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## OBITUARY

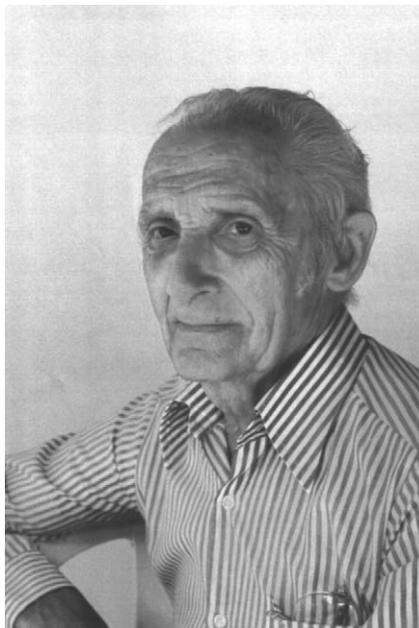
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### Lajos Vári (27 September 1916 – 21 April 2011)

Lajos was born in 1916 in Hungary, and grew up with Dutch foster parents in Amsterdam after the Great War. This was arranged for orphans by the Red Cross; his foster father was an artist, restorer and collector. Lajos worked as a laboratory assistant at the University of Amsterdam during the German occupation and directly after World War II, and later qualified as a teacher. He was a member of the Dutch Entomological Society from 1942 and developed his entomological expertise and interests at the Zoological Museum of Amsterdam.

In 1948, at the age of 32, he emigrated to South Africa, together with his wife Geertje and his three small children, to take up a post at the Transvaal Museum. His qualifications from Europe were not recognized in South Africa. He therefore returned to his studies and obtained a M.Sc. at the University of Pretoria. Thereafter he specialized in the study of leaf miners and in 1961 was awarded a D.Sc. (*cum laude*) for a revision of Southern African Lithocolletidae (now Gracillariidae). From 1948 to 1952 he worked in close collaboration with Dr A.J.T. Janse and spent much of his time in Gezina, a suburb of Pretoria, where the Janse collection was housed. This collection had been purchased by the South African Government in 1945 and was intended to be consolidated with the Transvaal Museum Collection (now Ditsong National Museum of Natural History); the merger only happened in 1952. He also worked with Dr G. van Son, and indeed succeeded him after his death in 1967, managing the Lepidoptera Department at the museum. Later he completed and edited the manuscript of Dr van Son's fourth volume dealing with southern African butterflies. He also acted as Assistant Director of the Transvaal Museum from 1963 to 1976.

He first went on pension at the Transvaal Museum in 1981, but continued as Head of the department, retiring fully in 1986. However, Lajos just continued working at the Transvaal Museum and especially continued working on the checklist project as an Honorary Curator. This was particularly relevant while he co-authored the standard refer-



ence checklist for southern African Lepidoptera which appeared in 2005. This contains a huge number of references useful to moth or butterfly enthusiasts, all set out formally and impeccably correct. In reality he never really retired, and continued working in the Lepidoptera Department until 2007. He was gradually forced to reduce the time spent on library and journal research, and checking of aspects of the moth literature and systematics.

His duties at the Transvaal Museum were varied, at times requiring his expertise as an authority identifying insects for governmental agencies, universities or colleagues. When filling in as Acting Director, he had to deal with running both the museum and his own department efficiently. At the museum his career in South Africa brought him into contact with eminent entomologists such as Dr A.J.T. Janse, Dr G. van Son and Dr M. Scoble, who later rose to become Keeper of Entomology at the Natural History Museum, London.