

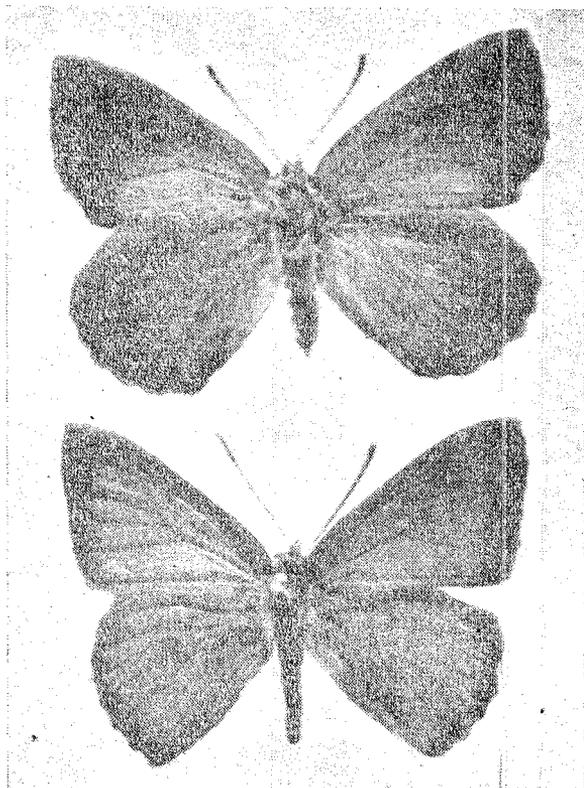
The North Queensland Naturalist

The Journal and Magazine of the North Queensland Naturalists' Club
Established 1932

VOL. XX

Cairns, 1st December, 1952

No. 103



Candalides hyacinthina josephina var. nov.

A new race of the Butterfly, *Candalides hyacinthina* Semper.

Family Lycaenidae.

By E. J. W. HARRIS, Kuranda

MALE—Above. Forewing rich bluish purple, termen and costa brown-black; more broadly than the typical race but consistent with the western race. Cilia brown-black tipped pale brownish grey, brown-black at the veins. Hindwing rich bluish purple, termen and costa brown-black more narrowly than in the forewing. Cilia brown-black tipped pale brownish grey, brown-black at the veins.

Beneath. Forewing pale brownish grey, a faint streak at the end of the cell grey-brown. A discal line stretching from costa to dorsum of irregularly shaped dots, grey-brown. A subterminal series of arrow shaped marks stretching from apex to tornus and increasing in size, grey-brown with the last three brown-black.

Hindwing pale brownish grey, a series of concentric semicircles of

dots spreading from base to termen, grey-brown; terminal series arrow shaped, discal series larger and shape irregular.

FEMALE — Above. Forewing brown-black, a central area reaching the base and dorsum, deep rich royal blue. Cilia brown-black tipped pale brownish grey, brown-black at the veins. Hindwing brown-black, a central area reaching the base and dorsum, deep rich royal blue. Cilia as in forewing.

Beneath. Forewing and Hindwing as in male.

Hab. Stawell, Victoria (Harris). Types, male and female and paratypes coll. Harris (Kuranda).

The colouring in the male of this race appears to be constant,

though some examples may be more bluish than others. The females, on the other hand, differ widely in colour, shade of colour, size, and to some extent in shape, and the areas occupied by the coloured portions of the wing may extend from a few scales near the base of the forewing to the greater part of both fore and hindwings. The colour may be royal purple, violet purple, lilac purple, royal blue or the blue of *c. simplex*.

Taken from the series some females resemble *c. hyacinthina*, others *c. simplex*, while others differ considerably from either race; this instability may have considerable bearing on the origin of the race.

Shells Of The Sea

By J. H. WILLIAMS, Mackay

In the sea, as on the land, plant life is the basis of animal life.

Minute plants abound in the waters of the sea and gigantic algae grow in the Antarctic regions. Small animals live on these and, in turn, become food for the fishes.

In the sea, as on the land the rule is no plants, no animals. Fish eat fish, molluscs, plankton; the crabs eat fish and molluscs; the molluscs eat each other, and the minute scraps are cleaned up by the shrimps—the ants of the sea.

To replace the wastage nature has provided the reeds. In the Divine Plan it would appear that molluscs carry the greatest responsibility of all creatures for, without the molluscs all life in the sea would soon have ceased to exist and, with it, life on land.

In that great day after the Creation of the earth, the waters came forth forming gullies, creeks, rivers and torrents which carried their spoils down to the sea; and thus, to this day, the process continues.

The sea has become a repository, storing substances which make possible the molluscs, without which the sea, long since, would have become stagnant and putrid.

The sun's rays extract vapour from the sea, which ascend to the

upper air, later to be precipitated in the form of rain. We know, by taste, that rain water is fresh water, indications that the surplus matter, previously in solution, remains in the upper layers of the ocean, thus increasing the specific gravity and causing the more heavily laden water to sink. Soon a stalemate must have resulted but for the molluscs.

When the Atlantic cables have been lifted for repairs, molluscs were found adhering to, or embedded in the casing. The molluscs working in the depths of the ocean have used material such as lime and colouring matter to build their homes, thus decreasing the specific gravity; the lightened layers of water move upward.

So between the action of the sun's rays at the top and the molluscs at the bottom, the sea is so well mixed that never has a grain of salt been found in solid form.

When we speak of shells we refer to the house which the little architect has designed and built, and to the builder within. The discarded shell, decaying on the beach is known as the bones.

When you hold a shell of the snail tribe with apex upward, the whorls or rings almost without exception, turn to the right. These are the right-handed or dextral shells.

the necessary colouring material just at that spot.

It is suggested that the beautiful Paua Shell of New Zealand, cousin of our mutton fish, the South Australian and the American abalone, owes its rich colours to the copper ore, which extends under the sea, where it is found.

One shell around which superstition has persisted since very early periods of history is the Pecten, now so familiar as the Shell Co's emblem. A Pecten—Latin for comb—was worn as a charm to ward off sickness. The ornate comb our ladies wear in their hair and the cruder bamboo comb of the women of New Guinea, alike serve to perpetuate the superstition.

The purple shells were so named because the Ancient Romans and Greeks extracted from them an imperishable dye with which to dye their Royal purple Togas.

In the depths of ocean as on the highest mountains, the molluscs carry on their work. None knew Mother or Father, none had an instructor, yet each one is a faithful replica of each other one of the same variety. Part of the Great Design, they make it possible for life to exist, and so we learn from them a lesson of great humility. Let us not despise the lowly mollusc.

In the seas off the coast of Florida, two varieties of shells are found in which the whorls turn to the left. These are the left-handed or sinistral shells.

Except for odd, freak specimens, no sinistral shells are found in the Pacific, so our scientists claim that this establishes that the two Americas always were joined, otherwise the Gulf Stream must have swept eggs into the Pacific.

Holding the shell, we notice a very small top ring. This is the nucleus, a very small animal was born within that section. He diligently extended his house around himself as he grew, until he completed the fifth whorl or turn. The aperture, then, is finished off, and any further activity is devoted to thickening the shell.

Before starting out to collect shells, some little knowledge of their habits is essential.

Some shells are found in the open beach, some in rocks just beyond the reach of the tide as it recedes; yet others, in the breakers.

If the shell you seek is dark in colour do not waste time on a clean sandy beach. Look rather in the mud and reeds, for the builder must seek there for such materials as he requires.

If you find lovely pink shells then gather all you require while you may. Nature has provided

Rock Paintings In the Brown Bay Area, North Queensland

IRUKANDJI PEOPLE.

By DOUGLAS SEATON

Mr. Berkeley Cook who runs a Launch and Pleasure Resort at Brown Bay, asked me to come over and make a record of a new series of rock paintings which have recently been re-located by Mr. and Mrs. S. Stevens, who conduct the kiosk at Brown Bay. The paintings are on an under-sloping granite shelter near the Yarrabah track, about twenty minutes walk from the beach. Accompanied by Mr. Jack Courtney and his son, I visited the area on Sunday, 26th October, 1952, and recorded the paintings.

I was very fortunate as Mr. Cook had sent Dudley (tribal name Jimbul and totem Kanbee, which means blood) up to me at the shelter to assist me with the recordings. Dudley is an old man, born in the Cooktown area and removed to the Mission Station in the elder Mr. Gribble's time. He is intelligent and speaks several of the tribal languages, particularly that of the Tjapukai. I have a working knowledge of this language, so we got on well together. There is quite a midden of shell and nut shells around the

shelter, mostly marine bivalves and nuts of cycads (*Cycas* or *Macrozamia*). Dudley is the first aboriginal whom I have met who could interpret the meaning of rock paintings.

On the left side of the gallery is a figure which represents a dilly bag (*bookawl*) and a stone axe (*naam bar*). Alongside is a shield (*maahchay*), a cassowary (*boondarra*) track, a giant lizard (*bodja bodja*), a shield handle (*maahchay joon garoo*) and two unidentified objects. Under this group are two paintings of ships with high bowsprits. Dudley says that the old men told him the drawings were of Captain Cook's Endeavour, and as the Cook legends are still fresh in the minds of the old people, the explanation could be true.

The centre of the gallery has one of the most interesting groups that I have yet recorded. The central figure, painted in white, represents a headless woman in a squatting position. To her left is a red disk with a white inset, and to the right is a looped figure in red ochre. Under the figure is a drawing representing the rock shelter and nearby granite stone. The story of the group as told by Dudley, is as follows: An Irukandji woman was captured by the Kongkandji people, who cut off her head and placed the body in the stone oven (represented by the red disc). After the flesh was eaten the bones were wrapped up in bark for disposal (the looped red design). The drawings were painted by the old men to record the incident and also to serve as a warning. To the left of this group is another set of figures painted in white, and consisting of a bean shaped object and two lines. This set is a warning to any visiting tribesmen, telling them to beware of the Kongkandji people, as they are cannibals.

On the far right hand side of the gallery is another three sided figure painted in red which is also a warning sign. The top of the right hand side has another drawing of the "Endeavour," and under it is a drawing of a turtle (*bodjakull*). To the right of the

turtle is the figure of a man (*bama*) and a snake (*jumah*) painted in yellow. Below the turtle is a drawing of a shield, a cassowary track, and some objects too faint to decipher. Under the shield is a starfish. Dudley reckons that the paintings were made before Captain Cook's time, and says that the old men told him that the Irukandji area was bounded formerly by the Murray Prior Range, from Mission Beach to Trinity Inlet as far as Hill's Creek in the west. The area also included Yarrabah and False Cape. The area south of this, including Cape Grafton, King's Beach and the eastern area bounded by the coastal range to the Russell River, was occupied by the Kongkandji people.

The rock paintings to the rear of Mr. Berkeley Cook's cottage were described by me early in the year, and since this time Dudley has repainted the whole of the figure and added a few more. He has outlined all the figures I recorded, and several that I could not identify. He has painted them in the traditional colours of red (*woopa*), yellow (*murraka*), white (*kopa*), and black (*bookan*), and has stippled practically all of the figures in these four colours. He has told me that the old men had asked him to keep the drawings fresh. The outstanding figure in this gallery are the paintings of trees; one in particular has a snake painted in a panel on the trunk. This tree represents a large black pine tree (*Podocarpus*) which grows on the edge of the rain forest near the Yarrabah track. The tree is still venerated by Dudley and was "taboo" to any damage by the tribesmen. In the fruiting season the message stick (*wonggalukken*) was sent out to invite friends to the feast. The snake in the panel signified that this was also good meat country. There is also a painting of an anchor which is supposed to represent the anchor lost by Captain Cook when he landed in Mission Bay on 10th June, 1770, in a search for water. One of the Irukandji was supposed to have recovered the anchor and recorded the deed in the form of the rock painting.

The fact that the rock paintings have been done in this age

is to me a unique and pleasing occurrence, and I hope the visitors will not add their initials to this display.

Mr. Cook has cleared tracks

and erected signs leading to the galleries and the pine tree, and to those who have not seen aboriginal rock paintings I can recommend a visit.

Townsville And District Naturalists' Club

Meets on first Friday of month in Adult Education Lecture Rooms, Wickham Street, Townsville.

President, Mr. K. Kennedy, Esplanade and Rose Street, Kissing Point, Townsville. Hon. Secretary, Elizabeth Kennedy, Box 178, Townsville.

LECTURES AND FIELD DAYS

The February lecture by Mr. Keith Kennedy was entitled "Nautilus and its Geological Ancestors." The Nautilus first appeared as a tetrabranchiate cephalopod of the Phylum Mollusca. Its evolution was traced from a straight shelled ancestor which lived some 650 million years ago in the Cambrian period through various ancestral forms to the modern animal. Although shells of the nautilus have often been picked up on beaches, very few white people have actually seen the living animal, and there are only two preserved specimens in museums at the present day—one in the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons, London, and the other in the Sydney University. Pictures of fossil nautilus ancestors were projected on the screen, and specimens of shells were exhibited.

The Field Day was to the Town Common, where many birds were observed.

The March Lecture, by S. Brock, was illustrated by colour films taken by Mr. T. J. Fletcher, of Sydney, of a motor tour inland through Bathurst and Orange, then northward. These showed various rivers crossed in Queensland, different kinds of vegetation met with, the road through the Carnarvon Ranges and other interesting aspects. Views were included of the Town Common, Townsville, and Magnetic Island.

For the May meeting, Mr. J. J. Selvage entitled his talk "Naturalist on Holiday." He spoke of a recent voyage down the coast to Melbourne, and his experiences as a naturalist and traveller, giving an interesting account of the birds he observed, and the country passed through. He also gave his usual monthly report from Stuart, and exhibited preserved specimens of the brown snake from Stuart and a taipan from Stanley, pointing out the differences.

The Field Day was a "members' field day," members to report their observations at the next regular meeting.

The May Meeting was a members' night. Mr. Sleigh mentioned the various birds noted in the Town Common, especially the pygmy geese, white eyed duck, some snipe and coots. Mr. Brock spoke on the migration of birds in the riggings of ships and conjectured on their intelligence as to the direction the ship was taking, and to their knowledge when to leave and when to return. Different species of mosquitoes were spoken of, and a large specimen, *Megarhinus*, was exhibited by Mrs. Kennedy. The larvae of this carnivorous genus preys on smaller larvae.

The second half of the meeting was devoted to the botany class by Mr. Keith Kennedy. Specimens were exhibited to show the structure of flowers and fruits. He mentioned that the renowned German poet, Goethe, was also a distinguished botanist, who showed that all flowers are modified leaves. This mutation theory was adopted at the time by botanists, who thus anticipated the theory of evolution promulgated by Darwin and Wallace in later years. Field Day was to Cape Pallarenda.

North Queensland Naturalists' Club

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT, 1951-2

By A. A. READ

Again I have much pleasure in presenting the Annual Report of the North Queensland Naturalists' Club. This report is the 20th since the Club's inception, and the second occasion on which I have had the honour of being in the chair at the close of the yearly activities.

This September meeting has always been regarded as the end of the Club's financial year, and the beginning of a new one, and, on looking back over this year's achievements I feel that the Club's officers can have every reason to feel satisfied that those achievements are in every way in keeping with the past.

We really started our activities with a Wild Nature Show at the beginning of October, which was held in the Remilton Hall at the Parramatta Show Grounds, on the occasion of the 75th Anniversary and Back to Cairns Week.

That Show was quite a success, both financially and in public interest, and in spite of adverse weather during some of the time, I should say that close to two thousand adults and children came to the pavilion to view the exhibition.

That was a very big effort on the part of the Club, and I will always feel grateful for the wonderful team work done by the committee and members, in helping to arrange the transport facilities, and enthusiasm shown in the arranging of the exhibits throughout the show.

Our outings have not been as numerous as could be wished for, but on the four occasions when these events took place they were very well patronised, sometimes there being up to sixty adults and children present.

The first one was to the mouth of the Mowbray River last October, the second to Behana Creek, the third to the mouth of Hartley Creek, and the fourth in July, to the Boulders, near Babinda.

On that occasion we had the party of southern naturalists, headed by Mrs. Messmer, with us.

That party was the first of its kind that the Club has catered for, members of the club having arranged the whole of the itinerary, transport, hotel accommodation, camping arrangements on Double Island, and catering. It was quite a success, the Club having gained some very useful experience to our benefit in the handling of any further requests of that kind. The thanks we have received and friendships made have more than repaid for any trouble we may have had in the organising.

As regards speakers for our monthly meetings they have not been as numerous as one would like, but each speaker was outstanding in his respective subjects.

We had Mr. T. Tuckerfield, of W.A., who gave us a very illuminating insight of mission work, and the coastal line of Northern and Western Australia, accompanied by colour slides. Mr. Cliff Cantrill, on two occasions, held our interest, once with quite a descriptive talk on astronomy, and again on Aboriginal drawings in the Kimberleys.

Then we had Mrs. Messmer's address, also with colour slides, and although I was not able to be with them on that occasion, the reports I had on my return from the North showed that it was very highly appreciated by all members and visitors at the meeting.

Speaking of the showing of colour slides it is always very difficult for us to be able to procure a projector, and I look forward, in the not far distant future, to the club possessing one of its own. We almost lost the pleasure of Mr. Tuckerfield's address through this lack.

Last year, the Club inaugurated the annual competition for the H. Flecker Natural History Medallion, which carries a prize of £2/2/-, and a mounted medallion with the winner's name inscribed.

The first was won by one of our members, John McLoughlin, and this year it has been won by Miss Maureen Courtney, daughter of one of our members.

I would have liked to have seen the medallion presented to Maureen on this, the final meeting of the year, as on the last occasion, but on careful consideration, I feel that the event warrants a better place in the programme of a meeting than being wedged in between the election of officers, annual reports, and so on. Therefore, I have taken it upon myself to hold it over until our next meeting, and should that seem more fitting perhaps the Club would see fit to use that date, the Oc-

tober meeting, to present it in the future.

This then is my report on the achievements of the Club during the past year I have been in office, and I feel sure that whoever carries on in my place in the coming year will have the same support from the committee and members as has been extended to me, and I would like to take this opportunity of thanking all concerned for making my term as pleasant as it has been.

North Queensland Naturalists' Club.

Meets at School of Arts, Shields St., Cairns, usually on second Tuesday in each month, at 8 p.m.

MEETINGS

8th July, 1952: Short talk by Mr. C. Cantrill on "The smallest star, smaller than the earth, yet heavier than the sun."

12th August, 1952: Address by Mrs. Pearl Messmer on Indigenous Flora of the Hawkesbury Sandstone and Wyanamatta Shale adjacent to Sydney, illustrated by beautiful slides in Technicolor.

9th September, 1952: Annual Meeting. Presidential Report, Balance sheet showed credit balance of £98.18.11. Officers elected: Life Patron, Dr. H. Flecker; President, A. A. Read; Vice-Presidents, R. J. Gorton, Dr. H. Flecker, A. B. Cummings; Hon. Sec., J. Wyer; Hon. Assist. Sec. and Librarian, D. R. Peiniger; Members of Committee, C. Cantrill, G. Atkinson, J. M. Gray and Mrs. Price; Hon. Auditor, J. M. Gray.

AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION AND RULES

The following alterations in the above were made:—

Clause 4 (b). Delete "and exclude such appointees from being elected to any executive office in the Club during the period they hold such ranks of office."

Clause 5. In the phrase "Election shall be by secret ballot," delete the word "secret." Add sentence "If any member so desires, the election shall be by secret ballot."

Clause 16. For "At the meetings of the Council, 5 members thereof shall form a quorum," substitute 4 for the number 5.

Clause 17. Delete the words "by proxy, or by a representative duly accredited."

Delete paragraph "Any member who shall be absent from general special or Council meeting shall be entitled to appoint any other person as a proxy to vote for him, such appointment to be made in writing to the Chairman of the meeting."

14th October, 1952. Resolved to prepare new Check List of Orchids with illustrations. The second Annual Flecker Natural History Medallion was presented to Miss Maureen Courtney by Dr. H. Flecker. Mr. Heath gave an address on cyclones, illustrated by blackboard drawings.

CLUB OUTING

27th September, 1952: A visit to Mrs. Legge's property at Kuranda, on the bank of the Barron River, proved very enjoyable and instructive. Excellent weather prevailed and free use was made of power and other boats available for exploring the river in the neighbourhood.

NEW MEMBERS ELECTED

8th July, 1952: Dr. Fred Bainbridge, 54 Gatton St., Cairns; W. Walker, Marshall St., Machan's Beach; Sister Eileen M. Wall, 402-4 Pacific Highway, N. Hornsby, N.S.W.; Mrs. C. M. Aitken, Esplanade, Cairns; Douglas Johnston, Machan's Beach.

9th Sept., 1952: H. A. Bruce, 527 Gregory Terrace, Brisbane; E. Stables, Earlville; N. F. Loader,

234 Edinburgh Rd., Castlecrag, N.S.W.; Mrs. E. V. Yeatman, Postmistress, Rossville; Mrs. E. D. Whitton, Barron Heads; Mrs. E. Stables, Earlville; Mrs. A. Taylor, Machan's Beach; Miss O. Stables, Earlville.

14th October, 1952: Mrs. A. I. Price, Scott St., Cairns; Mrs.

Harland H. Smith, 271 McLeod St., Cairns; Mrs. E. L. Cupitt, Cape York; Howard Smith, 271 McLeod St., Cairns; R. J. Cupitt, Cape York; G. L. Williams, Archer Point; William Hosmer, 45 Collinson St., Cairns; Mrs. N. M. Molesworth, Titirangi, N.I., N.Z.

Rambling Memories

By GORDON F. LEITCH, Radical Bay, Magnetic Island

KOOKABURRA ATTACKS SNAKE

I have been watching a kookaburra (*Dacelo gigas*) kill a snake. He had been belting the snake, about two feet three inches in length, on the bough of a tree for a good ten minutes. Although it was not more than ten feet from me, I cannot name the snake, but I think it was a fast, grey snake, which inhabits the "spinifex" (*Triodia* or porcupine grass) known locally, of course, as a spinifex snake.

However, the interest to me was that it seemed likely that I was to witness a kookaburra eating a snake. I have seen many kookaburras kill snakes, but I have never seen one eat one. As this was one of our own hand fed birds, I expected to have my curiosity satisfied. But no, quite sure that the snake was more than dead, he hurried away with it into the scrub.

GOANNA SWALLOWS LIVING SNAKE

Thinking back to other snake eaters, I remember a grand stand seat I once had at a battle between a goanna (*Varanus*) and a brown snake (*Demansia textilis*). Riding down a bore drain on the Downs country beyond Hughenden I came upon the conflict. The battle was already joined and a good big goanna over four feet long had a brown snake at least four feet six inches by the tail. I brought my horse to a standstill very close to the combatants, and for nearly half an hour we held our position as still as possible. The goanna was fat and strong, as was the snake.

Sleek and beautiful, the latter moved with the whip like movement that no other snake can match. To my surprise, the goanna started to swallow the snake tail first without in any way disabling it. Slowly, bit by bit, inch by inch, he got it down. The first six inches took a long time. To say the snake accepted its fate is hardly correct, for he objected strongly. He writhed and twisted. He struck and bit and worried the goanna in almost every conceivable place, but except for closing his eyes when necessary, the goanna kept up the inexorable gulping. Each gulp gained a little more snake.

At one stage, the snake tried to escape down a crack in the parched black soil and got down to a point where the goanna's jaws met the ground. It looked like a stalemate. However, bracing his forelegs firmly, the big lizard sat back and pulled. Little by little, the snake came and with every little gained, a gulp meant a bit down the goanna's throat. This was the beginning of the end. Though fighting hard and biting constantly, the rate of swallowing increased, and the last I saw of the snake was its head disappearing in the swollen interior of that fearsome dragon.

The question I would like solved is—Did the snake's fangs penetrate the goanna's hide? If so, was the poison effective? The goanna seemed quite happy about it and waddled away without showing any signs of looking for an "antidote," Johnson's or any other.

(To be continued in the next issue).