

THREE NEW LYCAENID BUTTERFLIES FROM THE SOUTH WESTERN CAPE PROVINCE

By C. G. C. DICKSON, M. Sc.*

Nos. 57 - 59

A new *Lepidochrysops* Hedicke

This is a striking, small, blue member of its group, which was caught by Messrs. V. L. and E. L. Pringle at Toverwater, a highlyling locality in the eastern portion of the South Western Cape Province, about 46 miles from the coast. The first five, male, specimens were captured on 21st November, 1979, and further examples were secured on a second visit to the locality in the following year; also others still later, in 1981. In the short description hereunder in which the butterfly's salient characters only are given, comparisons are made with *Lepidochrysops oreas oreas* Tite (*Entomologist* 97: 4, figs. 4 - 6 (1964)), to which the present insect shows a fairly close relationship and was in fact noted in this paper.

Lepidochrysops pringlei spec. nov.

Male.

The forewings are less produced apically than in *Lep. oreas oreas* Tite.

Upperside.

Compared with *L. o. oreas*, the ground-colour is of a deeper and richer violaceous-blue; there is a broader black distal border to the forewing (some 2-2.5 mm. in width) and in the hindwing a definite and fairly broad black costal border, with some black suffusion extending into at least part of area 6, and some broadening of the narrow black distal border. On the latter wing the submarginal dark marking in areas 3-6 is, however, less well developed than in *L. o. oreas*, or may be hardly apparent in 3-5, but with the black spot in area 2 always well defined.

Underside.

Ground-colour of all wings of a darker (brownish-grey) tone than in *L. o. oreas* and the dark marking in general with finer and rather more clear-cut white edging. In the present taxon there is, in the forewing, a distinct, dark (narrowly white-edged) elongated marking (representing one of the components of the submarginal series) close to the lower angle of the wing which, in *L. o. oreas*, is filled in (or at least virtually so) with white scaling; and this also applies, if rather less consistently, to the corresponding marking in the hindwing. In the forewing the dark discal series is distinctly less sinuous, in most specimens, than in *L. o. oreas* - i.e., in the latter taxon, the upper half of the series is normally more strongly convex outwardly and the lower half, more so inwardly. The components of the series are less prominently white-edged, especially outwardly, than in *L. o. oreas*. The series of sagittate white markings occurring postmedially in the hindwing tending as a whole to be a little less irregular and often, if not always, being narrower and more sharply defined.

Length of forewing: 15.0 - 18.0 mm. (17.0 mm., in holotype).

The body and ancillary parts are very similar to those of *L. o. oreas*, with some of the hairs of the body possibly a little darker.

*"Blencathra", Cambridge Avenue, St. Michael's Estate, Cape Town.

♂ Holotype, SOUTH WESTERN CAPE PROVINCE: Toverwater, 21.XI.1979 (E. L. Pringle); British Museum Reg. No. Rh. 18704.

Paratype in Coll. British Museum: Zwartberg Pass, 9.XI.1946, one ♂ (K. M. Pennington).

Paratypes in author's collection: data as for holotype, 14.XI.1981, one ♂ (E. L. Pringle). Summit, Zwartberg Pass, 29.XI.1969, one ♂ (C. W. Wykeham).

Paratypes in Coll. V. L. and E. L. Pringle: as holotype, 21.XI.1979, three ♂♂ (V. L. Pringle), one ♂ (E. L. Pringle); 14.XI.1981, three ♂♂ (E. L. Pringle).

Paratype in Coll. Transvaal Museum, as holotype, 14.XI.1981, one ♂ (E. L. Pringle).

Paratypes in Coll. C. W. Wykeham: Summit, Zwartberg Pass. 29.XI.1969, three ♂♂ (C.W.W.).

As would have been expected in a closely related taxon of the present group, the male genitalia of *L. pringlei* are very similar as regards most of the components to those of *L. o. oreas*, i.e., if some allowance is made for some degree of individual variation in specimens, especially with respect to the distal end of the valves. As discovered in the first place by Dr. C. B. Cottrell, the lateral sclerites at the distal end of the aedeagus can provide useful distinguishing characters in the various species of *Lepidochrysops*. After the main dorsal "dip" in each lateral sclerite, in *L. o. oreas*, there is a small, distinct bulge, before the final decrease in width at the extreme distal end of the sclerite. But in a preparation of the genitalia of *L. pringlei* there has been a smooth dorsal outline towards the extreme distal end of each sclerite, without any small, distinct bulge. (The lateral sclerites and valves of *L. o. oreas* and closely allied blue *Lepidochrysops* species have been figured and described by Mr. G. E. Tite in *Entomologist* 97: 1-7 (1964)); while the present writer has figured and described the male genitalia of *L. o. oreas* and two related taxa in *Entomologist's Rec. J. Var.* 86 (3): 65-68 (1974)). In the case of *L. pringlei* the lateral sclerites have differed also from those of a taxon which has been described by the writer as a subspecies of *L. oreas* (*op. cit.*).

Toverwater (which can be translated as "bewitched water") is at the eastern extremity of the Zwartberg Range; and the specimens concerned were caught at a high altitude. Mr. Victor Pringle, who has climbed the mountain on several occasions, sometimes with his son Ernest, has referred to the locality, in a letter of 7th February, 1982, as follows:— "The range at this point falls away at the eastern end where the river and railway line cut through it. The north face slopes away steeply in rough broken ground, fairly sparsely covered in short bushes, while the south slope drops sheer in places and then falls very steeply to the valley below, and is covered in rocks and dense scrub, extremely difficult to penetrate.

"Only males of this insect were seen. They appear suddenly and circle and dash around swiftly, and then disappear as suddenly. If not taken quickly the opportunity is lost — they appear to be extremely restless, and are very swift in flight."

As indicated by the data which are included with the description, this butterfly, regarded at one time as a form of *L. oreas* Tite, was captured on much earlier occasions on the main portion of the Groot Zwartberg — as well, however, as specimens which are at least very close to it, and found further westwards, as on the Klein Zwartberg, at Seven Weeks Poort.

The writer has much pleasure in naming this beautiful insect after his friends Messrs. V. L. and E. L. Pringle — both of whom have added so much, over the years, to our knowledge of the South African butterflies.

Grateful thanks are due to Dr. L. Vári of the Transvaal Museum for his courteous and prompt help in loaning specimens which had a bearing on the foregoing study; and to Mr. R. I. Vane-Wright of the British Museum (Nat. Hist.) for his most kind assistance with colour-photographs of specimens of relevant significance.

(To be continued)

A. H. HAWORTH'S ENTOMOLOGICAL "PICTURES". — Among Adrian Hardy Haworth's many revealing comments about the contemporary scene in his *Lepidoptera Britannica* (London, 1803 [-28]) is the observation following his account of the "Clifden Blue", *adonis*, now *Lysandra bellargus* (Denis and Schiffermüller), the Adonis Blue. Haworth wrote that "Adonis, being by far the most lovely of the British Blues, is much sought after by our inferior collectors; who make annual and distant pedestrian excursions, for the sole purpose of procuring its charming males, to decorate their pictures with; a picture, consisting of numerous and beautiful Lepidoptera, ornamentally and regularly disposed, being the ultimate object of these assiduous people in the science of Entomology. These pictures are of various shapes and sizes: I have seen some which have contained 500 specimens" (I, 1803, 44-45.) Also in the *Lepidoptera Britannica*, writing about *Issoria lathonia* (L.), he stated that "my friend Dr. F. Skrimshire [Fenwick Skrimshire of Kettering, Northants, a member of Haworth's third Aurelian Society] assures me, he has seen a specimen of it in some picture, which was taken many years since in his father's garden" (I, xxviii.)

Frames of Lepidoptera, more or less ornamentally disposed, were (and still are) used as wall decorations. Many years ago I discussed the *bellargus* passage with the late P. B. M. Allan, who remembered seeing decorative frames of butterflies in inns and elsewhere during his younger days (he was born in 1884). But neither of us knew of entomological "pictures" so old as to be from Haworth's period, and Mr. Allan felt that Haworth had something in mind other than the dreary constructions familiar (at least by description) to antiquaries. Certainly he was not referring to those entomologists who arranged their insects in geometrical patterns in the drawers of their cabinets, an eighteenth-century conceit. Have any readers of the *Record* encountered English "pictures", especially of such great extent, fitting Haworth's descriptions? — RONALD S. WILKINSON, 228 Ninth Street, N. E., Washington, D.C. 20002, U.S.A.



Dickson, C G C. 1982. "Three new lycaenid butterflies from the south western Cape Province." *The entomologist's record and journal of variation* 94, 222-224.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/94409>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/196096>

Holding Institution

Smithsonian Libraries and Archives

Sponsored by

Smithsonian

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: In copyright. Digitized with the permission of the rights holder.

License: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/>

Rights: <https://biodiversitylibrary.org/permissions>

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.