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## EDITORIAL PAGES

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## EDITORIAL

Volume 34 of *Metamorphosis* published less articles and pages (12/142) than Volume 33 (16/168). All these articles were published on our Open Access website [www.metamorphosis.org.za](http://www.metamorphosis.org.za). The Table of Contents appears as usual on the back cover of the printed version.

### Editorial staff

We have been most fortunate to welcome a very capable new member to our editorial team – Andy Noss of the University of Florida. He is taking has already taken on a lot of the routine (but very important) functions – the devil is in the detail in publishing. This has freed me to concentrate on more strategic issues, such as finding an Editor-in-Chief to take us forward. The person who will be leading the team from January 2024 is Dr. Jonathan Colville, an extremely well educated and experienced entomologist with whom several of our members in the Cape have already worked on biodiversity surveys, the BED project and taxonomic work. He already is quite familiar with the journal from the several years he has served on our Editorial Board.

### Printed version

We expect to have Volume 34 ready for printing before the end of January.

### African Journals Online (AJOL)

AJOL are now regularly publishing *Metamorphosis* articles on their website, as an additional source for particularly African scientists. This includes archives back to Volume 30.

### Afrotropical Butterflies

Following the untimely death in August of the founder of the society, Mark Williams, we have been investigating how his monumental project “Afrotropical Butterflies (ATB)” can be continued. This has become a very valuable resource for all researchers and taxonomists working on the butterflies of Africa, which make up over 15% of the world’s butterflies. The main products of ATB are over 360 genus articles which describe all the species and sub species in each genus, and a checklist of all the taxa occurring in the Afrotropical region. A team of taxonomic experts is being assembled to keep these products up to date in a data base format.

### Indexing

Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ): Preliminary investigations have shown that *Metamorphosis* is able to satisfy all the requirements for DOAJ, and we should apply to join them.

Web of Science: Initially we should apply to join their ESCI (Emerging Sources Citation Index), which will give us more international exposure and the possibility of obtaining an Impact Factor.

### Gratitude

We extend grateful acknowledgement to our team of peer reviewers, who have again given of their precious time and expertise to improve and perfect manuscripts. *Metamorphosis* would not exist but for the efforts of our authors, who have again supplied a steady volume of high-quality manuscripts, covering all aspects of the study of lepidopterology, for which we are deeply appreciative.

Finally, I would like to wish all those who have an interest in *Metamorphosis* a prosperous, productive and joyous 2024, and encourage you to send in your contributions for publication to our new Editor-in-Chief at [jonathan.colville@gmail.com](mailto:jonathan.colville@gmail.com).

It has been an honour and a privilege to have served as your Editor for the past 12 years and I wish my successor every inspiration and success in taking *Metamorphosis* forward.

With kind regards



Dave Edge  
[orachrysops@gmail.com](mailto:orachrysops@gmail.com)

31<sup>st</sup> December 2023

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## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

2023 marks forty years since the inception of The Lepidopterists' Society of Africa, or LepSoc Africa (LSA). I believe we should be very proud of the accomplishments, in the fields of Lepidoptera conservation, research, and publication, made by our Society over this period.

We had intended to celebrate our “middle age” at our annual Conference on 16 September. Unfortunately, Mark Williams, the founder of LepSoc Africa passed away four days earlier, which put a dampener on proceedings. As well as being a friend of mine, Mark made huge contributions to our Society over the years, and his presence is sorely missed.

Another influential LepSoc Africa member passed away in 2024: Ian Richardson, author of the *Neptis* revision (*Metamorphosis* Volume 30 Part 2) and the driving force behind the “Practical Guide to Butterflies and Moths in Southern Africa” succumbed to cancer in December. Ian was a member of the *Aloeides* project panel, and was a regular source of information to me, with his knowledge of barcoding and phylogenetics.

While LSA experienced another busy year, our membership – for the first time in several years – declined. One reason for this may be a lack of activity at branch level. During the Covid period it was impossible to plan with any certainty, and I think this mindset has continued. LSA Council will focus on promoting branch activities during 2024.

The objectives and status regarding our core business is summarised below:

### Publications

#### Metamorphosis

*Metamorphosis* Volume 33 (2022) has been published and may be viewed via the LepSoc Africa or *Metamorphosis* websites. Hard copies are on sale for R225. Those of you requiring a copy, please contact Dave Edge or myself.

Volume 34 (2023) is almost complete, and contains several important papers, including major taxonomic revisions of the *Acraeini* and *Charaxini* tribes.

Jonathan Colville is taking over the *Metamorphosis* editor's role from Dave Edge, who has been the Editor for 13 years. Andrew Noss has been appointed as Copy Editor. Sponsorship is urgently required to maintain our Scientific journal in its current format; we require about R10 000 per month.

#### Afrotropical Butterflies

*Afrotropical Butterflies* (ATB) is an incredibly useful and comprehensive butterfly-resource, freely available to LepSoc Africa members via our websites ([metamorphosis.org.za](http://metamorphosis.org.za) or [lepsocafrika.org](http://lepsocafrika.org)).

A taxonomic database, derived from ATB, has recently been set up. Butterfly lists, generated from this database, are now being used by the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), iNaturalist and LepSoc Africa's own record-database, LepiBase. Updated African and South African lists are included as links in each bimonthly edition of *African Butterfly News*, from where they may be downloaded. News regarding taxonomic revisions affecting African butterflies is included in the newsletter. We have commenced with a “Country” field in the ATB database; once this has been completed it will be possible to generate butterfly-checklists for any African country at the press of a button.

A cell phone application, based on ATB, was being produced by Mark Williams and myself. With Mark's passing, the App has stalled, but I'm hopeful that I will find a willing partner to help me finalise the first module at least.

#### English Names for African Butterflies

A dedicated team is systematically working towards our overall objective, which is a comprehensive, rational, and unified list of English names for all African butterflies (species and subspecies). We are about two years away from completing this goal, one that has never been achieved within any biogeographical region, including Europe.

There is a misconception that the project is primarily a re-naming exercise. It is not: more than 70% of all African butterfly taxa did not have English names prior to commencement of the project, and of the old names, many were lazy repetitions of the scientific name.

### Research

#### CRG

The Caterpillar Rearing Group (CRG), managed by Hermann Staude, is a major LSA research project. The number of caterpillar-rearing records obtained to date by Hermann and his team continues to grow.

A new book, based largely on the CRG work, has been published. *Southern African Moths and their Caterpillars*, by Hermann Staude, Mike Picker and Charles Griffiths is an essential reference and is reviewed elsewhere in this journal.

### Aloeides Project

The *Aloeides* Project has received several barcodes that were sequenced via Dr Pasi Sihvonen on behalf of LSA. We have analysed the information and have, I believe, made considerable advances in our understanding of this large and difficult genus. As could be expected, there are still many unresolved questions, and we are considering a further program of multi nuclear-gene analysis.

Our overall objective is to produce a detailed phylogenetic arrangement, revise existing *Aloeides* taxonomy (as appropriate) and produce detailed distribution maps, images, and identification cues.

### Thestor Project

A similar undertaking to *Aloeides* commenced in January 2022. The *Thestor* Project has accessed all available barcodes from BOLD and GENBANK and, with the help of Dr Sihvonen, has sequenced several additional samples submitted by LSA members. We have made solid progress with this project and have a realistic expectation of acquiring all necessary DNA samples during the coming South African season.

Like *Aloeides* however, this will be a never-to-be-completed project; further barcoding will continue to uncover new, cryptic species and will shed further light on *Thestor* phylogenetic relationships and distributions.

### Spialia Project

A further phylogenetic project commenced last year with the hesperiid genus *Spialia* (which was subsequently split into *Spialia*, *Ernsta* and *Agyllia*). We are trying to establish the overall similarity of various *Spialia* (and related genera) and at the same time, look out for new species. We will focus primarily on Southern African taxa.

LSA's Johan Greyling is to sponsor the cost of sequencing a plate of 95 samples. We hope to include representatives of other genera, such as *Gegenes* and *Platylesches*.

### Lepidochrysops

Marianne Espeland, a LepSoc Africa member and Curator of Lepidoptera at the Leibniz Institute, Germany, is undertaking research on *Lepidochrysops*. An initial paper titled *Rapid radiation of ant parasitic butterflies during the Miocene aridification of Africa* was published recently, and further taxonomic papers are planned.

### Gabon Lepidoptera Workshop

A Lepidoptera Workshop, originally planned for November 2020 had to be postponed due to the Covid pandemic. We rescheduled the workshop for February 2024, although this date also had to be postponed to May, due to a military coup in the country.

Unfortunately, my contact in Gabon has informed me that the situation in the country has still not stabilised, so regrettably I must inform you that the Gabon Lepidoptera Workshop has been cancelled.

We are investigating other alternatives, such as Guinea and Mozambique and will revert shortly.

## **Interaction among our members**

### African Butterfly News

Our bimonthly newsletter, *African Butterfly News*, celebrated its seventh birthday in July this year. The newsletter endeavours to keep our members up to date with all matters related to African lepidoptera: taxonomic revisions, trip reports and photographs, new scientific papers, and progress reports regarding the various LSA projects.

### Branch activities

There has been a dearth of LSA Branch activities recently. While this was unavoidable during Covid restrictions, we urgently need to reinstate local branch meetings and field trips.

## **Conservation**

### COREL

COREL (Custodians of Rare and Endangered Lepidoptera) is LepSoc Africa's flagship conservation project. COREL produced its annual report, which was ratified by the Brenton Blue Trust at a meeting on 25 July. The BBT provides funding to the COREL project, although much of the cost of ongoing monitoring of rare and endangered South African butterflies is borne, voluntarily, by LSA members.

Annual reports are compiled by the various COREL custodians, which are in turn published in a unified document: Graham Henning has taken over this role from Mark Williams and will be managing COREL on behalf of LepSoc Africa. A major development during the 2022–2023 season was the rediscovery of Swartland Silver-spotted Copper (*Trimenia wallengrenii wallengrenii*), which was previously listed as Critically Endangered, Possibly Extinct.

Another interesting development is the proposed establishment of the Wolkberg Zulu Butterfly Reserve, which is being managed by Etienne Terblanche. The type-locality of the critically endangered *Alaena margaritacea* is being earmarked for a conservation servitude. The beneficiaries of the servitude will be LepSoc Africa (LSA), the Brenton Blue Trust (BBT), and the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT).

### Butterfly Monitoring of National Botanical Gardens

We have now completed three and a half “seasons” of butterfly-monitoring of our National Botanical Gardens (the annual reporting period extends from 01 July to 30 June) and have acquired over 3 500 records. The overall objective of the monitoring project is to establish trends in butterfly abundance in South Africa. Habitat within the gardens is relatively controlled and the various surveys are fairly regular and consistent; if there is an ongoing decline in insect numbers nationally, we will be able to detect this and report in an objective manner.

Last season, we added Pretoria (Hennie Vermaak) and KwaZulu-Natal (Corrina Naidoo) to the list of gardens being surveyed.

### South African Butterfly Index

In parallel with the Botanical Gardens monitoring, the SA Butterfly Index is obtaining regular species counts, primarily from Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal (I've added the “South Africa” prefix, as a “Butterfly Index” recently commenced in the UK.

We now have six years of data from this initiative; no clear patterns have emerged yet, but at least we are keeping ongoing records of butterfly abundance in South Africa.

### eBMS

Steve Woodhall has been appointed as LepSoc Africa's representative for development of the European Butterfly Monitoring Scheme (eBMS) in South Africa. It is still early days, but the project has potential to be an important component of our butterfly monitoring programs.

### **Other news**

A major recent development is the commencement of our own African Butterfly Centre (ABC). “Butterfly” is used in a general sense, to include all Lepidoptera. This development has been made possible thanks to the generosity of André Coetzer, who has made a building available to us at his property near Hekpoort, North West Province.

We are finalising an agreement with the Natural Science Collections Facility (NSCF) and hope to achieve funding for cataloguing and curating the collection; we have appointed an independent Steering Committee to manage ABC. Martin Lunderstedt is LepSoc Africa's representative.

We are grateful to Steve Woodhall and Graham Henning, who have made their valuable collections available to us. The costs of renovating the building and transporting collections have been borne by private donations, although LSA Council has approved an allocation of R 1000 per month, to assist with the costs of curation.

We actively pursue partnerships with other conservation bodies, and this year signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between LSA and the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) and between LSA and the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI). We are hopeful that our relationship with EWT will result in funding for ongoing conservation monitoring, and possibly for data-management.

The corporate governance aspects of LepSoc Africa in good hands. The status of payments and scrupulous membership records are kept by our Membership Secretary, Hanna Edge, while the overall financial management is overseen by our Treasurer, Peter Ward. We still hope to be able to issue tax-exemption certificates to donors in the not-too-distant future, although this process has taken far longer than we expected.



Our Annual General Meeting was held, via Zoom networking only), on 13 September 2023, and our Annual Conference (and 40th birthday party) took place on Saturday 16 September, at the Nestlé Centre, Walter Sisulu Botanical Gardens, Roodepoort.

LepSoc Africa have built an enviable CV over the past 40 years. The challenge - to LSA Council and to all our members - is to maintain our role as a leading player in the world of African butterflies.

Finally, I am serving the final year of my fourth term as Chairman of LepSoc Africa; this is my eighth and final annual report for *Metamorphosis*. While time has flown, and I've appreciated every minute of it, eight years is a long time in a democratic institution like ours, and it is time for a change. We will be electing a new LepSoc Africa Council in 2024 – I have no doubt that the Society will go from strength to strength, and I hope to be able to contribute in some capacity.

Jeremy Dobson  
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Chairman – LepSoc Africa

31<sup>st</sup> December 2023

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## METAMORPHOSIS 40 YEARS ON

**Mark Williams**, the founder of what would eventually become the Lepidopterists' Society of Africa was the Editor of the first issue of *Metamorphosis* subtitled "Newsletter of the Lepidoptera study Group of Southern Africa" 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 very first issue the focus was on butterfly conservation, descriptions of new taxa and accounts of collecting trips. The first 10 issues (up to September 1984) were produced on A4 paper using an old-fashioned typewriter to produce a stencil, which was then inserted into a Roneo machine to make copies. Mark was assisted by his wife June (an excellent typist) 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 sent to all members of the Society using the rapid and efficient (in those days) South African postal service. 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.

**Nolan Owen-Johnston** was the second Editor of *Metamorphosis*, assisted by Douglas Kroon, who produced issues 20 (December 1987) to 24 (December 1989) in A4 size. He used more illustrations, many penned by Stephen Henning, and the content of each issue grew, with a regional round up in every issue by Graham Henning, and a series of reports on surveys of Nature Reserves by members of the Society. There was also mention of several significant publications by LepSoc Africa members, including the Red Data Book of South African Butterflies, which emphasised again the conservation objectives of the Society.

**Bill Henning** took over as Editor in June 1990, with Doug Kroon doing the typesetting, and they produced the final issues 25 & 26 (A4 size) and 27 (A5 size, folded and stapled with a thicker cover) of Volume 1 by December 1990. This format of *Metamorphosis* in Volume 1(27) was to endure for 20 years, and every quarter the arrival of a fat A5 envelope in our members' post boxes was eagerly awaited. Issues 1–27 were all combined into Volume 1, and from Volume 2 (1991) there were four issues per annum, initially with only pen drawn (by Stephen Henning) black and white illustrations. Volume 2 (4) was a huge milestone because *Metamorphosis* had been allocated an International Standard Serial Number (ISSN 1018-6409). It also published the first of a series by Torben Larsen "Hazards of Butterfly Collecting in Africa", which became a firm favourite with readers. Volume 2 also began a series of articles by Stephen Henning "Getting to know moths", which encouraged members to take an interest in these lesser-known (but much more species-rich) lepidopterans. From Volume 3 (black and white) photographs started to appear, and in Volume 4(2) the first colour photographs. Bill Henning continued until Volume 6(1) – March 1995, when he stepped down, after five years as Editor and having achieved his aim of making *Metamorphosis* a balanced blend of scientific and popular articles. As Steve Woodhall wrote in June 1995 "It was during Bill Henning's reign that vital changes were made to *Metamorphosis*, as witness to the fact that the decline in membership was reversed in 1992, and we are now over the 300 mark and growing. We thank Bill for his five years of successful editorship of *Metamorphosis*".

**Hermann Staude** became the next *Metamorphosis* Editor in June 1995, assisted by Mark Williams (Sub Editor scientific articles), Bill Henning (Sub Editor popular articles) and Andy Gray (Sub Editor technical – Sixgee's). Hermann said from the outset that his aim was to publish more high quality scientific articles, and that all he asked from authors was to submit their manuscripts and let the "mill turn" so that their manuscripts could be reviewed, suggested improvements put forward by his team of Editors (what we now call the peer reviewing process), and implemented in final articles which comply with the *Metamorphosis* "house style" established by Doug Kroon and are meticulously proof read. Volume 7(3) heralded the formation of the Lepidopterists' Society of Africa and with a whole continent to explore this led to a proliferation of articles. Volume 8 introduced colour covers and regular colour plates inside the journal, with photographic expertise provided by John Joannou. With all these improvements Hermann's team became so good at attracting authors that they had to start producing "Occasional Supplements" which covered topics from reviews of entire genera to the proceedings of international conferences. At the end of his period as Editor he wrote "I am of the opinion that the journal has reached the "pupal" stage. Much of the groundwork has been put in place. What *Metamorphosis* needs now is for someone to smooth out the existing rough edges. Someone who is dedicated and meticulous and whose attention to detail will ensure that the resulting "imago" will live up to the aspirations of the vision that was started seventeen years ago. I think we have found such a person in Douglas Kroon".

**Douglas Kroon** wrote in his opening Editorial of his three year term that "The responsibility and function of an Editor is exacting. Material of scientific merit has to be carefully presented. At the same time this journal must satisfy a general readership, with many persons only pursuing a hobby, but who want snippets of news and information regarding the Society's activities." Doug managed to live up to this challenge and during his tenure of three years produced many excellent articles on life histories; interesting behavioural observations; descriptions of multiple new butterfly and moth taxa; butterflies of a game reserve in Tanzania; notes on Witsand butterflies; diverse and sometimes amusing collecting trips; butterflies of the Seychelles archipelago; butterflies and moths of two Kaya forests of the Kenyan coast; conservation of Maputaland forests and their butterflies; searches for rarities; threatened wetland butterflies; hill-topping behaviour;



IUCN Red Data Book categories; a revision of the genus *Chrysoritis*; the biology of threatened butterflies; and a survey of Côte d'Ivoire butterflies.

**Mark Williams** came back for another stint as Editor from March 2003 to December 2007. Major publications during his tenure were a description of four new *Lepidochrysops* from Zambia; life history of *Thestor basutus basutus*; 15 new Afrotropical taxa by ABRI; revision of genus *Abisara*; conservation in the southern Cape; checklist of the Bobiri butterfly sanctuary (Ghana); and an *Orachrysops* found in Gauteng. Mark also wrote many stimulating and insightful editorials mainly about the research being done on Afrotropical Butterflies worldwide.

**Martin Krüger**, a very experienced and knowledgeable professional entomologist, was Editor from March 2008 to December 2011 (Volumes 19 to 22). The most notable articles published on his watch were a series on South African biomes hostile to butterflies; a 72 page ABRI article describing 23 new African taxa; life histories of 14 *Graphium* taxa; butterflies of southwestern Angola; two new species of *Euriphene* from West Africa; taxonomic notes on tribe Acraeini; butterflies of southeast Africa's mountains; new butterfly records from Zambia; and Custodians of Rare and Endangered Lepidoptera (COREL).

**Dave Edge** took over as Editor in early 2011 (Volume 23) with a brief to:

- transform *Metamorphosis* from a print only journal by adding a digitally published version (as PDFs)
- set up a custom designed website to host *Metamorphosis* so that articles can be searched for and downloaded
- make articles immediately available when the PDFs are finalised
- create an archive of all back issues of *Metamorphosis*
- enable all images to be in colour and of high quality, without costs for the authors
- no page charges to LepSoc Africa members
- produce an annual printed version of the journal (free to Sponsors and Honorary Life members)

When all that had been achieved (by 2014) new objectives were set:

- register all taxonomic acts with Zoobank (2014)
- achieve accreditation with the Dept of Higher Education & Training (applied and failed three times)
- set up an Editorial Board (2016)
- make the *Metamorphosis* website Open Access to all users (2017)
- institute a more formal peer review process to meet best publishing standards (2019)
- join African Journals Online (AJOL) (2020–21)
- obtain DOIs for our articles via AJOL (2021)
- align all our policies and procedures with best ethical practices (e.g. COPE) (2022)
- appoint a copy editor (2023 – Andy Noss)

The strategic plan for 2024 includes the following:

- appoint an Editor-in-Chief and Subject Editors (2024)
- Invite prominent authors to do review articles of issues currently topical in lepidopterology and taxonomy.
- Allocate DOIs to all volumes since digital publishing began (Volumes 23 to 29).
- Investigate feasibility and cost of using Open Source Journal Management Software
- Investigate hypertext linking to link citations to the literature cited list
- Improve plagiarism detection by using Quetext software (text only)
- Implement the CRediT system for determining authorship criteria
- Investigate other independent archiving tools to improve security of data
- Prepare and submit an application to join the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)

## Obituaries

*Metamorphosis* has had a tradition of publishing detailed obituaries of prominent members of the Society:

Ivan Bampton (2010) – Members of LepSoc

John Joannou (2013) – Kate Kelly-Maartens & Hermann Staude

Torben Larsen (2015) – Nancy Fee & Steve Collins

Herbert Otto (2016) – Belinda Otto & Justin Bode

Michael Gardiner (2016) – Alan Gardiner

André Claassens (2017) – Alan Heath

Dave McDermott (2018) – Owen Garvie

Cameron McMaster (2019) – Dave Edge

Martin Krüger (2020) – Hermann Staude & Wolfram Mey

Douglas Kroon (2021) – Dave Edge, Hermann Staude & Heather Kappmeier

## HONORARY LIFE AND SPONSOR MEMBERS OF LEPSOC AFRICA

Below we list our honorary life members, who have been honoured by the Society for their outstanding contributions to the study and conservation of Lepidoptera.

### HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS

Dr. Jonathan B. Ball  
Dr. Bennie Coetzer  
Stephen C. Collins  
Colin E. Congdon  
Dr. David A. Edge  
Alan Heath

Graham A. Henning  
Dr. Stephen G. Henning  
Ernest L. Pringle  
Clive Quicquelberge  
Hermann S. Staude  
Stephen E. Woodhall

### SPONSOR MEMBERS

The members below, apart from their significant contributions to the Society as ordinary members, have chosen to be Sponsor Members for 2023, and have through their generosity provided significant financial support, which is much appreciated by the Society. Any member of the Society can volunteer to become a sponsor member on an annual basis by making a contribution (for 2024) of R1 480 (Africa) or R 1 650 (International). Since the Society needs all the financial support it can get to provide services to members, and to fund our projects, more persons are encouraged to become Sponsor Members in the future.

Svenja Ahlborn  
Ian Bampton  
Dr. Julian Bayliss  
Ben Breedlove  
Anthony Cambitzi  
Kevin Cockburn  
Jeremy C.H. Dobson  
Dr. Douwe de Boer  
Dr. Stewart Fisher  
Stephen Georgiadis  
Dr. Richard C. Greene  
Dr. Johan Greyling  
David Horne  
Dr. Timm Karisch  
Jeremy Kuhn  
Dietmar Ley

Dr. Michel Libert  
Dr. Duncan MacFadyen  
Dr. Dino Martins  
Dr. Wolfram Mey  
Dr. Michael Ochse  
Jean-Paul Peroni  
Dr. Lorenzo Pizzetti  
Jan Praet  
Dr. Ian Richardson  
Peter Sharland  
Harald Sulak-Wildenauer  
Reinier Terblanche  
Peter Ward  
Ian Waters  
Dr. Christian Widmann

Any sponsor members who wish to contribute a larger amount are of course at liberty to do so, and this would be much appreciated.

### DONATIONS TO THE SOCIETY WILL ASSIST BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION

Donations to LepSoc Africa are needed more than ever, since we have now committed ourselves to several conservation programmes and projects:

COREL – Custodians of Rare and Endangered Lepidoptera  
CRG – Caterpillar Rearing Group  
APP – *Aloeides* phylogeny project  
TPP – *Thestor* phylogeny project  
ABC – African Butterfly Centre

These programmes are currently being funded through the Brenton Blue Trust (BBT), a registered Public Benefit Organisation, of which LepSoc Africa was a founder member. SARS has given permission for donations made through the BBT (website [www.brentonbluetrust.co.za](http://www.brentonbluetrust.co.za)) for butterfly conservation to be eligible for issuing of section 18A tax certificates. Donors are therefore encouraged to make their donations by accessing our website page [www.lepsocafrika.org.za](http://www.lepsocafrika.org.za) and clicking on the “donate” button, or by making an electronic funds transfer to the BBT’s bank account, which is given below:



## **METAMORPHOSIS PEER REVIEWERS**

Below we list our peer reviewers for Volume 34, who have given of their expertise and time to assist our authors to produce articles of high quality.

### **Peer reviewers**

### **Principal affiliation**

Dr. Lief Aarvik	
Dr. David Agassiz	Natural History Museum, London
Dr. Graziano Bassi	Museum d'histoire naturelle de Genève, Switzerland
Prof. Julian Bayliss	Oxford Brookes University, United Kingdom
Dr. Carvalho	University of Florida, USA
Colin T.E. Congdon	African Butterfly Research Institute
Jeremy H.C. Dobson	Lepidopterists' Society of Africa
Dr. David A. Edge	Lepidopterists' Society of Africa
Graham A. Henning	Lepidopterists' Society of Africa
Dr. Timm Karisch	
Dr. Karsholt	
Dr. Wolfram Mey	Museum für Naturkunde, Berlin, Germany
Andrew Noss	University of Florida, USA
Dr. Ian Richardson	Lepidopterists' Society of Africa
Dr. Spiedel	
Prof. Martin Villet	Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa
Prof. Emeritus Mark C. Williams	University of Pretoria (retired)
Stephen E. Woodhall	Lepidopterists' Society of Africa

## Southern African Moths and their Caterpillars

**Authors:** Hermann Staude, Mike Picker, and Charles Griffiths

**Publisher:** Struik Nature ISBN 978 1 77584 795 3

This book has been anticipated by so many nature lovers for years. The gestation process I know must have been long and arduous. Well do I remember Hermann standing up at a LepSoc conference about 20 years ago and confidently stating it would only take a couple of years to complete. I fell off my chair laughing and reminded him that my butterfly field guide took 20 years to get into print – and he said ‘yes, but I’m German’...

Along the way it’s birthed projects like the admirable Caterpillar Rearing Group. With the recent advances in digital photography the ‘CRG’ has been pushing the edges of the envelope in all directions.

The book’s publication was supported by the Mapula Trust, an organization at the forefront of preserving and protecting our biodiversity. It will doubtless assist them in achieving their aims and for this we must thank them.

Was it worth the wait? Well yes of course! To start with, it is a handsome book. The quality is superb – heavy satin finish paper, high quality colour rendition, and a generous 168 x 245mm format. To cover about 1500 of the 11000 recorded species in a book of only 464 pages with 2400 photographs is a remarkable achievement. Hermann and his colleagues have done an excellent job of fitting a quart into a pint pot. The text in the species account is succinct - there is not so much detail on species authorship or synonymies as there is in Pinhey (1975). Users will doubtless take the view that those details are more than replaced by the leading role of the caterpillars. They are the stars of the book. As Hermann has often pointed out the caterpillars are often all the public sees of lifeforms whose adults are mostly nocturnal.

The selection of species covered is broad across the families and covers the ‘most often seen.’ This increases the chances of spotting something that looks like what you are familiar with or are looking at. The coverage is, understandably, skewed towards the larger taxa. This is forgivable since so many of the ‘micros’ are confusingly like one another. Having said that, the images of tiny Micropterigids, Tineids, Gracillariids, etc., are the best I have seen and far better than squinting at a tiny, mounted specimen in ‘Pinhey.’

My copy is already getting dog-eared because of the amount of use it gets assisting iNaturalist identifications. I find that I often need to use it alongside Afromoths to get to the right identification. With a computer and the internet, you can use this book to get to the subfamily or genus then type it into Afromoths’ filtering system. Which, by an amazing coincidence, has just undergone a major facelift.

Do not throw your old ‘Pinhey’ out yet because one benefit of its set specimens is that you can see the colour of the hind wings. The new book describes this but because most moths’ forewings cover the hindwings at rest you must take its word for it. ‘Pinhey’ is better than Afromoths’ images because you cannot riffle through those.

There are a couple of gripes I have heard like the lack of a glossary, but there are other insect books (like a certain one on butterflies) that have glossaries you can use. And of course, there is Google! I have experience of the stress one goes through with one’s publisher regarding page space in a book like this. Sometimes things must be sacrificed for the greater good, which here is clearly species coverage.

There are a couple of things that I would like to have seen. One is a key to the subfamilies. Again though, there was not enough room. If I had to make one change, I would have the subfamily (and tribe?) name printed after the family name at the foot of each page. And have a page edge colour key to those. I find that, for example, the Arctiinae get lost among the Erebidae and I must waste time fossicking around in the index. That would take up zero extra space.

But these are minor cavils.

This book is a *tour de force*. Go out and buy one now!

**Steve Woodhall**

## TRIBUTE – MARK WILLIAMS

Mark Christopher Williams passed away on Sunday 10 September 2023. A few days earlier he had been hospitalised with what appeared to be severe bronchitis - this was subsequently diagnosed as a new strain of Covid, but he appeared to be on the road to recovery. Unfortunately, one of his lungs collapsed, necessitating him being put in a medically induced coma. He was in and out of consciousness, but eventually his heart stopped. Mark had been diagnosed with *Myasthenia gravis* (a long-term neuromuscular junction disease) in 2010. 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.

Mark was born in Port Elizabeth on 17 April 1950. His primary and secondary education was at Grey College, Monument Laerskool and Krugersdorp High School. His tertiary education was at Wits and Pretoria University. He obtained a Bachelor of Veterinary Science and later qualified as a specialist Veterinary Pathologist. He joined the Faculty of Veterinary Science at the University of Pretoria in 1975, where he remained until his retirement in 2015. After he had retired, he was made Emeritus Professor. He authored or co-authored over 100 scientific publications.

His interest in nature started in Port Elizabeth at the age of three. As a five-year-old he raised a caterpillar of the Grapevine Hawk Moth. The process of metamorphosis that he witnessed with wonder set him on the path to a lifelong obsession with Lepidoptera. In 1983 he instigated the Lepidoptera Study Group of Southern Africa, which subsequently metamorphosed into the Lepidopterists' Society of Southern Africa and, later, the Lepidopterists' Society of Africa. He was its first president and was eventually made an honorary life member.

In the mid-1980s he began work on a digital encyclopaedia of the Afrotropical butterflies, which has now reached over 6 000 pages. In 1994 he published a field guide: *Butterflies of Southern Africa* and in 2021 was a coauthor (with Steve Collins and me) of *Butterflies of Botswana and their Natural History*, a book based on the work of the late Torben Larsen. He has had three terms as editor of *Metamorphosis*, the Society's journal. He has published extensively on the biology of African butterflies and has discovered over 200 new lepidopteran larval host plants.

Mark's overriding passion was the *Afrotropical Butterflies* encyclopaedia, which was first published as a CD in 2004. The work is freely available to everyone via the *Metamorphosis* website. It contains a comprehensive list and all the published details of all African butterflies, images of many of them, and as much information as Mark was able to glean from various other sources. He visited ABRI in Kenya, and several private collections in SA in search of specimens to photograph. The butterfly checklist in the encyclopaedia has been pulled into a database which has been recognised as the most up to date list of its kind by several sources, and will be maintained by LepSoc Africa as a tribute to Mark.

I first met Mark in March 2000 and we have been on numerous butterfly-trips together. I can safely say that, from my side, I've gained a huge amount from Mark. He had a happy knack of rediscovering rare butterflies, the most notable of which was probably the Waterberg Sunset Copper (*Erikssonina edgei*) a Critically Endangered 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 rediscovery of the Critically Endangered 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 may well prove to be a new species.

Mark is survived by his wife, Tildie, and daughters, Bronwyn, Carmen and Gisela, to whom we extend our deepest sympathy.

Rest in peace.

Jeremy Dobson