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X THE CONCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA X
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CIRCULAR NO. 87

JULY, 1967
(Re-printed August, 1976)

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Edited by Leila Kerr

MEETING:

The next meeting of the Society will be held in the Lecture Hall of the South African Museum on Tuesday, 25th July, at 8.15 p.m. The shells for display will be those on Plates 8 and 9, in Marsh's "Cone Shells of the world", viz:-

Plate 8: Conus dauous, luteus, fervus, lignaius, aegrotus, buxeus, kermadecoensis, augur, litoglyphus, circumactus, striatellus, pulchrelineatus, vitulinus, planorbis, chenui;

Plate 9: Conus magus, raphanus, circae, ustulatus, cinereus, pohlianus, gubba, andamansensis, lienardi, collisus, alveolus, stramineus, bernardii, suturatus, boeticus, mozambicus, consors, janus.

A film will be shown.

N.B.: The remaining trawled shells will be sold.

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Minutes of a meeting held at the S.A. Museum, 27.6.1967.

Members and friends were welcomed by Mr Freeman in the Chair. Apologies were received from Mrs K. Hofmeyr, Mrs Gillett and Mrs Weakley. The minutes were taken as read.

The following were elected as members of the Society:-

- C Mr J.X. Corgan, c/o St. Clair Oil & Gas Co., P.O. Box 7190, Tulsa, Oklahoma 7415, U.S.A.
S Miss L.D. Jean, 17 Utrecht Ave., East London.
S Miss L. Dickorson, P.O. Box 184, Kitwe, Zambia.
Mrs C. Gillett, 21 Stellenberg, Pinelands, Cape.
C Mr R. Hardy, B.P. 3038, Tananarive, Republique Malgache.
Mrs K. Hofmeyr, Cottage, Marina Farm, Stellenbosch Rd., Somerset West.
S Master G. Lewis, 52 Leafmore Road, Lansdowne.
Mr C.W. Marcham, 17 Ives Rd., Robertsham, Johannesburg.
S Miss J. Melville, 40 Drydon Ave., Mufulira, Zambia.
Mr J. Scheepers, P.O. Box 31, Amanzimtoti, Natal.

The following were proposed as new members:-

Master Ray Aikon	proposed by L. Kerr,	seconded by N. Prior
Mr S.C. Fenwick	" D.H. Kennelly,	" D. Freeman
Miss M. Scott	" D.H. Kennelly,	" M. Rix

Mrs Kinlock had brought a very interesting specimen preserved in spirits to show us. This was the body of a Conus geographicus with the proboscis extended showing the barb. She also brought the shell from which the body was extracted and various articles and pictures on the subject. Mrs Kinlock spoke about these and also about a fossil Cypraea, 10 million years old from Florida, and extinct species, which was also exhibited.

Mr Freeman gave a brief talk on his cones, mostly American.

Mr Elston displayed fourteen of the twenty-four cones. His C. sozoni, No. 12, was a very good specimen, complete with operculum. He also showed some other rare shells.

Amongst Mrs Kerr's cones was a fine Conus virgatus.

Mrs Prior had brought along some splendid shells just received from Israel, to show us - very topical at the moment!

During the tea interval the trawled shells were sold.

A film, "Winter in the Canadian North", was shown.

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POSTAL VOTE - IMPORTANT.

We are sending you a voting paper. Will you please post or return it personally to Mrs Giles as soon as possible before the A.G.M. in August.

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SUBSCRIPTIONS.

These are coming in better. Give that conscience of yours another dig! Please remember to add 5 cents to country cheques. Thanks.

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Mr and Mrs Giles are back after a wonderful holiday overseas. We welcome them and hope they will soon be back in harness again (especially me!).

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CHANGE OF ADDRESS.

Mrs H. Boswell, P.O. Box 21027, Valhalla, near Pretoria, Yvl.
Mr Graham Ivy, 119 Long Street, Cape Town.

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NATAL BRANCH NEWS. by E. Dee

After a very gloomy and cold Saturday - Sunday was a lovely day with hardly a murmur of breeze. We joined forces with the Durban Undersea Club who were holding an underwater treasure hunt at Vetch's Pier. There were about 50 club members and 6 of our enthusiasts making up the happy party. The water was crystal clear and the temperature was 70 F. Quite a few shells were found by people who were skin-diving, and a tally of the species revealed the following:

Mrs Lambert found a live specimen of the rather rare Cypraea owenii vesta Schilder and Schilder.

Mr F. Kidwell found a live Cypraea marginalis Dillwyn. These were the outstanding finds but the following live specimens were also collected.

Cypraea: moneta annulus; erosa; helvola argella; felina; durbanensis; clandestina; lamarcki; arabica; caputserpentis; citrina.

Conus: vexillum; nemocanus; lividus; sponsalis; ceylanensis; rattus; catus; coronatus.

Murex maurus; Bursa granularis; Cymatium capensis; C.africanum and Charonia pustulata. Oliva scitula; O.bulbosa and O.ispidula.

It was decided to hold our next monthly meeting at Mrs Pearce's residence at 430 Kingsway, Amanzimtoti (road lies parallel to National Highway) at 10.00 a.m. on Sunday, 23rd July, for morning tea and then to a choice of beaches, Clansthal and Wydenham, where it is possible to skin dive. Bring your picnic lunch. Friends and families welcome.

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BORDER GROUP. by D.H. Kennelly

The meeting of Border Group members held on 18th June at Mrs C. Hulley's residence, was well attended, and also enjoyed by those present.

Apology for absence - with best wishes for a good meeting - was received from Hazel Jefferies, and an unavoidable absence from town prevented Daphne Vice from attending.

A hearty welcome was extended to our new member - Steve Fenwick - who was attending his first meeting.

The family on display was Cypraeidae, and the specimens on view were greatly admired. A short talk on the range of some of the species occurring on this part of the coast was given.

Having spent two days at Kei Mouth just previous to the meeting, the writer was able to give some account of the Kei Mouth Shell Museum, and Hazel's private collection. The Museum collection has benefited by the addition of some interesting species from Shimoni, East Africa, and

from Natal, and the same remark applies to Hazel's collection. The remarks as recorded in the Visitor's book at the Museum make very interesting reading, and it is quite evident that the scientific and educational benefits of the Kei Mouth Shell Museum are now really appreciated by the public at large.

Two Border members - Adeline Gillmer and Maimie Rix - have been fortunate in establishing an exchange contact in Mauritius and Madagascar respectively. The Malagasy shells exhibited by Maimie at the meeting fairly made those present gasp with delight - many of us had never seen the species previously.

In the course of general conversation at the meeting, it was revealed that some members are now busy arranging their collections with the various Genera grouped in their correct Families. This is a very good move as visiting collectors and members appreciate being able to judge the approximate number of Genera shown. Further, the owner is better able to estimate what species are needed to add to the collection - a great help when exchanging shells.

The meeting closed at 4.45 p.m. with a hearty vote of thanks to Connie Hully for allowing the members to make her dining room untidy - also for the tea and refreshments generously provided.

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CAPE NOTES. by L. Kerr

In a recent letter received from Mrs Bobbie Richards of Mossel Bay she informs us that at Little Brack some Cypraea vitellus have been on the beach in perfect condition and a good one at the Point, Mossel Bay. Also at Little Brak a few C. caputserpentis were found. She and her husband have searched these areas dilligently at low tide, and say that there are definitely no living cypraea there.

At the winter solstice, being a good spring tide, I went down to my usual hunting-ground, Muizenberg, and was rewarded by a fair number of Fusus verruculatus, Argobuccinum argus, Cassis achatina, Cymatium africanum and Tellina madagascariensis all mixed up in hundreds of rolls of red bait.

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GENERAL NOTES.

THE SOWERBYS. by P. Elston

For many years the writer has been curious regarding the history of the Sowerbys' names, which cover Conchological interests over a period of eighty years, publications of Marine, Terrestrial and fossil Mollusca, with as far as I can ascertain, the first publication in 1820 and the last in 1892. Possibly there were later books or papers as the last, George Brettingham Sowerby, died in 1921 at the age of 78, and I expect his interest in our hobby continued for many years after his retirement.

Recently, to my intense delight, on browsing through our library, I came across two articles in the Hawaiian Shell News on this subject which were of great interest to me and together with three of the Sowerby' publications, which I am fortunate to possess, and Marsh and Rippingale's book on Cones, in which they give credit to the "G.B.S" I, LL, and III and the dates of specific names, perhaps it may be of interest to members to learn more of this famous family dubbed "The Royal Family of Conchology".

In my research it appears that apart from numerous monographs and papers read before the various bodies such as the Linnaean Society of London, British Zoological Society and Conchological Society of Great Britain and Ireland, the first issue of any substance in book form was the "Genera of Recent and Fossil Shells" 1820-1825, which I am fortunate to have. The title page states "Commenced by James Sowerby and continued by G.B. Sowerby". Original plates to plate 17 by James, remaining plates by J.C.D. and G.B. Sowerby, two of his sons, and the latter G.B. I and they acknowledge the assistance of another great naturalist J.H. Ponsoby.

James Sowerby, 1757-1822, although perhaps not so prominent as his sons, grandsons, and great-grandsons, was an established Printer, an

Artist and Naturalist who greatly assisted in the establishment of Kew Gardens and the many parks in London, also laying the foundations of the British study of Mollusca in general, his example and methods being retained by the following three generations of his family. It appears that drawings were made, text printed, and both filed against the day when they might be issued in pamphlet or book form, sometimes the text printed by other printing firms as was done in those days of hand type.

Certainly, in the late 18th and early 18th centuries, with the great days of overseas trading by sailing ships to remote parts there was a vast quantity of shells new to science coming to hand and James and his sons G.C.D. and G.B.I. considered it time to publish the first series on Marine and Fossil shells, so with the assistance of their wives, who did most of the colouring of the plates, these were available to the public. The issue was as far as possible in monthly parts, each containing six plates and the text, in the years 1820 to 1825, each part costing 4/- drawings in black, and 6/- drawings coloured. The authors stated that they did not expect to make a profit and were publishing the series in the hope that it would encourage students and further their knowledge of conchology.

The writer was amused to read that, at times, they stated having to employ other artists to colour the plates and pay as much as £10 (ten pounds) per month to them !!

George Brettingham II, 1812-1880 and G.B. III, 1843-1921, also carried on the good work of their forefathers against the time when their labours could be published, collecting specimens and examining various collections, and during their ownership of the firm published many monographs, produced some famous and invaluable works as Reeves Conchological Iconica, which extended over twenty volumes, and their magnificent Thesaurus Conchyliorum, worth more than R1000-00 today. Also their Marine Shells of South Africa published in 1892 from specimens obtained in South Africa and the appendix in 1897, the latter from further specimens from the same source. Incidentally G.B. III was colour blind and his wife assisted in colouring the plates.

During this period of the firm's history, Fulton evidently bought an interest in their publishing house and it was re-named Fulton & Sowerby. On the death of G.B. III the name of Sowerby was dropped and it became Fulton & Son who, I understand, are still in existence to this day in London, as printers and publishers. In their time the Sowerbys were all members and Fellows of the Linnaean, Zoological and British Conchological Societies.

In conclusion, what does surprise me is that though many shells were named after them, no Genera were, as was done in the cases of that genius systematist Linnaeus, Bruguiere, Lamarck, Roding and the three Adams, etc. Evidently it was collections only that they examined, already separated into Genus and Sub-Genus, but their work through four generations in the interest of conchology will forever be remembered and referred to, and continue to be of value to us all.

(Acknowledgments to Hawaiian Shell News, and my own copies of Sowerby and Reeve and Marsh & Ripplingale).

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LAMELLARIA AT BONZA BAY by Maimie Rix

The bad weather during the last week of May on the Border Coast, with gale-force winds and rain, caused a very rough sea. However, I took advantage of a suitable break in the weather and made my way to the beach in the hope that something interesting might be found.

I was agreeably surprised at finding a large number of Lamellaria with the animals, dead or dying, and came home with approximately 60 specimens.

Further examination revealed that the rough surf had damaged about half of them and the remainder were in fair condition. All appear to be examples of Lamellaria perspicua Linne, except one, which is definitely one of the rarer Lamellaria mauritiana, though smaller than the one I found here in November 1964.

Usually - about once a year - when I have found these shells, I have only come across about a dozen. Virtually it is a race between me and the gulls, as to who gets them first.

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CONUS VEXILLUM ? GMELIN AT BONZA BAY. by D.H. Kennelly

In Circular No. 82 (page 5) mention was made of this species, tentatively assigned to vexillum. Our member - A.B. Jenner - has informed the writer that the specimen has been re-examined, and proved to be a beach specimen of Conus pictus Reeve.

The foregoing is further proof that beach worn specimens lead to mistakes in identity, and errors in the recorded range of a species.

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DONAX SERRA (CHEMN.) BOLTEN. by D.H. Kennelly

Up to the present time this species has been recorded as living from False Bay to East London. In June the writer visited Kei Mouth, and while collecting found four half grown examples. These specimens were fresh dead, and further enquiry revealed that about four years ago a local angler introduced a small colony of D.serra, which were placed in a suitable beach at Kei Mouth. This imported colony is apparently surviving and increasing up to now.

Mrs Hazel Jefferies informed the writer that the variety D. serra aurantiaca Krauss is to be found at Kei Mouth, and apparently was included in the introduced colony.

Collectors will note that the increase in range now recorded has been brought about by human agency.

Available literature records a juvenile example taken at Durban in 1894 (Barnard 1964), but Cock (1965) does not list this species, and the writer has not found any further reference.

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