

QUARTERLY BULLETIN DECEMBER 1977

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING- 1978

Dear Member,

You are invited to attend the Annual General Meeting of the Club, to be held in the Audio-Visual Room of St. Mary's College on Thursday 12th January, 1978 at 5.30 p.m.

AGENDA

1. Confirmation of Minutes of the 1977 A.G.M.
2. Business arising out of the Minutes.
3. Honorary Secretary's Report 1977.
4. Honorary Treasurer's Report 1977.
5. ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 1978.
6. Other Business.

FIELD EXCURSION

The first Field Excursion for 1978 will be held on Sunday 22nd January to the Navet Dam. We will be leaving St. Mary's College on Pembroke Street at 7.30 a.m., making a short stop on the Princess Margaret Highway (Outside the National Brewing Co.) at 7.55 a.m. Please be punctual.

ARE WE ACCESSORIES ?????

Information has reached the Club of the activities of International Parrot Smugglers in Trinidad and Tobago. It is alleged that Trinidad is being used as the transshipment port through which endangered and protected species of Brazilian Macaws and the four Lesser Antillean species of parrots are being shipped to Europe. The Antillean species are *Amazona guildingii* from St. Vincent, *Amazona versicolor* from St. Lucia, and *Amazona imperialis* and *Amazona arausiaca* from Dominica.

The names of the smugglers and their accomplices in Trinidad have been supplied in the memo, a copy of which has been forwarded to the Chief Game Warden, Dr. Bal Ramdial for his action in the matter.

You may recall that by letter dated 11th November, 1977 the Club informed Dr. Ramdial about the activities of Mr. Kurt Hergoz, a bird collector from Switzerland and the contravention of Section 18 of the Conservation of Wildlife Ordinance, 1958.

Inaction in this matter may be interpreted by our West Indian Brothers in St. Lucia, St. Vincent and Dominica as aiding and abetting.

BUTTERFLY COLLECTING AT FOREST RESERVE

In September/October 1977, a female *Parides (Endopogon) sesostris* was followed while egg laying, and a new species of *Aristolochia*, as yet undetermined, was discovered at Road # 107, Grand Ravine, Forest Reserve. Flowers and slips have been collected and submitted to the U.W.I. for identification. The flowers differ remarkably in standing erect on the plant instead of hanging, and they lack the convolutions of other species of *Aristolochia* (*Grandiflora*, *rugosa*, and *trilobata*) recorded from Trinidad.

This plant has turned out to be the larval food plant of at least two and possibly three papilionids whose L.F.P. were previously unrecorded. They are *Parides (Endopogon) sesostris*, the "Southern Cattle Heart", *Battus belus varus*, and possibly *Battus lycidas*. Larvae of the two former species were collected and reared, and females of the latter were seen performing laying behaviour around the tops of trees on which the new *aristolochia* was growing.

According to Barcant's "Butterflies of Trinidad and Tobago", the rarest of the papilios in Trinidad and Tobago, which he never managed to locate was *Battus lycidas*, and in September/October 1977, I located a small patch of flowering black sage (*Cordia curassavica*) and on this together with *Battus belus varus*, *B. polydamus*, *P. (E.) sesostris*, *P. anchisiades*, *P. anchises cymocles*, *P. neophilus parianus*, *P. thoas nealces* were collected at least twenty specimens of *Battus lycidas*, including a beautiful purple variation. Damaged specimens were released for breeding. This flowering patch was a veritable "gold mine" for a butterfly collector.

On November 29th, 1977, in a modified Barcant-type butterfly trap with rotten guava and molasses for bait, was taken what is definitely a new Brassiolid butterfly from Trinidad. It closely resembles *Selonophanes cassiope* Cr. (see plate 29 of "Butterflies of the World" by H.L. Lewis) but lacks the orange rim on the hind wing. This specimen, a female, was kept alive and laid eight eggs before dying. I will attempt to hatch these and raise the larvae.

On December 5th, 1977, a male of the same species was taken in a nearby trap, thus confirming that this remarkable new addition to our fauna is resident and not a chance stray from the mainland of South America. The female has been sent to the British Museum for positive identification and the male retained in my collection.

Julius Boos

REPORT ON FIELD TRIP TO EL TUCUCHE - by T.F. Farrell

It has been customary for visits by the Club to El Tucuche to be made during the Dry Season. The visit on Sunday 26th September, 1977, was in the midst of the Wet Season and it paid off in some interesting finds to be described later.

At first the weather was fine, with little or no rain, but as the day wore on there were intermittent showers and, high up on the mountain, mist. Underfoot there was soft mud and sometimes even running water.

On the way up *Balisiers (Heliconia bihai)* were in full flower, and *Deer Meat (Centropogon surinamensis)* was plentiful. *Job's Tears (COIX: lachryma-jobi)* was flowering. This plant, a grass, thrives in wet situations and apparently it takes a wet season to bring out the flowers since on previous visits in the dry season flowers were not observed.

As usual members of the Rubiaceae (Coffee family) were present in great variety. The most noticeable were *Duggena hirsuta*, which seemed to be near the end of its flowering period, *Hamelia erecta*, which is characterised by having its leaves arranged in a whorl of three or four instead of two opposite leaves so characteristic of this family and *Psychotria uliginosa*, so conspicuous with its bright red berries. *Chaconias* were also seen, but they were also obviously nearing the end of their flowering season.

On the way up five specimens of *Proctoporus shrevei* were seen. These are lizards related to the familiar *Zandolies*, and live among the wet fallen leaves.

The most interesting finds, however, were at the top. First of all, flying through the mist, disappearing and reappearing from time to time,

was a Northern White Page. This rather rare butterfly is not often seen. Here and there growing on the bushes was the vine *Mandevilla hirsuta*, but perhaps the most interesting finds were two plants, *Psammisia urichiana*, and *Orthaea apothysata*, both belonging to the family *Vaccinaceae*. The former is a vine commonly called Wild Clove, with tubular red waxy flowers with white tips. The latter has red tubular flowers and is a shrub. The young leaves are a brilliant red, and although on previous occasions the plant had been noticed, it could not be identified for lack of flowers. It should be noted that the specific name of the Wild Clove, *urichiana*, may be after Dr. Ulrich, a foundation member of the Club.

Seen visiting the flowers of *Psammisia* was a Green Hermit Hummingbird. This little green bird with its shining green feathers looking like molten metal, is a beautiful sight.

REPORT ON FIELD TRIP TO MARACAS WATERFALL - T.F. Farrell

The excursion on 30th October, 1977 was to a point above the Maracas Falls. At one stage the trail broke away from the pathway and climbed up a steep slope to a ridge where the going was easier, what with the muddiness of the slope some members of the party travelled more on their posteriors than on their feet. It was noticed, especially when travelling along the ridge, that epiphytes were scarce and, quite unusual in these heavily forested areas, the foliage of the big trees could be seen. Destruction by Hurricane Alma was also obvious.

Right at the beginning of the trail a vine with off-white tubular flowers was seen. This was obviously a member of the *Apocynaceae*, and it proved to be *Mesechites trifida*. This vine was growing on a Cassava plant (*Manihot esculenta*) which was in flower. This was an unusual sight as cassavas do not often flower.

Some way up the trail a vine growing on a tree was identified as *Tetrapterys discolor*, a member of the *Malpighiaceae*. Further along the trail a grass with fairly broad leaves was identified as *Olyra cordifolia*.

Growing on rotting leaves, a leafless herb with yellow flowers and pale yellow stems was found. This proved to be *Leiphaimos aphylla*, a saprophyte. This was an example of a plant reduced to the barest minimum, i.e. roots, a small slim stem and a flower. There is no chlorophyll because, as its description indicates, it subsists on rotting vegetation.

A small tree with peeling bark, green underneath, was plentiful on the steep slope and on the ridge. Its young leaves were pink. Many saplings of this tree, identified as *Myrcia leptoclada*, were also seen.

A low shrub, in fruit only, proved to be a member of the ubiquitous and plentiful *Rubiaceae* family, *Psychotria involucreta*. Some way up the slope another member of the same family was found. Its inflorescence as a head of flowers under which were two dirty red bracts, and the plant was a shrub. It was identified as *Cophaelis pubescens*.

Above the falls the stream forms little pools where one can bathe. Quite a number of tree ferns are growing in this area.

ANYONE INTERESTED IN PLANT GEOGRAPHY ???

The purpose of Field Trips is to present members with an opportunity for learning about the plants and animals of the Country at first hand. With so many people trampling through the bush as we have on most trips there is little opportunity of seeing animals, but the plants are always there. Field Trips would probably become more interesting if some study of the plants were made. I suggest an exercise in mapping the distribution of selected plants. Some like the *Chaconia* seem to be everywhere; others like the Wild *Ixora* seem to be restricted to certain areas. Perhaps we could choose half a dozen plants that are easily recognisable and record their presence or absence at every site we visit. If anyone is interested please get in touch with me.

Victor Oyesnel

LIVING WORLD -- OUR NEW-LOOK JOURNAL

A great deal of discussion took place before we decided to change the style of our Journal and now that the change has been made, I would like to have members' views on some specific points.

LIVING WORLD

1. Should we find a place for our motto "NATURA MAXIME/MIRANDA IN MINIMIS"
2. Do you like the variety in typeface for the titles, or do you prefer a uniform typeface ?
3. Do you like the type broken up by decorations ?

Please let us know of your preferences . Any suggestions are welcome.

WHAT A CHRISTMAS PRESENT - BARGE LEAVES SWAMP

The Club and other interested Organisations which formed the BLUE RIVER ACTION COMMITTEE in 1973 were given the good news that the Barge Pelican had been withdrawn from operations on the Blue River and No. 8 Drain in the Caroni Swamp.

This announcement was made by Mr. Fred Talma, Managing Director of M.P. at the commissioning of the L.P.G. Installation at Sea Lots on Thursday 22nd December, 1977.

The Club was represented at the function by President David Books, Vice-President Victor Quesnel, Dr. Julian Kenny, Mr. G.E.L. Laforest and Hon. Secretary Ian Lambie.

More on this in the next Quarterly Bulletin.

NOTICE OF AMENDMENT TO THE RULES OF THE CLUB

The Management Committee of the Club is proposing an increase in the Annual Subscription payable by members to Ten Dollars (\$10.00) with Junior Members paying Five Dollars (\$5.00) . Admission Fee remains at \$10.00 To be proposed at the Annual General Meeting.

Yours sincerely,


Honorary Secretary

Dated 3rd January, 1978