on and on. Not only did he do this, he also left us with a monumental piece of work, his encyclopaedia. Mark will never be forgotten and may well have been the most remembered lepidopterist in Africa, if not wider. Tildie and

children, you have had the opportunity to share his life with him intimately and our thoughts are with you all.

Rest in Peace Mark.

Steve Collins

Thanks for this Jeremy sad indeed. Please give an email for Tildie.

Colin Congdon

Please pass on my sincere condolences. Thank you. Mark will be sorely missed. And not just for all the wonderful work he did. He was a great character. I remember when in Antananarivo the chorus of "NO!!" when he asked for ice in his drink. He was unwell even then, but bore his infirmity with courage, and was determined not to let it interfere with his work.

Alf and Neville Curle

We indeed extend our condolences and support to Mark's family from all at the CCSA. He was tower of strength and intellect and will be sorely missed in the Society.

Jurate De Prins

My goodness, what sad news!

During my first visit to SA in 2001, I vividly remember Mark when he enthusiastically spoke about the Society of Lepidopterists interested in African butterflies and moths. He drove his car and joked and we, all passengers in his car, laughed and laughed. It is so difficult to accept the fact that Mark passed away. Please extend my most sincere condolences to his family, friends, and his colleagues.

Veronica de Voogt

What terrible sad news! My condolences to Tildie, Bronwyn, Carmen, Gisela and family. May Mark RIP. My supporting thoughts for all.

Nick Dean

Thanks for your message, very sad indeed and yes please convey my condolences to the family during this very difficult time!

Thomas Desloges

After your recent emails to me about Mark's condition, I think I was well prepared for this outcome. Even still, it's terrible and I had hoped for a different one. He'll be missed.

Chris Dobson

Sad to hear dad. Thoughts are with Tildie and family.

Lourens Erasmus

Really sad to hear about Mark, his articles and Andre's videos are what made me fall in love with Lekgalameetse, which is now my favourite place in the country. He will be dearly missed.

Trust Donga

My sincere condolences.

Kevin Drummond-Hay

Sad news indeed. My sincerest condolences to Mark's family and friends. He was an outstanding Lepidopterist and will be sadly missed by the Society. Thank you for informing me of his passing.

Robert and Ginette Ducarme

Very sad news that the death of Mark Williams! We hereby ask you to convey our condolences to his family. His departure is an immeasurable loss for African entomology in general and the Lepidopterists Society of Africa. Personally, I never had the opportunity to meet Mark, a

world-renowned entomologist. However, I must be grateful for our constructive exchanges with the aim of publishing in 2018 *The butterflies of North-eastern DR Congo*. May his soul rest in peace.

Dave and Hanna Edge

Deepest condolences to you, Jeremy for the loss of your dear friend. Mark came down to Knysna many times in the 1990s and in 1994 helped to uncover the life history of the Brenton Blue along with Martin Krüger. He showed me how to rear ant-associated butterflies including the Knysna Skolly. In later years (the 2010s) we climbed many hillsides looking for rare lycaenids on the Kammanassie, Swartberg, Outeniqua and Kouga mountains. Even deep in the Knysna Forest it is sensed that a mighty tree has fallen. Go lightly once more Mark out of the forests and across the grasslands, the savannah, the Karoo, and the fynbos where you can meet your dearly departed LepSoc friends. Our heartfelt condolences to Tildie, Bronwyn, Carmen, Gisela and Lexie.

Marc Epstein

Jeremy – So sorry to hear this and my sincere condolences to the Williams family and your community.

Petrus Erasmus

Sadly, I won't be able to make it as I live in Zim. Condolences to just family. He was a great man.

Zdenek Faltynek-Fric

This is very sad news ...

Alan Gardiner

Very sad news.

Timothy Gilbert

A very sad day. RIP Mark. His fountain of knowledge will be a great loss to us all.

Hilary Grant-Currie

Oh, I am so sorry to hear this sad news. There are no words ... Thinking of his family.

Riette Griesel

Thank you for your time to send me news about Mark. This is very sad. I will always remember his visit to us here on the farm. What a special person!

Graham Henning

Thanks Jeremy, very sad news. He was close to you so please accept my condolences for your loss. Please keep me informed of where to send flowers and condolences. I have known Mark for about 58 years, we were school kids on our bikes in our mid-teens. We were both born in 1950, along with Jon Ball.

Stephen Henning

Thank you very much for letting me know about this. If you can, would you pass my condolences on to his family. Mark was a great friend and lepidopterist. I have known him since he was 16 years old! He was one of the founder members, with us, of the Lepidopterists' Society. This is sad news indeed.

Olivier Houe

My condolences to Mark's family.

Andre Kok

So sad to hear. Please pass Bets and my condolences to Tildie and the family. What a great loss for all of us.

Knud Larsen

I do not know him, but of course yes, LepSoc is a very strong society and his family should be proud of his work in this world.

Lyn Katsoulis

Such sad news. An enormous loss.

Mercia Maas

RIP Mark, I am so sad to hear this.

Silvia Kirkman

I'm so very sorry to hear of Mark's passing. It's a huge loss to LepSoc and butterfly research. He was integral to both SABCA and SALCA, and his contributions were of the greatest value. I really enjoyed having him on the team.

Julia Knowler

Thank you for sharing the very sad news. I am afraid I won't be attending his memorial service, but I would like to extend my sincere condolences to his family and friends. How fitting for the memorial to take place on the weekend of the conference; I hope this will enable many to attend the memorial.

Anton Kozlov

Thanks for the message. And sorry for my silence last months, too many family problems ... My sincere condolences to the family and all friends and colleagues of Mark. Russians are Orthodox, but in anyway I'll pray today for the soul of Mark. We have 1 God and no difference who are you, Cristian, Muslim, Islam and where you pray, the main that honest with opened heart praying. Today one person in Russia, Moscow will pray for the Mark's soul! I wish good health for you, your family and your friends.

David Lees

I am extremely saddened to hear this news. What an amazing contribution Mark made.

Michel Libert

This is very sad news. I only knew Mark through the discussions we had about his encyclopaedia, but he was a nice person, and I fully associate myself with your condolences to his wife and daughters. His death is certainly a great loss for the Lepidopterists' Society, but I'm sure his encyclopaedia will survive him for a long time.

Jacqueline Loos

I am sorry to read this, and I am sending peace and strength to you and to Mark's family.

Martin Lunderstedt

Goodbye my friend. I will always treasure driving through to Polokwane with you just 3 weeks ago. Those 6 hours just talking to you was great fun and a lot of laughter. RIP founder of LepSoc.

Koen Maes

Thank you for informing me. Please pass my condolences to his wife and children. A great loss for the entomologist society.

Akio Masui

Thank you for your sending notice. I owe him much in making my photo plates several months ago. The African part is now almost completed, please find attached. He kindly introduced me several key persons in the field of Apaturinae research, which greatly helped me. Allow me to convey my condolences from Japan, though very far, to

his family and all of African lepidopterists. How I wanted to see Williams-san and LepSoc Africa members, and to visit ABRI museum. Again, I am very grateful to him for all of his kindness, never forgotten.

Freerk Molleman

I'm sorry to hear about the passing of Mark Williams. Unfortunately, I never met him but undoubtedly a great guy for African butterflies. Condolences.

Devolent Mtui

Ooh no! Thank you for the information, Jeremy. May his Soul Rest in Eternal Peace, Amen. We will miss him. We are grateful to his great Legacy of founding LepSoc, and his effort to update the nomenclature of all butterfly genera to this day. May the universe give strength to his family – wife and daughters, to you as his right hand man, and the larger family of LepSoc during this difficult moment.

Rogers Muhwezi

I'm saddened to hear the death of Mark Williams. I still recall his encouragement words the last time I meet him Uganda (Mpanga forest) to breed more butterflies and the time we meet at the annual LepSoc meeting at Kwa-Zulu Natal. He once told me that the last trip he did to Mpanga forest was his best trip for butterflies, he will forever be missed by many lepidopterans, Rest with angels Mark.

My sincere condolences to the family members.

Ray Murphy

Of course, I join you in condolences to Mark's family and am sorry to hear of his passing.

Rick Nuttall

This is very sad news indeed – I have been keeping up with the reports on the ups and downs of his health situation on the various LepSoc WhatsApp groups. Thanks for sharing this news with me via a personal email as well. I had met Mark on a couple of occasions only, most memorably at the LepSoc Annual Conference held at Hermannsburg a few years ago. I was immediately impressed by his immense knowledge and his passion for all things LepSoc as well as his LepSoc friends. Wishing you, all LepSoc members and Mark's family and friends every strength and heartfelt condolences during this sad time.

Rolf and Beate Oberprieler

Thanks for the notification, Jeremy. Indeed, a sad day for all lepidopterists in southern Africa. I had some really good times with Mark in the 1980s, when we went on epic moth-hunting trips together. I don't really know Tildie (may have met her once at a LepSoc BBQ) or Mark's daughters, but please pass on my condolences to them from us (and from afar). It was a privilege to have known him and counted him as a friend!

John Pillans

Thank you for the sad news!! I only knew Mark in the "early" days, when I was actively collecting with Alf Curle so not up to speed with the latter years.

Jan Praet

Andy, Stephen, Lourens and I were at Hillshaven today when we heard the news. We walked some of the trails where we walked with Mark before, very sad, the world has lost an amazing man. R.I.P. Mark, strength to the family and friends. The reality is that without Mark, all of

us would probably not have witnessed this beauty today, would not even have met each other! What a legacy!

Ernest Pringle

This is indeed shocking news, and a real blow to both LepSoc and the Brenton Blue Trust. Please convey my heartfelt condolences and sympathy to the family when you see them, which I am sure you will. In his own way, he was a giant among us.

Fanie Rautenbach

Very sorry to hear about Mark. It is a big loss. I have used his Afrotropical butterfly files extensively to help with the IDs on LepiMap. If there is anything I can do to keep his work going then I will be the first one to put my hand up.

Ian Richardson

Thanks for sending me the news of Mark's death, very sad. I only met him once back in the mid-80s when the society arranged a day out at one of the nature reserves near Johannesburg. I remember him as an impressive character both in stature and for his deep voice. His work on the ATB is truly outstanding and he will be missed by Lepidopterists throughout Africa for his work.

Szabolcs Safian

Dear Jeremy, I am deeply saddened about Mark's tragic passing. He was one of the leading forces of Lepidoptery on "our" continent and we are really only a few left, who dedicated full life to butterflies. I have a huge respect for Mark, as his investment in the Encyclopaedia is and will remain invaluable and besides, he offered help to me many times when writing a paper or when I had taxonomic doubts. I really liked his humour and his energy in the field. Last time in Free State together this January when we had the chance to see many lifers for me. He might be away, but his work will remain a cornerstone or even a milestone of butterfly nomenclature and a ruler for many in the newer generations. Who will ever have such a dedication anymore in this hasty world? Jeremy, please forward my condolences to Tildie and the ladies. Mark will stay close to us and now even closer to Torben. I am sure they will have many discussions about African butterflies and sometimes maybe even about us. With the very best wishes from Luanda.

Wouter Schreuders

Yes, it's indeed a sad day to have Prof pass. But then he lived a full life, and his illness was short. I'll always remember him, just as he was and for the many things he meant to me and to many others. He was a remarkable man. Thanks for letting me know.

Stefan Schroeder

This is very, very sad news, and I am sorry to hear this! I was in loose contact with Mark for many years (even though we have never met personally) and it is very hard to learn that one of our great Entomologists is no longer with us.

Harald Selb

That is so sad to hear this, it's a real shock to hear this. I am saddened about this. Please send my condolences to his family.

Hermann Staude

Soo sad to hear this. Please pass our condolences. What a loss! We will sorely miss you, Mark.

Richard and Cherry Stephen

A loss to all and to the world of Lepidoptera. My condolences and sympathies to the Williams family.

Warwick Tarboton

I'm sure Mark's passing has left a big hole in your life and we do offer our condolences. In our brief relationship with him he always came across as someone with a generous heart and a huge empathy for people, animals, everything.

John Tennent

I think many of us have reached an age where people we've known for a long time, even grew up with, are passing away, for a wide variety of reasons. As you know, I didn't know Mark, but please do pass on my condolences. I see that he leaves behind three daughters as well as his wife; at least they will draw comfort from each other. Thank you for letting me know.

Teodor van Wyk

I am very, sorry to hear about his passing.

Richard Vane-Wright

Very sad news indeed. A terrible loss. Please do, if the opportunity arises, pass on my deepest condolences to his family.

Peter Ward

He will be missed and remembered. RIP Proffie.

Laurie Webb

Oh Jeremy, just heard about Mark. He was such a beautiful person. I am sure he is going to leave a big hole. Please extend my condolences to his family and friends.

Paul Waring

So sorry to hear this.

Ian Waters

Yes, indeed this is very sad news, and I extend my sympathies to his entire family. It is a great loss to the Lepidoptera community.

John Wilson

I am SO SORRY. A GREAT loss. I offer my DEEPEST sympathy to his wife and daughters for their VERY, VERY sad loss of their dear husband and father. May his good soul now rest in peace.

Rolf Woltge

This is very sad news. My sincere condolences to his family and friends. May he rest in peace with our Lord.

Steve Woodhall

One of the great ones has left us. Mark taught me how to be a lepidopterist and not just a collector.

15. PUBLICATIONS – VETERINARY SCIENCE

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- 30 Articles
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63 Articles and 334 Genus accounts – prodigious!

