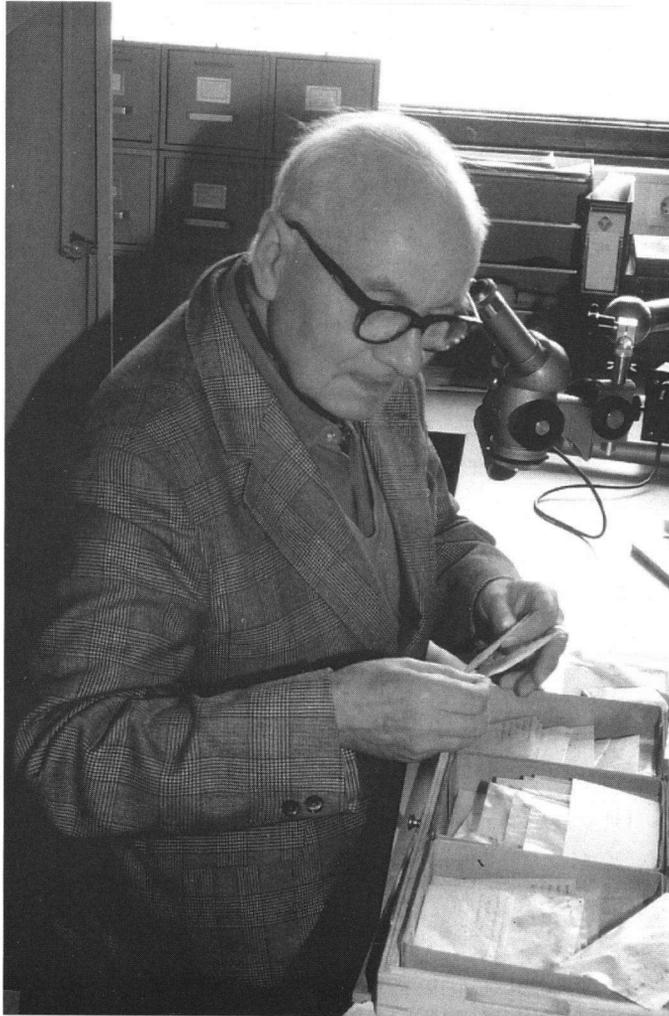


**IN MEMORY OF ELLIOT CHARLES GORDON PINHEY  
(10 July 1910 - 7 May 1999)**



*Elliot Pinhey*

*All dragonfly enthusiasts will have been greatly saddened to learn that Dr Elliot Pinhey died on 7 May 1999, at the age of 88. He was truly one of the masters of Old World odonatology; his scientific contributions will surely be judged by posterity to have been as important as those of Ris, Fraser, Lieftinck and Asahina.*

*As he had lived so long, many of his generation have now passed on and he had little contact with other enthusiasts for almost the last ten years of his life. I only met him once, when we invited him to talk to the British Dragonfly Society in Leeds about his experiences with African Odonata. He was a most humble, likeable and interesting speaker, and I remember him well for his infectious love of both Africa and African people, as well as for the enthusiasm we all shared for dragonflies. I offer this small contribution with considerable trepidation as I scarcely knew him and I have only been working on African Odonata for a few years, but I found his work to be incredibly accessible and helpful when I was starting out to study African dragonflies, and I would like to express my thanks for the life of such a talented man.*

*ELLIOT CHARLES GORDON PINHEY was born on 18 July 1910 near Bruges while his family were on a lengthy stay in Belgium. He took an early interest in natural history, spurred on by contacts with N.D. RILEY, F.W. FROHAWK, C.G. DE WORMS and other great British naturalists of that era. He took a BSc degree of London University in 1934 and started work as a science teacher in a secondary school in England and, from 1937, in Germany. He took a science-teaching post in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) in 1939 and worked in the RAF Meteorology Department for a time in the early part of World War II. In 1942, he took up employment as an economic entomologist in the Department of Agriculture in Salisbury (now Harare). While he was there, he developed an interest in African dragonflies when J.A. WHELLAN joined the section. He worked on identification, receiving assistance and encouragement from F.C. FRASER, but he did not publish at this time. In 1948, he moved to the Transvaal Museum in South Africa as assistant professional officer in entomology, working on Lepidoptera and Odonata for one year, publishing his first scientific paper in 1950, on the South African fauna, including several species descriptions including that of the interesting chlorolestid *Chlorolestes elegans*.*

*He moved to Nairobi in 1949 as Keeper of Entomology in the Coryndon Museum and stayed there for six years until 1955. During this period he published his first major work in 1951: The dragonflies of southern Africa. He progressed to be Keeper of Invertebrate Zoology in the National Museum at Bulawayo, Rhodesia in April 1955; this was perhaps the most important position of his career and he remained there for 20 years until his retirement in July 1975. This was the main period of his*

*odonate studies. In 1961, he published the seminal faunistic text: A survey of the dragonflies of East Africa. This book has been criticised for providing descriptions which are inadequate to secure reliable determinations but, when used in conjunction with the earlier work of 1951, its value becomes apparent. A spell of intensive work followed and the much needed Catalogue of the Odonata of Africa published in 1962, after a huge amount of research, provided the foundation of all future taxonomic study of African dragonflies. All students of the order who have followed him have been indebted to him for this immensely valuable contribution; perhaps it is too easy to overlook its value nowadays when we have the luxury of catalogues such as that of Bridges available to us, but Pinhey's catalogue was a milestone at the time. He obtained a DSc from London University in 1962 on the basis of published works.*

*He made an exciting overland expedition in 1958, crossing Africa by Land Rover, travelling through the Belgian Congo to Cameroon and adjacent parts of Nigeria. He and T.W. COFFIN-GREY stopped to collect and record dragonflies at a huge number of sites on the journey. They were aware of the „wind of change“ which was going to create a different political landscape in the 1960s. This was perhaps an opportunity that had to be grasped while travel was relatively safe and some of the enormous human tragedies that were to unfold in Central Africa had yet to occur. They had the courage to undertake such an ambitious journey before it was too late. It would certainly not be advisable for two middle-aged travellers to repeat it at the present time. They passed through some of the centres of diversity of the African rainforest fauna; many new discoveries were made and published. Later, he published useful papers on Fernando Po, Cameroon and Gabon. This region is extremely rich faunistically and Pinhey was clearly fascinated by its potential, but in later years, he tended to leave it to ROBERT GAMBLES who was specialising in West Africa Odonata and preparing a monograph on the Odonata of Nigeria (including anglophone Cameroon).*

*The two friends collaborated for many years but had very different methodologies and minor tensions were apparent. Gambles was incredibly exacting, precise and cautious, preferring not to publish unless he was almost certain of his position. Pinhey seemed to believe that a job had to be done; he accepted that errors and synonymies would occur from time to time, but he was determined to leave published work to help others who would follow him. I often visited Robert Gambles in the 1970s and 1980s, and learned how much he respected Elliot for his monumental contribution to the knowledge of African Odonata. At times, I used to be amused by some of Robert's views of Pinhey's work: he would sometimes talk in great detail, and in a most entertaining way, about an error of Pinhey's that had caused him a problem, perhaps in Orthetrum or Pseudagrion, or a synonym that he had unnecessarily created. However, Robert held Pinhey in the highest regard and had huge respect for his achievements. In fact, the work of the two great men is complementary.*

*Pinhey continued to produce crucial faunistic and taxonomic works and he published indispensable papers which included those on Mauritius, the Seychelles, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Zambia, the Central African Republic, Angola, Mozambique, Botswana, Ethiopia, and later revisionary works on Zimbabwe and Zambia, and Southern Africa in the 1980s. One of his most recent interests was the Okavango where he discovered a surprisingly interesting dragonfly fauna and he reported on expeditions made by Zimbabwean students from Falcon College and Peterhouse School to Botswana. He collected in the Okavango himself with his African assistants, Philip and Raphael, and I remember his talk to the British Dragonfly Society when he was in his late 70s; he discussed this exciting region with an enthusiasm that belied his age and he stressed the importance of the help he obtained from these two assistants.*

*One of the problems that used to hinder odonatologists who were working with the African fauna was that many of the commonest and most frequently collected species belong to genera that were hard to identify or in need of revision. The species of Orthetrum, Trithemis and Pseudagrion are particularly dominant in savannah and they are therefore usually well represented in most collections from tropical Africa: all presented problems of determination. At the present time, male material of these three genera is relatively straightforward to determine, thanks to the important revisions which he produced. Taxonomic revisions were published of Aciagrion, Agriocnemis, Pseudagrion, Neurogomphus (insufficient for reliable*

*determinations and at present being worked by R. Cammaerts), Chlorocyphidae, Chlorocnemis, Umma, Zygonyx, Trithemis, Lestidae, the Metacnemis group of the Platycnemididae and, building on C. LONG-FIELD's work, the dominant libellulid genus in so much of Africa, Orthetrum.*

*Finally, he made a start with the vast task of describing the larval form of African dragonflies, a project which is, even now, scarcely begun. He also published works on African Lepidoptera and*



Fig. 2. In Dr M.A. Liefstinck's garden, Rhenen, the Netherlands, May 1982. From left to right: Dr B. Kiauta, Dr E. Pinhey, Mrs N. Pinhey, Dr M.A. Liefstinck - [Photo M. Kiauta]

*general African entomology.*

*Elliot Pinhey was an extremely talented and intelligent entomologist. He was an enthusiastic field worker as well as an expert museum worker. His work output was prodigious: he must have been continuously preparing papers with very few breaks. In many ways, he was an odonatologist in the style of Fraser and truly the leading figure of the twentieth century in the study of African dragonflies. He has published so much that it seems that he will live on: his vast knowledge and experience have been put into print so that future workers can follow in the footsteps of the master.*

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Portrait on p. 1 dated May 1982,  
in Dr B. Kiauta's collection,  
Bilthoven – [Photo M. Kiauta]

#### THE IMPORTANCE OF ELLIOT PINHEY TO THE STUDY OF THE LARVAE OF AFRICAN ODONATA

*Workers on the larval stages of the African odonate fauna have few sources to draw upon for their base information. In 1937, K.H. BARNARD wrote a definitive paper with descriptions of larvae for the South West Cape of South Africa. F.C. FRASER added a number of contributions, and more recently P.S. CORBET and M. SAMWAYS and colleagues have added greatly to our knowledge of East and southern Africa respectively. But the name which stands high above all others and who has provided the benchmark for all recent workers is Elliot PINHEY. In a series of three papers published in the Journal of the Entomological Society of South Africa between 1959 and 1961, he described, albeit somewhat briefly, the larvae of almost 100 species including the first Aeshna larvae and of many other families.*

*Economy of description was Pinhey's hallmark: no place for flowing prose when an overall size and rudimentary sketch of leg and mask would suffice. In many ways the descriptions were inadequate and the drawings too superficial but the strength of his work was the foundation that it gave to all the later workers. There was even space in his papers for little quirky habitat details; "Bradinyopyga cornuta bred in rain butts in Kimbosa Forest" is probably my favourite.*

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