

## REVISIÓN DE PUBLICACIONES BOOK REVIEWS

**M. Payne**

**The butterflies of the Canary Islands – a field guide plus**

**417 pages**

**Format: 23,5 X 16 cm**

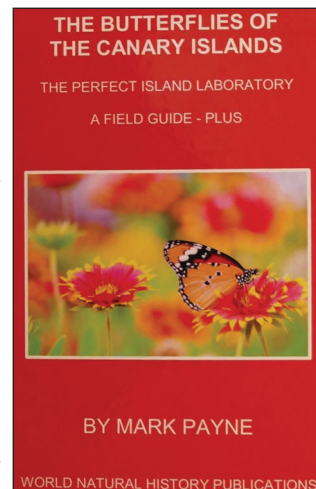
**World Natural History Publications, The Lake District, 2019**

This is the third of four butterfly books from this author - a small fraction of the 28 titles, with a total of 5,680 pages, his self-promotion claims to have been published in 2019. This is not, by any criterion or the stretch of any imagination, a Field Guide, the purpose of which is to assist the reader to identify wildlife (butterflies in this case) seen in the field. As with the author's previous books, he arbitrarily cites the work of others on a monumental scale, belittles the work of respected colleagues and hugely praises his own "work", which largely consists of unfounded and unsupported ideas. Like previous volumes it opens with a quote from Alfred Russel Wallace, whose name is mis-spelled on every occasion the author has used it and continues with two pages of Payne's unsupported grand accomplishments (see TENNENT, 2020a). A pretentious preface concludes with the claim "There has never been a butterfly field guide like this one, for the Canary Islands or, for that matter, anywhere in the world. The planned global series of which it forms part makes all other such field guides obsolete at a stroke". The first of these claims is accurate, but not in the way the author intended: the only butterfly books the reviewer is aware of that are equally unutterably awful are the author's previous efforts on Cape Verde Islands and Azores butterflies.

Respected European entomologist Martin Wiemers receives a fulsome acknowledgement including a declaration that he "... not only supplied material and photographs for use in this book but also read the manuscript through prior to publication ...". This is only partly true. The reviewer understands that Wiemers did exchange e-mails, allow use of his photographs, and read through a draft of Payne's first book but that he subsequently withdrew support. The author has used Wiemers' name and work to a disturbing degree, perhaps in the hope of giving himself a measure of credibility, but also to mask his own inadequacy.

Holt White's 1894 book "The Butterflies and Moths of Teneriffe [sic]", downloaded from the internet in its entirety (pp. 16-44), is followed (pp. 45-46) by a short "holiday" note published in the *Bulletin of the Amateur Entomologist's Society* in 2000, seemingly included to provide the author with the opportunity to append his own sarcastic and disparaging comments. Species accounts begin with the Lycaenidae; for example, the South African butterfly *Cacyreus marshalli* (pp. 76-81), although over six pages there is nothing about the characteristics of the adult butterfly, or its flight patterns, the essence of a Field Guide. Content is almost entirely the work of others, transcribed in bulk. It is not always clear where a quote finishes; whether this is deliberate or careless is hard to tell. Authors are usually named in the text but rarely acknowledged in the references.

The next species, probably not resident in the Canaries, is *Callophrys rubi* (p. 83-84). Of five paragraphs, text is largely copied verbatim from Wiemers (1<sup>st</sup> para), Holt White (2<sup>nd</sup> para), "South (1906)" (3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> paras), and "HENRIKSEN & KREUTZER (1982)" (final para). Neither South nor Henriksen & Kreutzer appear in the references. The former refers to Richard South's now very out-dated *Butterflies of the British Isles*, almost the only book available to a schoolboy of limited means when the reviewer was a boy. Henriksen & Kreutzer's *Butterflies of Scandinavia in Nature* describes butterflies occurring in a part of Europe about as far from the Ca-



naries as it is possible to get. Citing a quaint 116 year old book on British butterflies and a 40 year old Scandinavian butterfly book can hardly be considered adequate for a modern book on the Canary Islands.

For *Lampides boeticus* (85-91), following the usual tracts from Wiemers and Holt White, Payne moves east to the Indian sub-continent. Here he presents tabulated data relating to food consumption and utilisation efficiencies of laboratory reared *boeticus* larvae, including the weight of larval faeces, digestibility and other information irrelevant to the Canary Islands or to a Field Guide. The source is said to be “Padem [sic] et al. [sic] (2015)” (not in the references), but as the reviewer has already pointed out (TENNENT, 2002b), the first author’s name is Palem, not Padem, or “Pal-im” (p. 86). Unfortunately for Mr Payne, although the authors believed they were dealing with *Lampides boeticus*, all photographs in their paper are of *Euchrysops cnejus*. This sets the standard for the author’s work and illustrates the depressing fact that he cannot correctly identify one of the most easily recognisable butterflies in the Canary Islands and across much of the rest of the world. The section includes exactly the same entries from other Payne works: clumsy (“*Lampides boeticus* constitutes a genus by itself” [i.e. monotypic]: [p.88]); nugatory (tabulated larval and pupal duration pre- and post-monsoon: [p. 88]); and frankly silly (“In India, *Lampides boeticus* butterflies migrate annually from the heating-up plains to cooler hills in the early hot weather (Lefroy, 1909) [not in refs], with this movement occurring in the middle of March (Fletcher, 1930) [not in refs]. It is unknown if this behaviour also happens in the Canaries, but it would be surprising were it not so manifest. Simply, no-one has bothered to investigate its biology and life-cycle in the archipelago”: p. 87). So far as *boeticus* is concerned, there appears to be nothing, in seven closely typed pages and tables, that relates directly to the species in the Canaries ... and of course, *Euchrysops cnejus* does not occur there. Large scale regurgitation of exactly the same text used in previous books is dishonest and may be legally fraudulent since Mr Payne expects customers to purchase a series of books without acknowledging their common content.

The section on *Leptotes webbianus* includes reproduction (p. 100) of a colour plate depicting adult phenotypes from various islands taken from “Merit [sic], Manil, Vila & Wiemers” with all its very detailed data, presumably because his own illustrations (p. 369) consists of pictures from Wiemers and the author doesn’t know which island form they represent.

A list of “doubtful species” [sic: recte doubtful records] do not include *Vanessa braziliensis* (166-167), which is given a full page of text (“until this matter is conclusively resolved, this author proposes to list *Vanessa braziliensis* as one of the species recorded from the Canary Islands”) and a “known distribution” map of the whole of Tenerife. The author’s maps serve little purpose; it would have been more useful to tabulate species/islands or to present a simple island distribution in the text for each species – although this would be challenging with the present chaotic layout.

Figures are of dubious or no relevance. Fig. 4 (p. 137) is a full page map of Africa with overlaid pictures of *Danaus chrysippus* phenotypes, acknowledged as “source: Herren et al [sic], 2007”; Herren is not in the references. The reviewer found the paper from which it is copied (HERREN *et al.*, 2007) courtesy of the Oxford University Research Archive; the Canary Islands are not mentioned in the text. Fig. 5, on the following page, is clearly based on a similar but this time unattributed map. Elsewhere in the *D. chrysippus* section (p. 136), the author is critical of “Hassan *et al.* [sic] (2012)? [sic]” (not in refs: see below) for not doing what he thought they should have done: “Given the tantalising glimpse of an explanation to [sic] a major problem that the authors came up with in 2012 it is a pity that (Majerus died that year) Hassan & Idris did not follow this up with rigorous experimentation and publish the results”. Majerus is not mentioned in the text and this made no sense at all, until the reviewer found the original paper (HASSAN, IDRIS & MAJERUS, 2012) and realised the last author was afforded posthumous co-authorship. Mike Majerus died on the 27<sup>th</sup> of January 2009. The section concludes with a map with all islands except El Hierro shaded. The last paragraph is vintage Payne, who cannot resist a puerile and rather petulant jab at the entomological world in general (p. 139): “It seems to this author inconceivable that *D. chrysippus* [sic] has not occurred or does not occur in [sic] El Hierro .... Stray arrivals must over the years have come from other Canarian islands - just not to be noted by half-way competent entomologists present at the time”.

Grammar, syntax and punctuation throughout the book are poor. The author has a grossly inflated idea of his own worth and ability, but unfamiliarity with his subject is transparent. For example (p. 98) “... eggs bear about 40 spiral ribs, half of them laevorotatory [sic: recte levorotatory], the other dextrorotatory towards the micropyle [sic: recte micropyle] zone.” ... and (p. 101) “South ... described ... the-then named *Herodes* [sic] *phlaeas* (*Chrysophanus*) [sic] in the UK”. South (1906: 152) correctly (for his time) referred to “(*Heodes phlaeas* (*Chrysophanus*))”. In places (e.g. p. 58), the author presses hard for acceptance of his term “Paynesian Shortfall”, now mentioned in each of his books, apparently without any awareness of the obvious irony: a lack of basic knowledge; abysmal research; no understanding of the purpose of a Field Guide or references *etc.* Mr Payne’s glaring shortfalls are there for all to see. There is no index.

Content depends wholly on what the author happens to have come across in his inadequate literature forages. Perhaps because he believes his own work is outstanding, he feels under no obligation to properly confer credit

where it's due - and when he does, he is often disparaging. For example (p. 225): "It is a mystery to this author why Higgins & Riley (1970, and subsequent editions) and Tolman & Lewington (1997) are so often quoted in the literature as authoritative sources, as their work ... contained numerous errors even at the time of publication ...". An astonishing statement from someone whose own work is so hideous. Totally unnecessary rudeness of some of his other comments is breathtaking. For example, with reference to an observation by Owen, Smith & Smith (1988) (p. 357): "... to this author this small piece of ad hoc [sic] work falls into the 'freak show' end of scientific experimentation, devoid as it was of meaningful science", and of Brian Gardiner "Gardiner's logic, work, efforts and conclusions were so deeply flawed as to have been just about irrelevant to meaningful scientific debate"; and so it continues.

As anyone who has visited the Canaries knows, the islands are wonderfully photogenic. Of a series of 18 photographs of the Canary Islands (pp. 61-69) Mr Payne acknowledges responsibility for five very ordinary pictures of Tenerife; the remaining 13, illustrating some superb views on Tenerife, La Palma, El Hierro, La Gomera, Gran Canaria, Fuerteventura and Lanzarote, were all taken by Martin Wiemers. Photographs of butterflies and a sparse, random sprinkling of early stages at the end of the book (pp. 364-401) perfectly mirror Mr Payne's input to his own book; of ca 235 pictures, ca 150 have been taken from Matt Rowlings internet website; almost 50, mainly of *Hipparchia* and *Gonepteryx* are attributed to Wiemers. The few remaining photographs were taken by others (*Hypolimnas misippus* pictures are from India), leaving a solitary picture taken by the author himself (p. 395): a mediocre photograph, possibly using a mobile telephone, of *Pieris rapae*, some distance away, sitting on a nasturtium leaf. A bleak illustration of Mr Payne's ability, engagement and interest.

Continued association of Pemberley Books with Mr Payne, regularly raised by European entomologists, is baffling. His publications cannot be taken seriously, and it is understood there are copyright and other issues pending; a search by the reviewer failed to identify any other reputable bookseller stocking or advertising his books. It is difficult to comprehend why, supported by risible knowledge of the new world he temporarily inhabits, the author has chosen to write in the most negative fashion imaginable. His perfidious narcissism does him no favours, and his egregious attempts at writing butterfly books are exceedingly thin gruel. In the opinion of the reviewer, there is nothing to recommend this dreadful book.

The price of this book is of 69 pounds and the interested ones can request it to:

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