

Newsletter of the Lepidopterists' Society of Southern Africa

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Constitution of the Society

M.C. Williams

The whole question of a constitution was discussed in great depth at the 3rd Committee Meeting of the Society held on the 30th August 1984. A draft constitution was minuted and is presented in *Metamorphosis* with the express purpose of eliciting comment from our members. Such comment should be sent in writing to the Secretary and will be discussed at a future committee meeting. Comment should be limited to definite, concrete proposals. The decision of the committee in regard to the acceptance or rejection of these proposals will be final.

Preamble to the Constitution of the Lepidopterists' Society of Southern Africa

The Society is to be composed of individuals in voluntary association. This implies that they are free to join, participate in the affairs of the Society, or leave according to their own individual choices. The Society has been formed with the purpose of providing structure for interaction between its members and will thus act in promoting the free exchange of ideas, opinions, knowledge and materials.

The Society and its delegated representatives (the Council) may make no rules, regulations or decisions which infringe the rights of members. These rights must be understood to include the individuals right to his property and his/her right to freedom of speech, movement and association. The Society may only censure or expel a member if it is proved that he/she has infringed the rights of another member or members. The power of censure and expulsion shall be vested in a constitutionally elected Council. Any full member of the Society is at liberty to challenge the validity of any rule, regulation or decision made by the Council should such member deem this to be in violation of the spirit or letter of this preamble. Such a challenge is to be debated at a duly constituted general meeting and will be put to the vote for a final decision.

1. Name: The name of the Society shall be the Lepidopterists' Society of Southern Africa.
2. Aims: The aims of the Society shall be: (i) The promotion of the scientific study and conservation of Lepidoptera. (ii) The publication of original scientific papers as well as articles of a less technical nature, in the newsletter or other publications of the Society. (iii) To promote an interest in Lepidoptera.
3. Membership: The Society shall provide for three forms of membership. Full members shall pay an annual subscription as may be resolved by the Council to be necessary. Scientific societies, museums,

libraries, schools, and the like may subscribe as Affiliate members at the same rate as full members. Junior members, who shall be persons that have not attained the age of 18 years by the 31st March of the subscription year, shall pay half the annual subscription of the full member.

4. Application for Membership: A person seeking membership must apply on the Society's application form and address it to the Honorary Secretary. Acceptance into membership shall be at the discretion of the Council. The decision of the Council shall be final.

5. Cessation of Membership: Any member having paid all sums due to the Society may resign by giving written notice to the Secretary. Any member may be removed from membership by resolution of the Council: (a) if he neglects to pay before 30th September the subscription due on the previous 1st April; he will be re-admitted on payment and, if possible, be provided with the publications forfeited by his failure to pay. (b) if he shall act in a manner which is, in the considered opinion of the Council, detrimental to the interests of the Society.

6. Finances: (a) The financial year shall end on the 31st day of March of each year. (b) The annual subscription for full membership shall be payable in advance. (c) Subscriptions shall be determined by the Council. (d) All monies received on behalf of the Society by the Honorary Treasurer shall be paid into a banking account. Cheques shall be drawn and signed by the Honorary Treasurer and either the Honorary Secretary or President. (e) Any donations which may be made for any specified purpose shall be deposited in the same account but shall be accounted for in the annual balance sheet. (f) All financial books shall be closed at the end of the financial year, and shall be audited by an auditor appointed by the Council.

7. Dissolution of the Society: In the event of the dissolution of the Society, the property, assets and effects of the Society shall be realised and the proceeds, together with the liquid resources of the Society, shall vest in Special Trustees, who shall be the Council at the date of dissolution, and be disposed of by them as they in their absolute discretion think fit.

8. Council: The affairs of the Society shall be conducted by a council of seven members elected by postal ballot for a period of two years. Returning Councillors shall be eligible for re-election. The Honorary officers are entitled to remain on the Council for an additional two year term. The Editor of the newsletter must be appointed from among the councillors. A quorum for a Council meeting must be four councillors.

9. Honorary Office Bearers: The office bearers of the Society shall consist of a President, a Secretary and a Treasurer who shall be elected at the time of ballot.

10. Elections: The election of the Council and office bearers will take place every two years by ballot through the post. Members must designate which of the nominees they wish to hold office. All full members are entitled to be nominated. All proposals must be

accompanied by the written consent of the nominee. The Honorary Secretary shall call for nominations at the beginning of January of the election year. All nominations must be in by the last day of February. The ballot will be held in March.

11. Casual Vacancies: The Council may co-opt a member to meet a casual vacancy and he will act for the unexpired term of service of the person whose place he takes.

12. Headquarters: This will be the centre in which the largest number of full members reside.

13. Meetings: (a) The Annual General Meeting of the Society will be held at a venue decided on by the Council. A notice thereof shall be sent to every member at least one month before it is held. A third of the total membership shall constitute a quorum for voting at the Annual General Meeting. (b) A Special General Meeting can be called on written application to the Honorary Secretary by 15% of the total members. Notice shall be given as for an Annual General Meeting. At such special general meetings only those matters shall be discussed for which the meeting has been called. (c) Occasional meetings for scientific purposes may be held at the discretion of the Council as occasion arises. (d) The Council shall meet as often as necessary, but not less than four times a year. Four councillors shall constitute a quorum.

14. Amendments to Constitution: Amendments or alterations to the Constitution shall be effected in the following manner: All proposed amendments or alterations must be submitted in writing and seconded by another member so as to reach the Secretary two calendar months before the Annual General Meeting. These proposals shall be proposed and discussed at the Annual General Meeting. A vote will then be taken at the Annual General Meeting, and other members can vote by proxy. Changes to the Constitution will require a two thirds majority.

15. Branches: May be formed where a number of members desire to do so. Such branches must meet their own expenses.

On the taxonomic status of *Acraea anacreon bomba* Grose-Smith

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My zest for pursuing butterflies has frequently led me to strange and remote places, some presenting panoramas of enchanting beauty, others, vistas almost as featureless as the proverbial hades.

Land of the Baobab tree, the Soutpansberg can rightly boast this mind boggling oddity festooning its northern slopes where the march of its seeds seems to have been inexplicably halted. Whereas most South African major mountain ranges such as the Drakensberg and Wolkberg follow the continent's coast line northwards, the Soutpansberg has been thrown across the country south of the Limpopo River as if holding up a warning sign 'so far, no further' to botanical and faunistic elements from the tropics. The enthralling spectacle of the Baobab has no parallel elsewhere in the R.S.A.

I experienced many thought provoking moments on the Soutpansberg trying to uncover the tantalizing heart of its secrets which, alas, seemed so near yet so far. One year in June on the summits during my quest for a mysterious rupicoline dubbed 'the hermit' I came across the *Acraea* which, according to legend is not an uncommon inhabitant of Zimbabwe. Locating it on the Soutpansberg sparked off much speculation as to its presence so far south and yet so near the habitat of *A. anacreon anacreon* on the Wolkberg east of Pietersburg. The question has often been raised: is it really a form of *anacreon* or is it a species all of its own?

One often comes off the Soutpansberg reluctant to leave but seldom without pondering once more the lepidopteral enigma that is *Dira swanepoeli*. How had this species, so strikingly similar to *D. oxylus*, come all the way – 800 or more km – from what one could call the parent-stock area, Kokstad-Queenstown, to the Soutpansberg without having left populations in the intervening mountains. Did wind play a role in establishing it on the Soutpansberg or has it been a victim of an evolutionary quirk?

My experiences with *anacreon* has led me to believe that the subspecies *bomba* has nothing to do with it. It is a butterfly all of its own and calls loudly for specific status. The sooner the better. One year in May while *bomba* was still gaily flitting about the Soutpansberg there was no sign of *anacreon*, either on the Wolkberg or at Graskop where the country was much greener – rain had fallen there a month previously – than on the summits of the Soutpansberg and there was no difference in temperature at either locality.

Anyone who cares to conduct a meticulous study of *anacreon* and *bomba* is at once struck by the dissimilarity in the shape of their forewings and other features that are evident when compared. Many butterflies have been accorded specific status on fewer differences than *bomba*. The writer prefers to give priority to the latter form described by Grose-Smith in 1889. The wet season form *induna* was described by Trimen in 1895.

Two Zimbabwean collectors whom the writer met at the Lepidopterists' Society's first general meeting in Pretoria confirmed that they had so far not met with *A. anacreon anacreon* in that country. According to their experiences *A. bomba* is the dominant form there.

Notes on butterfly migration

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(These notes are apropos Andre Claassens article on butterfly migration in the south-west Cape, which appeared in *Metamorphosis* 1 (8), July 1984. Ed.)

It appears to me that the word "migration" is being applied in too wide a sense in connection with butterflies, as it is used to cover three completely distinct phenomena, namely true (usually seasonal) migration, territorial expansion and drifting.

Danaus plexippus in North America with its two way annual journeys is, of course, the classic example of migration proper. In Northern Europe *Vanessa atalanta* and *Cynthia cardui* provide two further examples. They

arrive late in the summer, oviposit and a new generation emerges in the autumn. In 1921 I carried out an experiment with a number of bred specimens of both species to see if, with a little help from me, any of them could successfully hibernate through a Scottish winter. The result was negative. I have read that recent research has revealed that there is a partial return migration. The butterfly which most nearly approaches this pattern here is *Catopsilia florella*. According to my observations over the past dozen years it arrives in the Cape in considerable numbers late in summer and eggs are deposited on almost every cassia, however small. The larvae mature very quickly and the next brood emerges in the autumn, but I have seen very few of this brood at large and my uniform success in breeding the larva in captivity may not be typical. I wonder if there is any evidence of a northward return migration? Incidentally, over many years in Malawi I observed this species migrating from East to West early in December in the Shire Highlands.

Into the second category, that of territorial expansion, exemplified by *Polygonia c-album* in Britain, falls the recent invasion of the Cape Peninsula by *Mylothris chloris agathina* and *Zophopetes dysmephila*. The former, now abundant in the Cape, is frequently to be seen in my garden and the latter breeds there in the palms.

The movement of insects by drifting is purely accidental. They may be carried by unusually strong winds persisting for some time in a particular direction or by rising air currents, which can lead to their being deposited far from their usual habitats. The sporadic occurrence of *Danaus plexippus* in England is to be explained in this way. In all probability it also accounts for the occasional appearance of *Papilio nireus* and *Junonia hierta cebrene* in the southern Cape. I first saw the latter on Redhills above Simonstown on 12th April, 1974. A year or two later I saw one in my garden, but failed to record the date. Both specimens were in worn condition. A few months ago a knowledgeable and reliable observer, who lives very near me, was astonished to see a specimen of *Junonia oenone* on a flower in his garden. My most remarkable experience in this connection was my capture of a good specimen of *Xanthodisca vibius* on 25th January, 1961 near Gwero, Zimbabwe. This distinctive little hesperiid is a denizen of West Africa.

Different again from all of the above movements is that of the fellow travellers who 'tag along' or get carried with the stream. My first experience of a large scale migration was at sea between Zanzibar and Dar-es-Salaam about 1934. The great mass of the insects were *Belenois aurota* but mixed in with them were a few *Belenois thysa* and *Danaus chrysippus*. I had ample opportunity of observing them as a number of weary insects paused for a rest on the deck of H.H. Sultan of Zanzibar's steamer, though it was travelling in the opposite direction to their flight.

The efficiency of Mother Nature

E. Laithwaite

The following is an excerpt from an article with the above title, which was written by Prof E. Laithwaite of the Imperial College, London and published in *Electronics and Power*, January 1984, p. 30. Rob Plowes, who sent it in, thought that it may be of interest to our members.

“The burning question of course, is what are we missing by not looking more closely at living things? One has already occurred to me. The wings of certain butterflies, the wing cases of tropical beetles, the feathers of humming birds, tropical fish scales such as those found on *Neon tetra*, exhibit a metallic-like sheen that does not fade when exposed to sunlight for a million years. Other species would be bleached white within a year or two of such treatment. For a long time the mechanism was thought to be nothing more than interference due to the scale formation, but examination of all the facts quickly reveals that this cannot possibly be (despite what all the best biology books state most emphatically!). They are now known to be liquid crystals.

Now comes a jolt; as liquid crystals they are never required to change their state by a change in temperature or by an applied voltage – which is the purpose to which we put them. So there is a second property of liquid crystals, used by the birds and butterflies and beetles, of which we are entirely unaware. What is worse for us, it appears to be the more important property!

There are even more disturbing pieces of evidence. Some species of spider can go for a year without food. Yet they do not lose their supply of energy. Others of the same family (arachnids) can withstand what is ten times the lethal dose of gamma radiation for a human. Yet they have never had practice in doing so, nor so far as we know had cause to be tested, except by man in his laboratory. For what purpose were they given the facility then?

It is rather amusing to see some of us so keen to conserve a relatively unimportant species of creature such as the Large Blue butterfly. We should all be aware that, of all the species of creature that have ever lived on earth, over 98% are now extinct. This is nature’s way. And yet having said this, the common woodlouse has remained unchanged for over 600 000 000 years. The engineer must ask: is this an example of a good engineering design or of a bad one? It has survived all, but has never progressed!”

Vlindersprokie van seun

Rudi Mijburgh

Die volgende artikel het in die *Beeld* koerant van Vrydag, 26 Oktober 1984 verskyn en is deur Rudi Mijburgh ingestuur. Hy sê dat hy hierdie storie nie sou geglo het nie maar sy skoonseun ken die skoolhoof (Mnr Page) en laasgenoemde sal hom nie inlaat met onsin nie. Rudi is van mening dat dit seker *Cynthia cardui* moes gewees het.

“Francois du Toit, ‘n st. 1-leerling aan die Laerskool Wilgehof in Bloemfontein, het ‘n skoenlapper, so ‘n mooi bonte, meer as ‘n maand lank vertroetel en op sy skouer saam skool toe gebring.

Skoenlapper het geen streke gehad wat sy maatjie in die klaskamer in die moelikheid kon laat beland nie. Hy het rustig op Francois se skouer gesit tot die pouse wanneer hy kans gekry het om ‘n entjie te vlieg. Skoenlapper het dan ook nooit te ver gevlieg nie en altyd weer op die basie se skouer kom sit.

Dat Skoenlapper baie gehoorsaam was, kan nie betwyfel word nie. Hy het nooit op een van die ander kinders gaan sit nie. Wanneer Francois hom van sy skouer afgehaal en op die grond neergesit het, het hy stil bly sit totdat dié hom weer kom optel het.

Snags het hy op Francois se bed uitgerus en bedags self kos gesoek.

Mnr J.H. Page, hoof van die skool, het die eenaardige verhouding tussen Francois en sy skoenlapper opgemerk. 'Ek het aanvanklik gedink dit is nie moontlik nie, maar nadat ek Francois uitgevra en gesien het dat hy daaglik met die skoenlapper op sy skouer skool toe gekom het, moes ek dit glo. Francois is 'n besondere kind en ek glo hy is een van die min wat dit sou regkry om 'n skoenlapper mak te maak.'

Maar ongelukkig het die sprokie nie 'n gelukkige einde nie. Skoenlapper het tydens 'n rugby-oefening te opgewonde geraak en is per ongeluk deur een van die spelers raak geskop. Hy het kort daarna aan sy beserings beswyk.

Nodeloos om te sê, was Francois se hart gebreek. Of hy ooit weer so 'n maatjie sal kry, weet hy nie. 'Nie gou nie,' sê hy, 'ek was te lief vir Skoenlapper. As ek weer die regte skoenlapper sien, sal ek dit dalk oorweeg.'"