

THE CONCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

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Page 1.

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Edited by Leila Kerr.

Meeting.

The next meeting of the Society will be held on Tuesday May 18th at 8.15 p.m. in the Lecture Hall of the S.A. Museum. Will members please bring along their latest finds, especially those lucky ones who have been away on holiday. Exchanges are welcome at any meetings. We hope to show a film of general interest.

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Minutes of Meeting held at the S.A. Museum 20.4.1965.

Only 20 people, including Council members and visitors, were present. Apologies were received from Mr & Mrs J. Ackermann, Miss Leers, Mrs Lowry, Miss Kerr and Mr Ivy. Mr Elston, in the Chair, welcomed René and Les Cock who were visiting the Cape from Natal. The minutes of the previous monthly meeting were taken as read and confirmed.

Mrs A. Blomerus, 405 Lorna Court, Paul Kruger Street, Pretoria was elected as a member of the Society.

The following were proposed as new members:-

Mr Patrick Anseeuw	Proposed by D.H. Kennelly	seconded by L. Kerr
Miss E. Dunstan	" " L. Kerr	" " D. Freeman
Mrs C. Hulley	" " D.H. Kennelly	" " P. Elston
Mrs Mumby	" " N. Smit	" " L. Kerr

Mr Elston reported that Mrs Kuttel's suggestion that the Society hold an exhibition of shells was being investigated and that a hall could be obtained, but that the main difficulty was to find suitable display case and to finance the exhibition. Investigations are proceeding.

Mrs Kerr reported that the Library cupboard was ready to be installed in the Lecture room and that the books were ready for issuing. Transport would be arranged shortly. The four missing library books had not yet been traced and members were asked to make enquiries if possible, to assist with their recovery.

Mr Elston asked for help with the classification of some very interesting specimens of Thais cingulata obtained from Plum Pudding Island, near Chamais Bay off the coast of S.W. Africa. This species is well-known to collectors in its several varieties with up to four spiral ridges, but the specimens were interesting in that some had six spiral ridges and were large, too. Has any member a record of this variety?

Mr Elston also reported that an approach had been made to Mr Sam Collins of the Marine Diamond Corporation for assistance with conchological research on the West Coast, where little or no work has ever been done.

Mr Cock, our country Council member from Natal, then addressed the meeting, giving some indication of the keenness and enthusiasm of the Natal Group, some 22 in number. These have mostly to travel long distances to their meetings every two months, but who, nevertheless, muster an average of about 13 members per meeting. (Cape Town members please note!)

The second birthday of the Natal Group, of whom our Chairman, Mr Percy Elston, was a foundation member, will be celebrated in June of this year. The best wishes of those present at the meeting were conveyed to the Natal Group through Mr & Mrs Cock.

Mrs Prior suggested that members who bring visitors to meetings should pay a small fee towards the Society's funds in addition to tea money. It was not decided to make this a rule, but the Chairman remarked that it was a custom to be encouraged and could be left to the member's discretion.

The meeting agreed that the Chairman should arrange for a small metal

plaque, commemorating the late Dr K.H. Barnard, to be fastened to the new library cupboard.

Mr Jock Dichmont then gave a most fascinating and humorous account of his recent trip to Luanda in Angola, where he found great quantities of shells and no interest in conchology among the local inhabitants. The sandy shore and sea bed, with very little rock, results in an abundance of bivalves, notably Pectens and Cardiums, as well as Olives and Teretra. Among the remarkably fine specimens on display from this successful expedition, were a magnificent Tonna galea, two large and smelly Conus prometheus, a pair of Cymbium cymbium, a large and colourful West Coast Murex, the rare Conus genuanus and many others, some yet unnamed.

The bulk of the collection was obtained by skin diving in fairly deep water, (enlivened by sundry encounters with electric fish and mole-crabs) but very satisfactory results could be obtained in shallow water at low tide and even by beach-combing, all in the vicinity of the modern city of Luanda.

The weather was excessively hot, but would probably be more comfortable from June to August.

Before the nesting ended, members were making plans to go to Luanda, which seems to be a shell-collector's paradise.

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NATAL GROUP.

The next meeting of this Group will take place on Saturday afternoon 12th June at 2.30 p.m. at the Durban Under-water Club House, at the end of Reskine Terrace, Durban.

Mr Dee will be the speaker on matters of general interest.

Incidentally this will be our second birthday meeting; so what about a bumper turnout?

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CHANGE OF ADDRESS.

Mr W.E. Smylie, 2 Gol-Dor, 50 Clyde Street, Port Elizabeth.

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GENERAL NOTES.

Shelling in Luanda.

by Jock Dichmont.

I returned recently from Angola (Portuguese West Africa), where I went on a business/holiday. I dived for a fishing company and off duty sneaked in a bit of shelling. Unfortunately, I was unable, due to currency problems, to get any money into the country so that I could not collect all the shells I wanted. Nevertheless, I brought back about 1,000 shells with me (air freight £25.0.0.). The preponderance of these are multi-coloured Pectens - calico, yellow, red, tiger-striped, purple, orange, brown and any colour you wish to think of. These I found in Luanda Bay lying on sand in 5-12 feet of water. The only trouble was to pick up the specimens most free of barnacle and oyster growth. The scarier specimens are plain red and yellow. Most specimens have one violet valve and one striped or different coloured one. I am yet unable to give a name to two or three species.

I was thrilled to find Cymbium cymbium. I have ten of these only, all live specimens.

In the cone line I found ten huge Conus prometheus, three C.genuana which are rare and I have also five other species of West African cones - three of which are C.ambiguus, C.cedonulli and C.fulmen. The rest, I have not yet been able, in the short time available to me, to identify. I have eight pitch black Fasciolaria with purple mouths striped with white. When the periostracum is removed, they have a white line encircling them. I have ten Strombus latus, a couple of very interesting hairy Cymatium, and some colourful Cancellaria cancellata. I found eight species of Murex; of these I have only single examples of two. I have fifty or sixty swops of the remaining four species, mainly with

out perc., but live specimens. At present these are not named.

I found some gorgeous orange and crimson mouthed big Thais. These are so common that I made my usual mistake and collected only six of them (they are hard to clean). When I opened my cases soon after alighting from the plane and saw how beautiful they are, I could have cried at my stupidity.

I found two species of Cassis - neither appear in any literature I have seen to date; West African shells are very poorly documented.

Diving in deep water, I found five species of Clionella and Clavatula (These shells have a partial slit or notch in the aperture - I think I shall be lucky to have them named). One is Pleurotoma (Clavatula imperialis) I also found quite a few vase shells Latirus filiosus and Latirus nassatulus.

By diving and sweeping the sand by hand in water 10-20 feet deep, apart from being bitten on several occasions by huge undersand crabs and on one occasion receiving a shock from an electric fish which must have lit up like a search light, I found three species of Olives and two Terebra. I also found lovely small Coquins (probably Donax variabilis), Tapes litterata, Beautiful Tellina madagascariensis, Cardium costatum, Solecurtis strigillatus and several other lovely and interesting bivalves which I have not been able to trace. Also on sand I found the Voluta cymbium I have already mentioned (two pairs were found mating), Conus prometheus, Cancellaria cancellata, Fasciolaria and Strombus - the Strombus very active and cheeky, and not the fellow to tuck into your bathing costume! My greasest find was a huge purple mouthed Tonna which, alive, weighed two pounds.

On and under rocks (underwater), I found Nerita, Cymatium, Cypraea, Latirus a few limpets, Arca, Turbo (three only), Trochus (One only), Calliostoma (one only), cup and saucer shell (like a Chinaman's hat with a bottom to it, transparent and interesting), Thais, Drupa, Epitonium (one only), Lima scabra, Bursa, key-hole limpets, Mitras, Murex (many types), Trivia and all sorts of odds and ends.

Of interest is the fact that in each of the big Prometheus cones I found a flat, white, short-legged crab about one inch in length, apparently quite blind. In every huge Pinna mussel (with fingerlike projections) I found there were two big prawns; as their home is open, airy and well lit, they had all their faculties unimpaired.

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Natal Group Notes.

by Les Cock

A good attendance of members of this Group was treated to something out of the ordinary at their March meeting when Dr van Bruggen gave a talk on the Radula, and the method of its extraction.

This was followed by a practical demonstration, after which some slides of the Radula of Conus minimus, which the writer had taken alive at Park Rynie were shown under the microscope. The "arrow" formation of the Conus species was particularly outstanding under magnification.

As the full process takes some time to complete, Dr van Bruggen has offered to give practical instruction to anybody wishing to make a further study of this most interesting sidelight of our hobby.

The writer, on behalf of the Group, expressed regret at the departure of Mr Benton, who leaves us shortly to take up residence in Rhodesia, and wished him and his family all success and happiness in his new home.

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Border Notes.

by D.H. Kennelly

This Easter saw a fine gathering of Shell Collectors and Spear Fishermen at Kei Mouth.

Among the collectors present in addition to the writer, were Hazel Jefferies, Jack and Maxie Ackermann (Cape Town), Edward Dee and son, Richard Gerber, Mrs Childs, Mrs H. de Jager, plus a number of skin divers (spear fishermen), all from Durban. The writer had no opportunity of noting names of all who were present, which is regrettable.

The weather was fine, but some current or other set in, and the water cold

and very murky, which prevented the divers from obtaining the small species of shells.

However, trips were made to Morgan Bay, Double Mouth and Haga Haga, where many fine shells were obtained alive.

Two very fine specimens of Charonia pustulata - with almost complete spires were taken, one by Edward Dee and the other by Richard Gerber. Haliotis midae in galore, fine specimens of Turbo sarmaticus, Patella tabularis, P. oculus, P. longicosta and P. miniata. Jack Ackermann obtained a really fine specimen of Conus natalis var gilchristi, which seems to be very scarce

Strange to say no specimens were obtained of Haliotis sanguinea, the reason being the murky water and the size of the shells. This species is known to live on the part of the coast visited.

However, all those present thoroughly enjoyed their visit, and the Durban folk are determined to come again when it is hoped the water will be warmer and not so murky.

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Cape Notes.

by L. Kerr

The Argonauta are in again, but not so plentiful as last year. Les and René Cook managed to do some shelling while they were here, but unfortunately we could not oblige with a hurricane or two, so not many rare shells were found!

Max and Jack Ackermann are back again and looking fit. Max was lucky to find two Cypraea amphithales at Haga Haga, also a Volva volva. We are looking forward to seeing her shells at the next meeting.

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