

Two new *Poecilmitis* Butler (Lepidoptera:
Lycaenidae) from the Hantam's Berg,
Western Cape Province

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

(No. 43-44)

These two taxa differ markedly in themselves from one another, but quite close affinity is apparent to another subspecies and species, respectively, in each case. The habitats of these Lycaenid butterflies overlap to some extent, although from observations to date each is decidedly more prevalent in a general area of its own. Their distinguishing characters are covered fairly concisely in this paper, under the names concerned.

Poecilmitis lysander hantamsbergae subsp. nov.

Comparisons are made with topotypical *P. lysander* Pennington (1962, *J. ent. Soc. sth. Afr.*, **25** (2): 275), to which insect the present race is most closely related. The margin of the forewing in the male, below vein 4, is less slightly incurved than in nominate *lysander*, or more often not so at all.

Male (Upperside)

The silvery-blue of the forewing is, as a whole, more extensive and merges more gradually into the orange-red area of the wing. The pink to violaceous iridescence which continues from the main blue field always reaches fully and covers, or at least partly covers, strongly, the black spots in areas 2 and 3, and sometimes those in 4 and 5; and in 1 and 1b reaches, fully, the black distal border. The iridescence always spreads into the orange area beyond the discocellular marking and thus at least partly reaches the black spot in area 4, frequently that in area 5 and occasionally even that in 6. In extreme cases, the iridescence extends in areas 2 and 3 (as well as in 1 and 1b), as far as the distal border.

Underside

On the hindwing underside there is a rather general tendency (certainly in more than 50% of the males examined) for the finer darker basal or sub-basal markings to be more definitely defined and darker in relation to the lighter background; sometimes in conjunction with corresponding prominence of the outwardly-placed marking in areas 4 and 5.

Length of forewing: 13.0-14.25 mm. (13.75 mm. in holotype). Two abnormally small males have forewing measurements of only 10.5 and 11.0 mm. respectively.

Female

Very similar to that of nominate *lysander*, on both surfaces, as would be expected in such a case — the females of closely allied taxa of the *P. thysbe* group generally differing, if any difference is in fact apparent, far less than in the opposite sex. The allotype, which is in very fresh condition, has the basal bluish colouring of about the same tone as in the female of

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

P. thysbe (L.) and the main orange-red colouring of the wings is of as rich a tone as in fresh females of this species.

In the allotype, the submarginal darker marking of the forewing underside and the marking of the hindwing underside as a whole is more pronounced, and contrasts more strongly with the lighter parts of the wings, than in the two female paratypes. In this specimen the main darker markings of the hindwing are more brown than reddish-brown and the median area is lightish fawn-coloured.

Length of forewing: 15.25-16.25 mm. (15.5 mm. in allotype). Judging by the material that has been available for examination, both sexes of *P.l. hantamsbergae* have been of about the same average size as topotypical *P. lysander*.

♂ Holotype, WESTERN CAPE PROVINCE: Hantam's Berg, Calvinia, 14.x.1976 (C. W. Wykeham); British Museum Reg. No. Rh.18676.

♀ Allotype, W. CAPE PROVINCE: data as for holotype, 13.x.1976; British Museum Reg. No. Rh.18677.

Paratypes at present in Coll. C. W. Wykeham: as holotype, 13.x.1976, one ♂; 14.x.1976, one ♂; 25.x.1976, four ♂♂; 24.x.1977, four ♂♂, two ♀♀; 4.iii.78, seven ♂♂.

Some variation occurs in the shape of the forewing in the male of this butterfly, this being more elongated in some specimens than in others, and the opposite extreme being of a somewhat "square" shape; and the upperside of the hindwing of the male may bear the full complement of black spots (as in the holotype), have these partially developed or, in occasional specimens, lack the spots altogether. Three male paratypes have the dark forewing border much broadened, and in two of them coalescing or partially coalescing with the black spotting — itself very heavy in one case.

This very pleasing member of its group was found, in the first instance, by Mr. C. W. Wykeham, on 13th October, 1976, when accompanied by the writer — who did not, however, ascend the Hantam's Berg to the same height as the peak actually frequented by the butterfly, at an altitude of nearly 5,000 ft. above sea level. An adequate number of further specimens were only obtained after two more trips to the Hantam's Berg were made, from Cape Town, by the discoverer of this insect. It is felt that the differences mentioned do warrant this insect being treated as a local race of *P. lysander*; and even if, on this basis, it would not be the only other race within the species' extensive accepted range.

Poecilmitis stepheni spec. nov.

This butterfly is, on the whole, most closely related to *P. beaufortia*, and especially its subspecies *charlesi* Dickson (1970, *Entomologist's Rec. J. Var.*, **82** (4):93), and the following comparisons are all made with the latter taxon.

Male (Upperside)

In the forewing, the silvery-blue is noticeably less extensive than in the other insect, and often more consistently so as regards its lower portion in areas 1a and 1b, and in areas 2 and 3. The development of the black borders and marking

is never as great as in the most heavily marked specimens of *charlesi*, though varying individually and, in lighter marked ones, leaving definite orange spaces even in area 1b, basad of the black distal border.

In the hindwing, the blue is often if not always slightly less extensive than in *charlesi*, darker, generally more clear-cut and has virtually no iridescent extension over the adjoining orange-red area; and the inner-marginal concavity is darker than nearly always is the case with *charlesi*. (The male holotype does not have the most extreme form of dark marking for this sex.)

Underside

On the hindwing, the more basal marking is more often darker and more definitely defined than in the other insect, as well as, not infrequently, in relation to the more outwardly-placed portions of darker marking of the wing. In certain specimens this is very apparent — as in the holotype.

Length of forewing: 13.5-15.5 mm. (15.25 mm. in holotype). Some later males have shown a rather greater range in size than that just given.

Female (Upperside)

The restricted basal, rather bluish, area in all wings, is very decidedly darker than in *charlesi* and the inner-marginal concavity of the hindwing is also darker. Forewing black borders broad and spotting, either in forewings or all wings, heavy; but the general degree of development of the dark marking varies within the same limits as in the females of *charlesi*.

Underside

The remarks pertaining to the hindwing of the male apply in general also to the female of the present taxon.

Length of forewing: 15.25-16.25 mm. (the latter measurement, that of allotype). In both sexes the average size of specimens is decidedly below that of *charlesi* — but possibly more noticeable in the males.

♂ Holotype, WESTERN CAPE PROVINCE: Hantam's Berg, Calvinia, 14.x.1976 (C. W. Wykeham); British Museum Reg. No. Rh.18678.

♀ Allotype, W. CAPE PROVINCE: data as for holotype, 13.x.1976; British Museum Reg. No. Rh.18679.

Paratypes at present in Coll. C. W. Wykeham: as holotype, 13.x.1976, one ♂; 25.x.1976, five ♂♂; 24.x.1977, six ♂♂; 25.x.1976, one ♀; 24.x.1977, one ♀.

Paratypes in Coll. Dr. C. B. Cottrell: as holotype, 18-20.xi.1976, ten ♂♂, two ♀♀ (C.B.C.).

When searching for butterflies on the Hantam's Berg on 20th September, 1970, Mr. R. D. Stephen saw specimens which, from the particulars he has furnished, evidently represented the presently-described *P. stepheni*; but through shortage of time he was not able to secure any of these specimens. Bearing these circumstances in mind, Mr. Wykeham has consented, in a spirit of friendly co-operation, to the name suggested by the writer for this very beautiful

Poecilmitis. After taking into account all relevant factors, the impression has been that this insect could best be accorded specific status.

It is necessary to state that the light, silvery-blue areas are not clearly demarked in the males figured in the plate, as a result of "flash" photographs.

Thanks are due, finally, to Mr. W. H. Henning for kindly furnishing topotypical males of *P. lysander* (found by Messrs. G. A. and S. F. Henning, and I Bampton) for the present study.

FIRST (?) KENT RECORDS OF TWO SPECIES OF GALERUCINAE (COL.: CHRYSOMELIDAE). — *Lochmaea suturalis* Thoms.: there seems, strangely, to be no published record of this widespread species for Kent — at least, I have no note of any. Its scarcity in the county is doubtless due to the fact that its foodplant, heather, is not a common Kentish plant. I should, therefore, remark that I have taken odd specimens of the beetle on two or three occasions at Petts Wood, Chislehurst, a little south-east of the London county boundary: the first as long ago as April 1929, on a young hawthorn just coming into leaf, and others in later years by sweeping or grubbing in heathery spots. *L. suturalis*, as might be expected, is far more common in Surrey, and the same applies to the very similar but much paler sallow-feeding *L. capreae* L. (for which the V.C.H. list for Kent gives "Rochester district" only).

Galerucella pusilla Duft.: I took this insect in the marshes of the river Stour at Fordwich, near Canterbury, 9.ix.68, which again would appear to be the first Kent record; though it must almost surely have been taken before in the county, but perhaps confused with allied species — the genus being a rather difficult one. *G. pusilla* most resembles a small, short, and pale *G. californiensis* L. I have met with it also at Bookham Common (Surrey), Amberley (Sussex), Wicken Fen, and in the New Forest. Joy (1932, *Pract. Handb. Brit. Beetles*, 1: 404) marks it as rare, but I have found it in more localities than several of its congeners. — A. A. ALLEN.

CERCYON LAMINATUS SHP. (COL.: HYDROPHILIDAE) AT CHARLTON, S.E. (N.W. KENT.) — As this colonist from Japan is so far known in Britain only from Blackheath, S.E., and single localities in Bucks. and Hants. (cf. Allen, 1969, *Ent. Rec.*, 81: 211-2; Appleton, 1972, *Ent. mon Mag.*, 108: 45), it seems desirable to report the finding of a dead example in a bowl full of specimen tubes in my study, several weeks ago, here at Charlton 2½ miles from Blackheath. Its presence in this odd situation is easily explained. The rather few British captures hitherto have all been made at m.v. lamps, and I had been running mine not many days before the insect was found — the bowl of tubes being always taken up to the lamp room on these occasions. The *Cercyon* must have dropped into it unseen, where, unable to escape, it had ultimately perished. — A. A. ALLEN.



Dickson, C G C. 1978. "Two new *Poecilmitis* Butler (Lepidoptera: Lycaenidae) from the Hantam's Berg, western Cape Province." *The entomologist's record and journal of variation* 90, 293–296.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/95126>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/196502>

Holding Institution

Smithsonian Libraries and Archives

Sponsored by

Smithsonian

Copyright & Reuse

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

Rights Holder: Amateur Entomologists' Society

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>.