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Desert Rose – *Acraea trimeni* and other fireproof butterflies

Steve Woodhall
132 7th Avenue, Edenvale

One of the really heartwarming things about working on a book is all the wonderful help I've had from fellow lepidopterists. I am trying to get this magnum opus as comprehensive as possible with a minimum of kebab shots (dead things on pins). Owen Garvie very kindly offered to take me down to Witsand to look for the special butterflies that fly there. As it turned out, this was on the long weekend of the 16th of December. A bit late for the fabled *Anthene lindae*, we thought, but we should hit *Acraea trimeni* on the button. Good rains had fallen, so we were optimistic...

Woolworths' profits must have shown a blip on that Friday evening as Wendy Garvie and I are devotees of their goodies. She kept Owen and I fed with glorious beef and salad sarmies all the way to Witsand. Owen's Toyota Diesel Double Cab Hilux might not have Brutus' [Woodhalls' Landrover] raw power but she doesn't have the raw thirst either, and she eats the miles just as greedily. I am ashamed to say I snored most of the miles away. Excitement, and the third SA-Pakistan cricket match, had stopped me getting enough sleep.

As we went past Kuruman and approached Olifantshoek, we saw that the veld was very green and started to get optimistic. Occasionally we would see a puddle swarming with pierids and little blues, but we were strong – no ornamental collecting on this trip, we were *focussed!* But, as we got on the road to Witsand the scene got drier and drier, although there were lots of big puddles in the road the rains had obviously only fallen very recently. Eventually we got to the reserve where we met Vaughan Jessnitz and his mother Jeannine. Like the Kyles at Kosi Bay, they live in Swiss Family Robinson style with paradise all around them. Beautiful Arab horses are Jeannine's lawnmowers, and they have a Labrador, Timber, who is almost as good a cadger as the Pringles' dogs.

With Vaughan as guide we set off for the gullies in the Langberg that harbour *A. trimeni*. First problem was no keys to the gate to the farm (this is outside the reserve). Vaughan is nauseatingly young and fit, and he hopped over the gate and jogged off in search of someone with keys. Owen and I mooched around looking for butterflies. The odd *Crudaria leroma* put in an appearance, and I found lots of *Oraidium barberae* chasing each other around a little flowering bush. I remembered the book needed a wings open shot, and after a lot of messing

around on hands and knees I got one. I *must* buy myself a set of kneepads.

After not too long a wait Vaughan reappeared with a farm-hand who showed us we had been looking under the wrong rock for the key. We drove towards the desiccated Langberg. As we got there we could see that the farmer had decided to graze his goats in the gully we wanted to search. It did *not* look good. The occasional *Colotis lais* would put in an appearance and there were plenty of *Belenois aurota* about, but not much else. The camel thorns and *Grewia flava* weren't flowering so we didn't bother looking for *Anthene lindae*, and we concentrated on the moisture that was seeping out of the rocks in the gully. In the end we parked off on some big scenic rocks overlooking the sand dunes and sat there chatting, then set off down the side of the hill hoping we would find an *Adenia* to search for larvae of *Acraea trimeni*. But no dice.

Eventually Vaughan and I worked our way back down into the gully; I had put my camera back in its bag and was unprepared for the sudden sight of a large bright-orange *Acraea* floating in front of me. Vaughan's sharp eyes had spotted it first. It was a nice male and he sat on a dead twig and slowly opened his wings. I cursed my premature bagging of the Nikon and for a second or two considered extracting it whilst praying the butterfly would stay put. I then remembered past debacles with *Acraea* photography, and bagged him. Inevitably the wait-a-bit tree he was sitting on grabbed my net and I just threw myself on top of a bundle of thorns, net and undergrowth. An orange shape floated past me and I cursed, but Vaughan's net swung and he announced he had a female. To my everlasting joy the male was still inside the net! Both specimens were kept alive and later starred in another thrilling episode in the ongoing saga, the fridge, the butterfly and the cut flowers (well, cut buffalo thorn if you want to be picky).

Our steps lightened by the success, we marched back to the Toyota where Owen was sitting in the shade. Never has lukewarm Woolworths soda water tasted so good. He was delighted at our success and as we drove back to the house a holiday atmosphere prevailed. It was SO hot. We flattened several G'n'T's in quick order and proceeded to park off for the rest of the day. Jeannine produced some crayfish – crayfish!! In the middle of the desert! And a very nice crayfish cocktail they made before the braai. The stars were incredibly bright despite the full moon, so Wendy set up her big Meade telescope and we indulged in a bit of stargazing. Life is hell in Africa...

Despite a bottle of port getting a bit of a seeing-to, we were up and doing first thing in the morning. We decided to stooze around the flowering *Ziziphus* and *Acacia karroo* near the house, in the hope that an *Acraea trimeni* would put in an appearance. One or two did but they were tatty. I got a very nice series of shots of *Cigaritis phanes* on the *Ziziphus* flowers, and spied a tiny lycaenid circling the top of a high *Acacia karroo*. I gave Vaughan my extension net whilst I went indoors to get my bug box with its pill bottles, and emerged to find he had caught it – a male

Anthene lindae! He was duly photographed, so the weekend was a total success. More *lindae* were circling high in another, introduced, *Acacia* in the garden, but they proved elusive.

Later in the morning we decided to look at some more gullies further north in the Langberg. This area was also dry but had not suffered the depredations of goats, so we were hopeful. We split up after Owen and I had seen one male *A. trimeni* sailing along the bottom of the hillside. Eventually I found one, like yesterday's, sitting on a dead twig. Unlike the descriptions I had had of their behaviour, they were not hilltopping but patrolling the base of the hillside, frequenting clearings between large *Ziziphus* trees. They would sit for long periods on the end of dead twigs, wings closed – like the description of *Cooksonia neavei* in Zimbabwe. Approached by a Nikon-bearing Woodhall they would first of all open their wings – making the Woodhall's heart sing – then take off just as they were in the frame. Teeth gnashing I eventually decided to bank on last night's studio shots and actually catch these darned things. Eventually I got three more males, before it was time to rendezvous back at the car.

The problem with lepidopterising in 42°C heat and a steady breeze, is that the breeze cools you down and it's actually quite pleasant until you realise how dehydrated you are. We got back to the house and it was only after the sixth ice cold Bavaria I glugged down that I was rehydrated... that's my story and I'm sticking to it.

This was Saturday night and time for Witsand Nature Reserve's Christmas party. Someone unknown to the laaities was required to dress up as Santa Claus and distribute presents. Owen and I were candidates and after an audition by Wendy and Jessnitz *Mère et Fils* it was decided that I had the correct build for the part... the costume was infernally hot but I was kept well plied with Spook and Diesels which cooled me down. If any of the kids saw me drinking, well there's nothing anything incongruous about jolly Santa sucking on a Coke, is there? I had to put this bit in to pre-empt the inevitable pictures of Woodhall dressed as Santa that will end up on the Lepsoc website!

Later that evening, we went to the Roaring Sands and sat in the moonlight absorbing a nightcap and scoffing Woolies chocolates whilst the Out of Africa music played on the Toyota's CD. I have always associated this music with Kenya but after this idyllic experience, I will remember Witsand...

Next morning we set off early for Kimberly where we hoped to get a hat-trick for the book and photograph *Lepidochrysops letsea*. We went to the area that used to be used by De Beers to weather Kimberlite from the big hole. Sadly the butterfly wasn't flying but it was a weird feeling to think I could step on one of the still-remaining lumps of rotten yellow ground and find a diamond...

We finished up near Windsorton where the cherry on top was a beautiful female *Colotis lais*, who obliged by giving me a glorious wings open shot. What a great end to a successful weekend!

My thanks to Owen and Wendy for taking me to Witsand and the Jessnizes for their hospitality. Our thoughts and prayers are for Vaughan's father Reinhardt whose illness has kept him away from home and I was sadly unable to meet him.

Field trips to Mpaphuli and Gundani (Limpopo Province, Thohoyandou area) 20–22 and 27–29 March 2004

Jeremy Dobson and Steve Woodhall

The forests at Mpaphuli and Gundani have yielded a few surprises in recent times and with this in mind Lepsoc Gauteng planned a visit for the weekend of 27th March. Peter Ward arranged an advance party for the preceding weekend of 20th March in order to take advantage of the long weekend: his wife Alison; J.P. Niehaus and his son Matthew; my son Christopher and I joined him.

Peter, Alison, J.P. and Matthew left early on Saturday – Christopher had to attend a school function on Saturday morning, so I departed in the afternoon accompanied by Alison's father, Arthur, who was a late addition, tempted by reports of large bass in the lake at our base camp. The accommodation (Oppidam Lakeside Lodge – about 50 km east of Louis Trichardt) was excellent: Three spacious and well-equipped four-bedroom units on the banks of a large dam. The dam is (allegedly) full of fish, although Arthur drew a blank, despite his best efforts.

Peter and J.P. had spent Saturday at Gundani, with moderate success. Looking at J.P.'s specimens I noticed a yellow hesperiid that I did not recognize: Pennington's revealed it to be *Acada biseriatus*, a Zimbabwean species, but one we later found out has been previously recorded from the area.

Pierre Le Roux, his wife Joy and Sven, a friend of theirs, joined us that evening for a braai. Pierre has compiled a list of butterfly species from the Soutpansberg and a further list of species that have been recorded from the area, but not seen for many years. I will try and get these lists onto the website shortly.

Sunday dawned – grey and wet! (according to the owner of Oppidam, the Louis Trichardt area has experienced over 700mm of rain in the last 3 weeks). Being optimistic lepidopterists, however, J.P., Matthew, Chris and myself headed for Gundani and the slightly lighter shades of grey to the north and east (Peter and Alison had decided to spend the day at Mpaphuli). To our delight the weather cleared rapidly and by the time we reached Gundani (about an hour from Oppidam) it was perfect!

There were plenty of butterflies at Gundani, but not much of note: *Coenyropsis natalii* were abundant in the forest margins and several *Papilio*'s were flying, including *P. ophidicephalus*, *P. dardanus*, *Graphium morania*, *G. angolanus* and *G. leonidas*. I found a few *Acada biseriatus* near the river and saw

a *Coeliades* that looked sufficiently like *C. anchises* for me to wade across the river with my boots on! (true to form, the butterfly disappeared as I drew near, never to return). Very few charaxes were on the wing – the traps yielded nothing but *C. zoolina*, *C. candiope* and *C. varanes*. Chris and I climbed a hill within the forest and saw a few *C. achaemenes* and what looked like *C. ethalion*. There was cellphone reception on the hill and I received the following SMS from Peter: “MPAPHULI HOPPING!” It was too late to visit Mpaphuli, but we decided to go up a small hill near the Gundani turn-off. Here we found *Deodorix diocles*, plus a few high-velocity UFO’s several of which remained unidentified. Chris caught a few *Platylesches* species, which included *P. moritili* and *P. robustus*. A surprising sighting (and you are going to have to take my word for this as I did not manage to catch the butterfly!) was a solitary *Dira swanepoeli*, which arrived at the hill at about 15h00, circled a tree and floated slowly down the hill-side over thick bush, making pursuit impossible. From the hilltop I could not see any typical *Dira* habitat, however, the spot is over 80 km from the known *Dira swanepoeli* localities at Louis Trichardt and I believe a colony must exist somewhere in the Gundani area.

Peter meanwhile had had a successful day at Mpaphuli, where he had caught numerous butterflies, including several *Charaxes etesipe tavetensis*, a gravid female specimen of which was later deposited with Pierre.

Monday – and wall to wall blue sky! Peter wanted a quiet day and an early return to Johannesburg: J.P., Matthew, Chris and myself headed for Mpaphuli. Lots of butterflies were on the wing, including some golden female forms of *Pseudacraea lucretia* but no *etesipe*! I was not carrying a net (relying on Chris to do the dirty work) and sure enough, I saw the first two *etesipe* of the day, although I could not get close enough to get good photographs. Eventually, however, both Chris and J.P. managed to net nice specimens although not one *etesipe* came to the traps. There were several other charaxes about, including *C. achaemenes*, *C. cithaeron*, *C. ethalion*, *C. varanes* and *C. candiope*.

As we were leaving, Chris casually mentioned that he had caught a *Fresna nyassae* and showed me a perfect male (sorry Steve, no photographs!). Judging by the condition of this specimen I suspect that there is a local population, although we found no further material.

We left, a little later than intended, but happy after a thoroughly enjoyable outing.

The Heavy Mob moved in on the evening of the 26th, Owen Garvie (well he’s not that heavy), Graham Henning (heavy reputation), Dave McDermott and I (Steve Woodhall) (enuff said). Experimentation was in the air – Owen had some doggie pooh in his bakkie, for use as *Charaxes* bait. Heaven only knows what he feeds the poor pooch. Its fragrance filled the night air as we unpacked. As usual sufficient food and drink for an army had been packed, and despite our resolution to get an early start the next morning, we were up betimes talking and getting ourselves in the mood – we’d all been working too hard and desperately needed this break.

Even though we had foolishly broached a midnight bottle of Allesverloren Port we were in mid-season form the next morning. We even phoned Pierre le Roux before breakfast and arranged to pick him up. After one of McD's feasts – his savoury scrambled eggs are a speciality of these, Graham commented he'd make someone a great wife – we got our early start and were at Gundani by 08h30. Feverish hanging of traps followed, I went up the koppie where I had seen a suspicious female *Charaxes* last year and festooned the place. A few *Acada biseriatus* were about at this early hour and I soon found them to be difficult photographic subjects. An *Acada* would wait patiently on a rock or flower, wings akimbo, waiting for me to commit to knees and left hand on ground. As soon as I had assumed the position, and it was a sharpening blur in the viewfinder, it would hop off three or four feet away. Too far to crawl on the horrible hard rocks, so back on my feet and creep slowly forward, only for the same thing to happen again. After four or five rounds of this sport, it would tire of me and disappear.

Even when I did get close enough for an 'insurance' shot, it would immediately take fright the moment the flash went off, so I wasn't sure I had got a shot. I had to admit defeat and bung a pair into vials for the fridge trick. As it turned out, I did get a couple of shots...

Graham soon found they were as difficult to catch as to photograph, so we had fun watching him. He got some, though, so his trip was a success. Later, he got the only *Charaxes guderiana* of the weekend, so his cup of happiness was full. I had been hoping to get my first real South African "first", having last year shared the first *C. guderiana* with Peter Ward when he netted one whilst I had one in the trap (anyway the honour was really Dave McDermott's as he saw the first one).

Sadly, the hoped-for *Mimacraea marshalli* and *Charaxes manica* never turned up, but Gundani is a strange place and no-one really knows what's going to turn up next. I love it, it's the only place left in SA where I can get that keyed-up, 'I could catch anything in the next half hour' feeling. This is an expensive feeling, I normally have to go somewhere like Kenya to get it these days.

All four of us got something we wanted, there were lots of butterflies about including *Andronymus neander* and *Anthene liodes*, which Graham caught and I spent a long time looking for another specimen. Owen's doggie pooh attracted *Charaxes*, and the rotten prawns he had sneaked along worked well with the *Papilio*s on the mud. The weather was partly cloudy, great for photography, so I got some really good stuff on film including *Eicochrysops hippocrates*, wings open, something I haven't been lucky enough to get before.

All that climbing up and down the hill to check the traps eventually did for me, so the superb shower at Oppidam was particularly welcome. Then the

le Rouxs came around for a braai and good cheer was felt by all, the port got a pasting and a few too many beers got sunk. The sky was clear and the Milky Way twinkling as we hit the sack. Mpaphuli in the morning, and it had been 'hopping' the week before! There were a few cruel remarks about my snoring and ability to fall asleep and start snoring before anyone else starts, which were mere indications of jealousy.

Well, we should have known better – Sunday dawned damp and cloudy, and as we drove to Mpaphuli the situation didn't improve much – for the collecting. I had a mild case of port poisoning. Joy, Pierre's wife, came along to look for larvae and they don't need sun. But I've come to realize that warm, cloudy days when the temperature is above 26°C are great for photography. Especially when there is a bit of intermittent sun, and you can see a butterfly get up and fly only to settle fairly soon, allowing me to sneak up on it and take advantage of its dopiness to get a close up. Even better when the sun breaks out for a few minutes whilst one is in the frame – it opens its wings to warm itself up and bingo!

I had real fun near a huge patch of that pernicious weed *Lantana camara*, which is such a boon to photographers. Despite the weak sun, the butterflies were really hopping. Dozens of *Papilio nireus*, *P. dardanus*, *P. constantinus*, and the rarer *P. ophidicephalus entabeni*. Hundreds, literally, of *Amauris ochlea*. We found males of these swarming around some wilting plants, sucking alkaloids. I got a photo, fulfilling a long held wish. Later, I found *Lachnocnema durbani* sucking at aphids, another photo I had waited a long time to take. It was only a matter of time before something special turned up. Occasionally a skipper would put in an appearance. A mint female *Platylesches neba* opened her wings obligingly, filling another hole in *Butterflies of South Africa*.

And then a little brown thing flitted down onto a *Lantana* blossom... that reddish hindwing underside with black spots, well remembered from years ago in Zululand. *Fresna nyassae*, and I with a camera in my hand. There is a line you cross to being photographer first, collector second, when the net gets left propped against a tree and the chase begins. The first shot, in frame and in focus, insurance so you've actually got an image. Moving closer, another shot. Then a little closer and off it flits to another flower. Get a bit closer, another shot and the flash mesmerises it. Then really close, filling the frame more, as you get closer looking for the money shot – all butterfly, not much background. It flies off again, you leave the lens on maximum extension and you get another, then off it goes. By this time you could be up to your chest in mud and not notice, or the acacia thorn digging itself 2 cm into your knee is a mere bagatelle, all that matters is the SHOT!

A shout of pure joy rent the tropical air – what a joy to be alive, feeling triumph. The *Fresna* had gone, I didn't care. It took a while to sink in that I really

needed that butterfly for the collection. An hour or so later and another dark skipper turned up. I grabbed the net, thinking the *Fresna* had returned. I soon dropped it as I saw it was *Coeliades libeon*. Not a single specimen in the Woodhall Collection, but in went the camera again, only this time it wasn't to be. I had it in the frame and was about to press the 'tit' when it flew a few inches onto another flower behind a tree trunk. My move to get it back in focus scared it off. Would have been better to have caught it and bottled it, dammit. It never returned.

Later that afternoon I had a couple more typical *Fresna* moments. A small form lands on a leaf or flower close to you and it registers on your retina that there's a *Fresna*. The signal goes down the synapses from eyeball to brain, but in the nanosecond it takes for signal to travel from brain to hand holding net, poof, it's gone! I don't think Graham wanted to believe me – he has doubted my sightings before – but this time I had the evidence on celluloid.

Not that Graham was unhappy. He got an *Andronymus neander*, and some nice female *P. dardanus*. Owen had a great time with the traps, with fresh *Charaxes etesipe*, *la spécialité de la Mpaphuli*, as entrée. His 'vrot' prawns on the mud were attracting these as well as dozens of papilios. I got some *C. ethalion* female form *swynnertoni*, unfortunately losing tails getting them out of my traps. Dave was likewise successful, and *Fresna* doesn't faze him, he'd caught loads in Rhodesia as a boy. Joy found lots of larvae as well as female butterflies for breeding. So off we went tired but happy, to have a shower and a braai before drinks with Pierre and Joy. Owen produced a bottle of Life from Stone, the finesse Sauvignon Blanc there is. Then someone nominated gin and tonic as the drink of the evening, a mistake as it turned out because I could NOT keep my eyes open as we looked at the le Rouxs' collection and captured our data on Lepibase.

One of Dave's clients had arranged something for him that necessitated his rushing off early Monday back to Joburg, muttering darkly. True to his luck, this ushered in a glorious clear sunny morning. Off we went back to Mpaphuli for another shot at the *Fresna* and his pals.

When we got there it was already warm and jumping. Owen went off to hang traps and Graham and I lurked balefully by the lantana patch. I obviously baled a little bit better because along came another *nyassae*, this time no messing about with the camera, into the bag he went. Not long after, along came another, but he did the usual vanishing trick. Despite much waiting and tramping around not another did we see. The *Coeliades libeon* also failed to show, but at least Graham got a *Platylesches robustus*. Getting bored with all the common butterflies strutting their stuff around us, we decided it was time to go.

Owen had been super successful with the traps again and very kindly gave me a couple of *C. ethalion* female form *swynnertoni*. He was off geologising the next day - oh the joys of retirement! But Graham and I had to be back at the

saltmines the next day so off we drove. Getting an early start meant we were back home in time for a good rest.

Many thanks to Pierre and Owen for arranging the accommodation and the hospitality. All records have been captured on Lepibase and will aid Pierre in his survey of the Soutpansberg area.

International Conference for Butterfly Exhibitors and Suppliers, 1–6 November 2003, Montegrotto Terme, Italy

Esther van der Westhuizen

Butterfly World Tropical Garden, Route 44, Klapmuts, 7625, Western Cape, South Africa.

(This article first appeared in *International Flutterings*, Quarterly Newsletter of the International Association of Butterfly Exhibitors (IABE), Vol 3, No. 1. January – March 2004)

I am sitting in a quaint restaurant in Venice. On my left a lady from a German display house is conversing in Spanish with an American supplier based in Costa Rica. On my right a supplier from Malaysia is translating the Cantonese comments of a Chinese gentleman from the Kunming display park. On the opposite of my table a Hungarian professor talks to a Canadian supplier and on the other end a South African is debating the outcome of the rugby world cup with a New Zealander living in the UK. Confusing? Not at all! On this fourth day of the sixth International Conference of Butterfly Suppliers and Exhibitors all the delegates are trying to squeeze in every bit of conversation they can. Even my husband, an engineer with no ties to my butterfly park, declared: “ICBES is so much fun I’ll not miss another one ever!”

Back at home people ask me: “What do you talk about at these conferences?” Well, I can assure you that we do not hang around having fun all the time, we do actually sit down and discuss topics that benefit the industry and we debate solutions to potential problems. For example, last year a world wide crisis arose from the fact that pupae are not transported in containers conforming to IATA’s animal transport regulations. IATA’s officials saw pupae not as dormant animals and demanded, for instance, air holes and changes in container design. As a result some courier companies decided to ban transport of pupae, to keep their noses clean with IATA. At ICBES this predicament was explained by Dr. Wayne Wehling of the USA’s Department of Agriculture, as well as the attempts made by himself, IABE Board Member Mark Deering and IABE Executive Director Dr. Michael Weissmann, in solving this problem. As we are all involved and may be influenced negatively by this, the delegates were on the edge of their chairs while Wayne was going through the history of this problem.

The person on whose shoulders the effort fell to bring this group of people together is Dr. Enzo Moretto, from the Butterfly Arc display house in Montegrotto Terme, Italy. Montegrotto Terme is close to the Italian city Padova, in turn about 40 km from Venice. The Terme in the town’s name refers to hot springs and together

with neighbouring Abano Terme these two towns boast an insane 200 hotels, each with their own heated hot springs pool. Enzo and his wife Gabriella were the perfect hosts, and managed to get a fantastic diversity of people together.

ICBES 2003 delegates included:

Mike Sikorski, Tina Dombrowski, Duke & Martha Wheeler, Dr. Wayne Wehling, Dan Dunwoody (USA); David Clermond (Canada); Ewout Erik (Surinam); Gerlinde Blaese, Connie Bernhardt, Prof. Michael Boppre, Dr. Klaus & Astrid Werner Wenzel (Germany); Lydia Reuter (Luxemborg); BT Chin (Malaysia); Dr. Victor Wu (China); Beatrice & Martin Beuche (France); Tim Jenkins, John Calvert (UK); Joris Brinkerhoff, John Frazzini (Costa Rica); Ekkehardt Wolff (Austria); Prof. Lazlo Varjas (Hungary); Washington Ayiamba, Maria Fungomeli (Kenya); Jacob Olander (Ecuador); Esther van der Westhuizen (South Africa); Dr. Enzo Moretto, Gabriella Tamino, Ettore Barbagallo, Enore Picco, Susanna Caruso (Italy).

Apologies if I missed someone! So you see, delegates from 16 countries and five continents make an excellent representation of our industry and dear reader, please do not miss the next ICBES if you can help it!

Joris Brinkerhoff from Costa Rica Entomological Supplies gave the first formal presentation on Environmental Education. They have the unique approach in that each visitor gets a two hour long tour of the farm and the display centre where the guides discuss, amongst other things, the history and production of the farm.

Dan Dunwoody, or Butterfly Dan, is a butterfly breeder from Kissimmee, Florida and also held the post of the President of the IABE until the end of 2003. With only a few hands on his farm, he developed a marvelous way of maximising larval food plant growth – through hydroponics. The rest of us just sat there thinking up grand ideas on how to change our food plant production to Dan's streamlined system!

Prof. Michael Boppre's talk on "Sex, Drugs and Butterflies!" was probably the most insightful – the way butterflies utilize certain chemicals of plants for the formation of sex hormones made some of us think: hey! I've seen a danaid behave like that! Michael urged the delegates to be more aware of processes like these, which should be incorporated in the educational side of butterfly parks, making the lives of nectar-sucking butterflies a little more interesting.

I gave a talk on how we approach education here at the Butterfly World Tropical Garden in South Africa and the presentation would have been a blast if I had been more technologically advanced and put the slides onto a CD disk. It is amazing how fast old-fashioned technological tools deteriorate – in my case two slide projectors gave up the ghost and I had to admit John Calvert of Stratford-upon-Avon Butterfly Farm was right: “Maybe I should not tell you this, Esther, but never ever use a slide projector in a presentation!” Yeah, John.

Giacomo Menini, working on his University thesis at Butterfly Arc, coordinated by Dr. Enzo Moretta, presented a paper on pupae quality, diseases and transportation. His revolutionary method of storing pupae in cone-shaped net cages had the rest of us gaping. While there is merit in this method I think most of us are way too old-fashioned to try this!

Dr. Wayne Wehling of the USDA expanded on this topic by collating and interpreting world-wide data for farm-raised butterflies. Some of the most interesting statistics that came out of his talk were that the average emergence rate of butterflies seems to be 79% in full-time butterfly display parks in the USA. Only 225 species were imported into the USA during 2003, with the top ten species being: *Morpho peleides* (of course), *Parthenos sylvia*, *Dryas julia*, *Heliconius charitonius*, *Idea leuconoe*, *Hypolimnas bolina*, *Papilio polytes*, *Heliconius hecale*, *Heliconius melpomene* and *Heliconius erato*. Interesting! *Hypolimnas bolina* was the butterfly clocking the most escapes, and parasitism claimed between 1% and 2% of pupae.

Dr Enzo Moretto, as exhibits’ consultant, gave an intricate lecture in the environmental control of the Bordano Butterfly Park, stressing that butterflies need light intensities measuring 300-500 lux, relative humidity greater than 65% and temperatures ranging between 22 and 28°C, depending on the amount of daylight.

Washington Ayiamba, who found the cold Italian weather freezing, explained the Kipepeo Project in Kenya to us. Coming from the tropical forests near Mombasa, Washington and Maria nearly did not make it to Italy. When their plane ascended from Nairobi airport, they struck a flock of maribou storks that nearly made the plane come down too fast. They managed to return to the airport and had to wait another day before they could lift off again for Italy. The Arabuko- Sokoke forest on the coast of Kenya is under severe pressure of over development and the Kipepeo (means butterfly in Swahili) Project enables the people living in the forest to earn money in other ways (pupae production) rather than burning down large swathes for crops or pastures. What an inspiring story!

On a different note, Prof. Laslo Varjas gave us a very interesting talk on the effects of thermoperiods on the development of spring and summer morphs of *Polygonia c-album*, the comma butterfly. In a series of what I can only call elegant experiments the photoperiods and thermoperiods were tweaked in different directions until it was clear that the internal clock of this insect’s brain perceived light changes as well as thermal signals – i.e. early evening coldness is critical in producing autumn morphs.

With the formal presentations over we had almost two days to discuss a series of topics in group context. Topics included: Transport problems, packaging methods, EU coordination relating to regulations, plant diseases, crowd control, industry unification and IABE, longevity of butterflies (or extending the lives of captive butterflies), pest control, climate control, future ICBES, research needs, pupae hanging methods.

These discussions, formal and not so formal when undertaken after hours, were immensely important. Different perspectives, perceptions and viewpoints were made available to all and while we all have a common purpose and that is to make our businesses work, we find that each of us have a different way of going about it. Sometimes a solution to an old problem will rear its head unexpectedly and sometimes a fact you took for granted amazes another exhibitor who will be eternally grateful for your input. This then is, in essence, the value of ICBES meetings, in that personal dialogue and the communal knowledge of thirty delegates from sixteen countries can never be replaced by any electronic or other communications.

So, what about the fun we had? By this time, dear reader, you should imagine that even the formal informative part of the conference was fun and the “informal” parts such as the visits to the Butterfly Arc and Bordano butterfly parks were even more so. The demands in running a tropical display park in Europe are strange to someone from sunny South Africa and how the Italians have managed to overcome these obstacles is amazing.

Each evening Enzo, Gabriella and their team presented a themed dinner at the hotel, all very typically Italian. One evening we were treated to lyrical Italian music, the next being of classical Italian cuisine. The inimitable Memo Vasoin de Posperi of Padova (President of the local club of Friends of the Earth and supporter of ICBES), made sure that we understood the history of the region, the food, the wine, the cheese and all the culture we could absorb. You have never seen such a jealous bunch of delegates when Memo produced an exquisite 17th century Italian masterpiece of a still life – a bowl of fruit and a graceful red admiral, painted to perfection, caught in a delicate sunbeam.

One of the more memorable events was the day-trip to Venice. Venice is everything you thought it would be – weird and wonderful at the same time. To share this with your old and new friends made at ICBES made it even more special.

Although the butterfly industry has its roots in Europe, and there are many exhibits today in Europe, there has traditionally been very little information exchange and collaboration between them. The ICBES meeting was an important step toward increased communication among European exhibits. When the time came to say good bye, some important decisions had been made – a European mini-

ICBES has been proposed for 2004 for cementing the industry on the Continent together, and at least four new IABE members joined. The industry can only grow and protect itself when more members join, from increasingly diverse regions and a wider spectrum of displays and suppliers.

See you all at the next ICBES!

Lepidoptera of Bird Island, Seychelles

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This article provides a brief overview of the Lepidoptera collected on Bird Island (3°43'S; 55°13'E), Seychelles, between 21 March 2003 and 26 March 2003. This low-lying coral island, situated on the rim of the Seychelles bank is the northernmost Seychelles island (Braithwaite 1984). J. Lawrence identified all butterflies. Moth species were sent to J. Gerlach for identification. The distribution of each species within Seychelles is listed. The following eight species were collected on Bird Island:

1. *Uthetheisa pulchelloïdes* Hampson (Family: Arctiidae). A widespread species in Seychelles. On Bird Island it was abundant around *Tournefortia argentea* L.f. (Family: Boraginaceae) trees. It has been recorded on Mahé, Aride, Coëtivy, Poivre, Darros, Saint-Joseph, Desroches, Aigle, La Digue and Silhouette (Fletcher 1910, Fryer 1912, Legrand 1965, Gerlach *et al.* 1997, Aride Research Group 1999). This species was previously recorded on Bird Island by Fryer (1912).
2. *Crambus auronivellus* Fryer (Family: Cramidae). This endemic species has also been recorded on the islands of Mahé and Silhouette (Fryer 1912, Legrand 1965, Gerlach *et al.* 1997).
3. *Ethmia nigroapicella* Saalmüller (Family: Ethmiidae). This ethmiid has previously been recorded on the islands of Denis, Coëtivy, Mahé, Cosmoledo and Aldabra (Meyrick 1911, Legrand 1965).
4. *Chloroclystis mokensis* Prout (Family: Geometridae). Also recorded on Mahé by Legrand (1965).
5. *Zizeeria knysna* (Trimen) (Family: Lycaenidae). A very common and widespread species, being recorded on the islands of Mahé, Praslin, Silhouette, Denis, Farquahar, Desroches, Aride, North, Cousine, Aigle, Saint-Anne and Aldabra (Fletcher 1910, Fryer 1912, Legrand 1965, Gerlach *et al.* 1997, Aride Research Group 1999, Bourquin *et al.* 2000, Gerlach *et al.* 2001). This species was previously collected from Bird Island by Fryer (1912).
6. *Leptotes pirithous* (L.) (Family: Lycaenidae). Another common and widespread species, being recorded on the islands of Mahé, Aride, Cousin,

Aigle, Saint-Anne, Praslin, Aldabra and Cosmoledo (Fletcher 1910, Fryer 1912, Legrand 1965, Aride Research Group 1999, Hill *et al.* 2003).

7. *Hypolimnias misippus* (L.) (Family: Nymphalidae). A widespread species recorded on the islands of Mahé, Saint-Anne, Silhouette, North, Praslin, Aride, Aldabra, Cosmoledo, Coëtivy, Desroches, Cousin and Cousine (Holland 1896, Fletcher 1910, Fryer 1912, Legrand 1965, Gerlach *et al.* 1997, Aride Research Group 1999, Bourquin *et al.* 2000, Lawrence 2000).
8. *Platyptilia legrandi* Bigot (Pterophoridae). Recorded on Mahé and Coëtivy by Bigot (1962).

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‘Going bananas’ in the twilight at Port St Johns

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Despite upgrading and tarring of the final stretch of road between Lusikisiki and Port St Johns, the long trip to this jewel of the Eastern Cape coast seems no quicker and it was nine hours before Owen Garvie and I were finally able to swing a net in the forest after leaving Johannesburg at 03h30 on Saturday 24 April 2004.

Our flagging spirits and road-deadened senses were revived about 15 km out by the magnificent view down the Umzimvubu River to the Port St Johns Heads that the new road from Lusikisiki presents to weary travellers.

On arrival we headed up Mount Thesinger to explore the track through the forest that ends up at the top near the airstrip. Not much to report from this initial venture – a few *Paralethe dendrophilus albina*, *Cymothoe coranus*, *Hyalites cerasa cerasa*, *Colotis erone* and *Sarangesa motozi*. Visits to the top to look for *Abantis bicolor* proved – yes, you guessed it – fruitless!

At 15h00, with the forest cooling off, we decided to head for the Outspan Inn and introduce ourselves as we wished to hang traps there the next morning in the hopes of obtaining various *Charaxes* species such as *pondoensis*, *xiphares thyestes* and *karkloof*.

This done, we headed off on the main road inland to search for *Gnophodes betsimina diversa*. Having been briefed by Lepsoc members from the previous Society outing that the best time to find this striking, elusive and aptly named Yellow Banded Evening Brown was late afternoon going on sundown, we arrived at the home of the affable Rod Hastier, whose banana plantations have a resident population, at 16h00.

You’re too early, Rod told us. The best time to catch this beautiful brown in his experience was when the chickens head into the hock to roost. “You’ll see them come out of the plantation and flash around as it gets dark. That’s the time to swing into action!”

Owen and I were unconvinced and Rod invited us to have an “early go” anyway. We entered the plantation. They were there all right but very wary and alert, flying quite considerable distances before settling again. It was almost impossible to follow their flight and they were very difficult to catch in the confined spaces. After two hours of sweaty effort – it’s at least three degrees warmer under the bananas -- I had one perfect male and Owen had fared better with three.

We duly gathered at the edge of the plantation as the chickens headed into the hock for the night and Rod joined us, very kindly dispensing much appreciated glasses of beer. Sure enough, we saw several *betsiminas* come out of the plantation and sport around in the almost-dark gloom, the bands of their forewings being most visible. It was almost eerie, seeing dark shapes bobbing round punctuated by flashes of yellow from the forewings. There were bats about too, and it is quite probable that they are '*betsimina* predators'.

On the way to Umtata that evening where we were lodging with my sister and her family, Owen and I had a long discussion about *betsimina*. We decided that the next day (Sunday) we should 'audit' every banana plantation we could see and also try entering the plantations first thing in the morning when the browns should be a bit dozy and weary from the previous evenings activities and therefore easier to follow and catch. Well that was the theory anyway. But it did work quite well ... they were less inclined to fly and we both added to our catch.

We must have explored a dozen separate banana plantations on both sides of the river. Every one contained at least two specimens, some many more. The micro-habitat under the bananas is well suited to *betsimina* – the grasses upon which they breed grow at the edges of the plantations, the banana leaf litter provides advantageous hiding places with the excellent camouflage of their underside pattern, the micro-climate is warmer and more humid and sunlight is largely excluded – just perfect for the butterfly.

My previous experience with *betsimina* was confined to the Witchwood Valley and Rusitu in eastern Zimbabwe and, many years ago, the huge forest at Amatongas in Mozambique. In all of those places I rarely encountered more than one or two in any single spot. They had to be flushed from the forest floor or dark depressions on the edge of the forest. How well the Port St Johns population has adapted to a human-introduced habitat!

The remainder of our visit was reasonably successful and we at least captured *pondoensis*, a first for both of us with Owen being lucky enough to take two females and two males – he maintains it comes down to the bait recipe, particularly a very generous lacing with brown sweet sherry. I was very happy with two forms of *Nepheronia argia varia* females, and good series of *dendrophilus* and *coranus*, both which were plentiful.

A memorable experience was also my first sighting (no capture, unfortunately) of a huge female *Pseudacraea boisduvalli trimenii* form *colvillei* which floated majestically above me in the Mt Thesinger forest and landed out of net reach but clearly visible. What was really striking about it was the very dark, almost black forewing apex with a very clearly defined thick white band.

Grateful thanks are due to: John Costello and his hospitable staff at the Outspan Inn; Manny Milner, the LepSoc member based at Port St Johns, who provided us with information, directions and the odd cold beer well dispensed from her new "Dry Dock" bar next to the Outspan Inn (good luck and may it never run dry); and all of the friendly, stress-free inhabitants of the area who so happily gave

us permission to explore their banana plantations. We'll be back for more sooner rather than later.

The end of an excuse

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It has been a quiet winter this year. Most of my time has been spent tying up all the loose ends for the field guide. This is now in the final stretch, Struik is busy with the typesetting and scanning, and we have to have everything together and proofread by November if we are to publish as planned next February.

When I look back now, had we published the guide when we first planned to, four years ago, it would not have done our butterflies justice. Now, the photographic collection is much more complete. I've been able to replace shots taken years ago that I wasn't happy about, with better ones taken with more experience under my belt and better equipment.

Every season I've had a magnificent excuse to go out into the bush, not knowing if this would be the last season for photography before publication. I have had the pleasure of many companions during this time, and a lot of help from my fellow lepidopterists. Butterfly photography on one's own can be difficult – as well as the safety aspect of going far afield on one's own, it's nice to have company. Also, as collecting was not the main object, I was able to revisit many places I had gone to with a net years ago, but now with a camera and companions who may be new to the area, happy to be shown where the insects fly.

These unsuspecting lambs to the slaughter got roped in as ghillies and assistants – the cry “DON'T KILL IT!!!” must be familiar to many by now. I was very grateful to those who watched me at work, keeping an eye on the quarry as I tried to get a photo. Frequently they were called upon to watch the insect as it flew away; and then to act as pointer dogs... all my attention being on the viewfinder, I could never see where it went. This is where companions really came in useful. It wasn't always a bed of roses... a certain *Antanartia hippomene* springs to mind...

It is a lot more difficult to creep up close enough to a sitting butterfly and get a really good photograph than it is to swing a net. My *modus operandi* is to get in close enough for a shot with the insect still fairly small in the frame. This gives me an “insurance” shot that would still be usable by the publisher, but no good for slide shows or exhibition. At the same time, the flash firing would often cause the butterfly to freeze – what I came to call the “Hiroshima” effect. With apologies to any Japanese readers, this is named after the apocryphal last words of the mayor of Hiroshima – “what the **** was that?” Whilst the butterfly is still wondering what happened I could get in close for the “money” shot – wings wide akimbo, sitting still.

The intention was for the book to have as many live photographs as possible. I had a list of butterflies that I had decided would have to be “kebab” shots. Some of these are species famously unwilling to sit with wings open; others have distinguishing marks that can only be seen on a set specimen, such as *Hypolycaena lochmophila*. But many were simply too rare, or I had never been able to get a shot. This is when I discovered that the San might have been onto something when they painted game animals on cave walls as an inducement to the spirits to produce the real thing when out hunting.

More than once, I have photographed something set and on a subsequent safari have managed to get a shot of just that butterfly. The list is too long to give here, but only in May this year, I went to Graham Henning’s place to photograph *Coeliades libeon* and *Borbo holtzii*, both species I had given up on getting live shots of in time for publication. Hey presto, two weeks later there we are in Zululand for the annual June 16th party (sorry – collecting trip). What should turn up but just those two butterflies? I had once taken it to the extreme and gone to see Simon van Noort at the SA Museum. I photographed *Deloneura immaculata* just before going to the Bashee River area, but the medicine doesn’t seem to be THAT good.

Here’s another strange one. Mark Williams was good enough to go through the book’s text looking for taxonomic solecisms. One thing he pointed out was that I had missed Michel Libert’s paper on *Lachnocnema* that put another butterfly on the SA list – *Lachnocnema regularis*. Soon after this we all went to Mpaphuli, where Graham Henning watched Woolly Legs playing around an aphid-infested plant. There seemed to be two different species. We knew that female *Lachnocnema bibulus* had two colour morphs, both of which were present, but what about the males? There were two kinds of these too – the usual one with dull brown underside and rounded wings – and a bigger one with pointed forewings and a prominent dark line crossing the underside hindwing discal area. We suspected we were looking at *L. regularis* flying with *L. bibulus*. Needless to say, the mystery male proved impossible to photograph...

When we got home, I looked at my series of *L. bibulus*. I found that I’d had the two different males in my collection all the time and hadn’t realized it. Graham’s curiosity obviously was piqued. Having Libert’s paper to hand, he found that the big ones definitely were not *L. regularis*, as they were too small, too angular, and the underside markings were wrong. He suspected they were *Lachnocnema laches*, and phoned me. Did we have another *Lachnocnema* new to SA? I hot footed it to Mark’s, and asked him what he thought. Libert’s paper is in French, and Mark was of the opinion that there may have been a mistake but wasn’t sure. The map in the paper clearly showed symbols showing South African records for *L. laches*, but the text seemed to omit saying it actually occurred here.

With this, I shot over to Graham's with my series of *Lachnocnema*. Poring over specimens from all over Africa, I read Libert's paper with my English schoolboy French and we came to the tentative conclusion that it *does* say in the text that it is found here, but only by inference. From the photographs and specimens from further north, we deduced that it definitely DOES fly here – and the female we had always thought was the pied morph of *L. bibulus* is in fact *L. laches*. (Later, Steve Collins confirmed that he has reared specimens of *L. laches* from pupae found near Mkuze). I had no live shot of a male *L. laches*.

As it was only a month or so after our last visit, I quickly got together with Owen Garvie and the next weekend, off we went again to Mpaphuli. We hoped that the *Lachnocnemas* would still be there, but in case they weren't, Pierre le Roux reassured us that there were plenty on his farm. Also, finding I didn't have a live shot of the yellow hindwing female morph of *Nepheronia thalassina sinalata* (and my males weren't too hot either) I had just photographed dead ones...

We arrived at Mpaphuli to find it pullulating with *Nepheronia thalassina sinalata*. Great live shots were taken of both sexes, both female forms. The San theory was working again. Also present were *Papilio dardanus* females. I was able to photograph some morphs missing from the book, such as form *sylvicola*. I also saw, but could not get near, a female form *leighi*. Alf Curle, who was also there, had seen one of these and missed it too. But the aphids had gone from the plants and with them the *Lachnocnemas*...

The next day saw us hunting around Arbor Farm. Never thought I would end up anxiously looking for a Woolly Legs of all things. Pierre had advised us to get an early start, as they get on the wing as early as 08h00. We snooped around and finally found a female *L. bibulus*, which was duly photographed as my original shot was not so good. This disheartened me a bit because it was *L. laches* we were after. Eventually we found a male *L. laches* turboing (Andy Mayer's very descriptive term for the frenzied whirling of small male lycaenids deserves publishing!) around a *Macadamia* tree. No chance of a photo, into a film can he went for the fridge trick. A nice male *Anthene otacilia* sunning himself on the grass provided yet another photo upgrade. Then we found some trees with dozens of male *Lachnocnema* busy turboing. We set ourselves to get some specimens. Most were *L. laches*, but Pierre got a male *L. bibulus* in a *Coup Cockburn* with a male *L. laches*, showing they were flying together.

We then found a sunny corner that must go down in folklore as Woolly Legs Piccadilly Circus. Dozens of *L. laches*, chasing each other and the occasional *L. bibulus*. To my joy, they were settling in photo range – and sunning themselves! So not only did I get a live shot of the distinctive underside, but some very nice upperside shots as well. We didn't see a male *L. bibulus* with wings open, but you can't have everything.

This was a nice day's butterflying because Pierre then went on to show us his son Bertie's *Myrina dermaptera* ranch. This is a fig tree, whose bole he keeps stuffing with dead leaves, bark, etc., and retrieving regular supplies of pupae from these. Owen and I both came away with trophies. Mine have just emerged, very different to KZN specimens – larger with much more, paler blue. Is the rumour that these are in fact *M. d. nyassae* correct? Also, Owen was happy to find some larvae of *Deudorix diocles* in *Bauhinia galpinii* seed pods. I was glad he found something worthwhile after all the chasing after Woolly Legs!

There were plenty of skippers about, but no *Borbo borbonica* – the only one of the genus still to foil my attempts at photography, flashgun malfunctions having spoiled two attempts so far. And here lies the reason for this article's title. Bet you thought it referred to the end of book photography as an excuse to go on safari, didn't you? Well it is, partly, but -

Pierre asked Owen why he didn't collect skippers. Owen gave the usual reasons – including the fact that they are so difficult to set. I said I didn't consider that an excuse since I found out about cutting the wing muscles. Pierre said that was outdated – didn't I know about papain? As a fruit farmer he *would* know about this. Papain is a proteolytic enzyme found naturally in paw paws. It's been known as a meat tenderizer for years. Just mash some up and inject, he said – makes them soft as a freshly killed *Lepidochrysops*.

So I caught a couple of skippers. Then I bought a paw paw and cut some up, mashed it in a mortar and pestle. After straining it through a kitchen sieve, I used an ordinary hypodermic to inject it into the thoracic cavity. Just enough to make the wings come open a bit – I overdid it with one and burst the abdomen. After an hour, there they were – soft and easily set, no cutting or wrestling with hindwing muscles needed.

That's the end of the excuse for all those who don't collect skippers! It even works with skippers that have been papered dry for a couple of years, and with *Charaxes*, another thing I always battle to set. In fact it's a help with any muscular species. If they've been dry a long time it's a good idea to give them 48 hours in the relaxing box first, then inject with paw paw juice – put them back in the box, leave them for a day or so, then set them.

2003 Photographic Competition and beyond

By Steve Woodhall, 132 7th Avenue, Edenvale

I thought it might be a good idea to put something in *Metamorphosis* about the photographic competition. It has undergone quite a few changes and I'd like to clear up some of the confusion.

Originally the competition only had one trophy, donated by John Joannou. The express intention was to encourage lepidopterists to consider the camera as valid a collecting tool as their nets! Some form of recognition of excellence was required and this provided it. The initial form of judging was via a panel of experts and three places were awarded, first being 'Slide of the Year'. We were lucky in the early days to have some sponsorship in the form of film prizes from Agfa. Unfortunately they had an economy drive and we no longer get this. Recently generous individuals have stepped into the breach but we cannot rely forever on people willing to do this - so if anyone has contacts in the photographic game please let me know. Trouble is, as you will see later film might no longer be a suitable prize ...

Because some of the judges (ahem ahem) wanted to compete, we flirted with non-lepidopterist expert photographers as judges. The problem with this was, sure they were able to tell a well-composed shot from a bad one, but they weren't sufficiently knowledgeable about butterflies to pick the shots all our members liked. So there was a lot of criticism came our way.

When the Curle Trophy for Best Scientific Shot was donated, this scuppered the use of outside judges. It takes a lepidopterist to see the difference between a great shot of a rare, nervous species taken *au naturel*, and a posed shot of a tame, or common-or-garden one.

My love of computers led me to stick my chin out and propose peer judging. Surely with Microsoft Excel and a laptop we could get everyone in the audience to score and use stats to work out the winner? And so we did, no one had to recuse himself or herself to be judges and we had a democratic system. BUT, the judging took a long time, and because I had volunteered to do the stats I always missed the start of the Braai – a real tragedy. Also if I ever won anything there were some dark mutterings about the scoring. This could not carry on.

Last year we decided to do it differently. We closed entries on the Saturday. A team of judges were prevailed upon to arrive early on Sunday morning and the photographers amongst them recused themselves. We allowed digital pix to be entered. We ended up with a short list and presented these as the last show on Sunday. We had a simple show of hands to decide first, second and third places in each category. These were the results:

Fun Category, No entries; Scientific Category, Third Place: *Pentila pauli* group by Alan Gardiner, Second Place: *Alaena unimaculata* mating pair by Alan Gardiner; Winner:

Robber fly with moth by Keith Roos. Slide of the Year, Second Place tie: *Spindasis ella* by André Coetzer and *Catacroptera cloathe* by Keith Roos; Winner: *Capys disjunctus* by Jeremy Dobson. Well done to both winners, Keith is a well known past winner of both trophies and Jeremy, a first time winner, was also the first winner with a digital photograph. Everyone seemed happy with the result and it looks as though we now have a winning formula.

So we don't have any confusion at the next conference, these are the rules for the photographic competition: Three categories:

Fun (general pictures not of lepidoptera in particular but related to them - could be landscapes of habitats, foodplants or candid shots of lepidopterists.

Scientific - must be obviously natural, unposed shots of any life stage of lepidoptera, well exposed and composed but this takes second place to rarity, obvious difficulty or exceptional depictions of behaviour.

Slide of the Year - Live pictures of any life stage of lepidoptera, priority given to well exposed, well composed pictures, rarity or behavioural nature also important but less so. Only three pictures will be allowed per competitor per category. You must select your own best pictures, the judges don't have time!

Species must be African unless, as with this year, it is an International Conference, in which case all continents' lepidoptera are eligible.

Prints are not allowed.

Transparencies must be spotted at the top right corner of the frame when correctly aligned for projection. Name of photographer, slide title and category must be clearly marked on the slide frame.

Digital pictures must be sized to fit a Microsoft PowerPoint slide at 100% enlargement on screen; allowances will be made for cropping. Resolution is up to the photographer but each entry must be on a PC format CD-ROM, with each file properly titled (not just the bare filename given by the camera!). Each group of up to three entries must be saved in a separate folder marked 'Fun', 'Scientific' or 'Slide of Year'. The CD-ROM must be marked with the name of the photographer. To help the judges, for each file open the file/properties box and put your name on the summary tab as author.

Some final comments. A few entrants have expressed concern about the facilities used to project the slides. We accepted that using the Kodak Carousel projectors at Onderstepoort can result in a 35mm slide being enlarged too much beyond its capabilities - so we used a projector nearer the screen. This gave better results but some slides were still too dark. Underexposing deliberately to get colour saturation in slides for publication is one thing, but it doesn't help for projection purposes.

Also, overexposure of digitals is problematic. A shot that looks like a nice, high key, low contrast image on a laptop screen often looks washed out on a computer projector. Try and get your images projected digitally before deciding on your entries.

Be careful of backgrounds. Flash can cause the background to black out, which often looks unnatural. Digitals give much more exposure latitude with good depth of field, but the result is often a messy and untidy jumble of in-focus leaves. Backgrounds should not detract from or compete with the subject. They should be well exposed but out of focus - and even then a large out of focus highlight can detract from the subject.

Don't be afraid to crop your pictures - there is no rule that says they have to be 1½: 1 oblongs. Rather crop out any distracting objects, and avoid 'bullseye' shots with the subject bang in the centre of the frame - unless this is a vital element of the composition. Make sure the subject fills the frame but does not overwhelm it.

We have always had a last minute scramble to get entries for the photographic competition. This time we will do it better, so please all you photographers old and new - get your cameras out and give us a really impressive turnout at the next conference!

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Manuscripts not conforming to the instructions below may be returned to the author. All manuscripts of scientific papers will be evaluated by at least one reviewer. Proofs will be returned to the author if necessary and only printers' errors may be corrected. Ten (10) offprints are provided free to the author or senior author on request and only if the manuscript has been submitted on computer diskette in a word processing format that the editors are able to convert. Authors should contact the editor to enquire if the software that they are using can be converted by the editor, as the situation changes constantly. Additional offprint numbers can be ordered, at cost, at the proof stage.

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Figures must be boldly drawn in black waterproof ink, and arranged in clear and logical plates on stiff white, preferably A4-sized board. All the figures must be numbered in a common sequence in Arabic numerals, irrespective of whether they are line drawings, photographs, diagrams, graphs or maps. Magnifications should be indicated by scale bars on the figures.

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