

ABOUT MEMBERS.MEETING AT THE S.A. MUSEUM. 21.8.1962

Although we had no Circular, we did have a meeting, and a very good one too. There were many members and friends present to hear Mr Graham Ivy tell us about his "Air Safari", which included a visit to the Tree-Tops Hotel, Nairobi and Zanzibar. He showed many excellent colour slides, especially of Zanzibar. Mr Ivy also brought along specimens of the shells found there. His talk was much appreciated by all.

At this meeting, Mrs N. Prior, Radnor Hotel, Green Point, was elected as a member of the Society.

The following were proposed as new members:-

<u>Name</u>	<u>Proposed by</u>	<u>Seconded by</u>
Mrs V.S. Boulton	L. Kerr	J. Walker
Mrs H.F. Brunette	P. le Roux	L. Kerr
Mr A. Hirst	L. Kerr	M. Kempthorne
Mrs M.A. Rix	D.H. Kennelly	L. Kerr

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FIELD DAY AT MELKBOS. 3.9.1962

Unfortunately the weather was anything but pleasant, with a bitterley cold wind blowing and rain threatening. However the few members who braved the elements seemed to enjoy themselves and it was a good initiation for the beginners. The usual shells were found, including Marginella biannulata and a large Conus elongatus. On turning over the rocks, many eggs of the Cuttlefish (Sepia tuberculata) were observed, with the parent hovering not far away. A few eggs were collected and these hatched while in the jar.

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GENERAL NOTES.OUR SHELL COLLECTING LOCALITIES -(50 Years ago and Today) by D.H. Kennelly

Any collector of long standing, when reviewing past years of seeking shells, must realise the fact that well known localities are today not as prolific in Mollusca, as they were 30/50 years ago.

The progress of science and the march of civilization, always appear to cause havoc in the realms of nature.

In reviewing his experience of collecting in past years, the writer realised that localities today practically all reveal the absence of Seaweed (Marine Algae), between the high and low water levels.

At Port Alfred there was always an abundance of seaweed on the beaches and plenty growing in the Littoral zone. In fact the writer secured many good specimens of shells by hunting through stranded weed years ago.

Within the last two years, a visit to Port Alfred showed an absence of seaweed on the beaches, and no sign of it on the rocks in the Littoral zone. Today seaweed makes its appearance only after heavy weather, when the rough sea brings weed ashore from below low water mark.

The reader may ask what the foregoing has to do with shell collecting, and the answer is that it has a great influence on the molluscan population.

Seaweed in the Littoral zone provides shelter and food for numerous species of vegetarian mollusca, and the latter in turn provide food for the carnivorous species.

The dying off of the seaweed is naturally followed by gradual elimination of the vegetarians, and in turn the carnivores disappear because of the lack of their food.

The reason for the gradual disappearance of marine algae from between the tide marks, may be summed up in one word - OIL.

Fifty years ago all ships were steam driven, and used coal. Today

oil provides the power, and it is the waste oil drifting to our shores which does the damage, particularly during World War II when many ships were damaged, if not sunk, off our coast.

All the known collecting localities from Port Elizabeth right up the east coast to Natal, have been damaged to a greater or lesser extent by the waste oil. Jeffrets Bay is one of the most fortunate. This well known spot is tucked away far back from the shipping route in St. Francis Bay. Passing vessels are far out of sight, and Jeffreys Bay appears to have suffered less damage than places along the east coast.

Collectors may take heart for the picture is not altogether black. Molluscs living below low water level are not affected, nor are the sand dwellers such as Donax, Tellina, Macoma, Solen, etc. - the oil does not seem to reach these species.

During recent collecting trips in the vicinity of East London, the writer noted with pleasure that some species of Patella are making a re-appearance. The shells are immature, but there must be small algae not visible to the naked eye, growing on the rocks to provide the necessary food.

Mother nature is obviously taking steps to repair the damage done by man.

The writer has no experience of collecting in the area Mossel Bay to Saldanha Bay, and it would be of interest to learn what others have noted in the area mentioned.

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SHELLING NOTES. by P.J. le Roux.

The highlights of my "Forever seeking seldom finding" beachcombing expedition to the Transkei and Natal coasts south of Durban were:-

- a. Two of that rare mysterious or should I say elusive chiton - Thaumastochiton isipingoensis. The largest animal alive being $2 \frac{3}{8}$ inch long and $1 \frac{1}{8}$ inch wide but shrunk to $1 \frac{5}{8}$ by $7/8$ th when dried. The smaller one ended up $9/10$ by $3/5$ inches.
- b. A seven valve Chiton, name unknown to me, size when dried 1 inch
- c. The haunts of Pteryumurex mitraeformis were discovered but not a single specimen of the near relative Pteryumurex uncinarius was found
- d. An animal about $3 \frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter resembling more or less Umbrella indica was found at Coffee Bay. On dissecting the tough animal a thin, pellucid and fragile shell, about 1 inch long, $\frac{3}{4}$ inch wide and $\frac{1}{2}$ inch deep, with small spire and large aperture was observed. The shell was entirely and permanently concealed by the animals body. The upper surface of the animal had small hard wart-like elevations. Presumably it is a Lamellaria species

All the shells referred to above were taken live. May I suggest that in future only notes on shells taken alive be included in the monthly circular. Let us leave the beach rolled specimens at Bonza Bay, Jeffreys Bay etc, to the children and become Conchologists rather than mere shell collectors. We might not be able to write about Voluta africanasa and the new beach rolled varieties of Jeffreys Bay but our Circular will be all the better without them.

The most noticeable and shocking phenomenon observed was that the Natal and Transkei natives were denuding the coast of all shells. Daily, but more especially during the spring tides, they overturn stones and collect all shells, big and small, including chitons, for eating purposes. They even take sea urchins and in fact anything alive that they can lay their hands on. In the West Indies urchins or so-called sea eggs are regarded as delectable.

On seeing the destruction of our sea fauna one is inclined to judge the natives harshly but it must be remembered that we Europeans are as guilty or even more so for we allow our Haliotis (Perlemoen) to be collected by the thousands. A perlemoen diver only last week told me that a Mr G., an out of work and now a diver - presumably all out of work become perlemoen

divers - is getting on nicely for during the week he for the first time collected just over 1000 perlemoen (Haliotis midae) in one day.

The question is what we, as a Society, should do for the conservation of sea life on our shores. Individual members have worked through their respective municipalities, but the Society as such might approach and advise the Government on the preservation of our marine fauna.

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CYPRAEA VITELLUS DAMA, Perry (A Colour Variation). by D.H. Kennelly

This species is well known to most - if not all - of our members, and these notes have been compiled to bring to notice what appears to be an unusual colour in two immature specimens. These two shells show the apex of the spire, but the ground colour of the shells is black, whereas the usual colour is a brownish hue.

The East London Museum has four other immature shells, of about the same stage of development, - and these have the usual brownish ground colour.

One of the "black" shells was found on the South Coast, Natal, and the other at Inthlonyane, Transkei.

Should any of our members have any further information in connection with the colour of "vitellus dama" at any particular stage of growth, it will be of interest to have their notes included in a Circular.

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BORDER NOTES. by D.H. KENNELLY

We record with pleasure the latest news of our leading collector Helen Boswell - and her effort in collecting at the Phillipines, Japan, and the middle east during the past three months.

Complete details are not available, but it is known that this enthusiastic collector has added nearly 40 species of Conus, 5 Cypraea and a magnificent specimen of the rare Spondylus aculeatus from the Red Sea, to a collection already recognised as the finest privately owned.

In addition Helen managed to put in three weeks as an unpaid assistant in the Department of Mollusca, British Museum.

This was a unique and grand experience, which resulted in much additional knowledge being gained about genera of particular interest to the "unpaid assistant".

Border and Eastern Province members are now looking forward to the annual "unofficial" Society meetings, when Helen makes her usual visit to this part of the country.

Within easy reach of East London, there are a number of well known camping and fishing localities, all of which yield shells worth collecting. As the opportunity occurred, the writer has been out collecting with a view to adding to the records of the range of South African shells. This information is available to all collectors visiting East London, and enquiries at the museum will be welcomed

While collecting recently at Bonza Bay, near East London, the writer had the good fortune to obtain another specimen of the rare Cypraea amphithales, Melvill.

The type locality is given by Joyce Allan as South Africa, and the range as Port Elizabeth to Port Alfred.

According to the records of the East London Museum, this species occurs at Jeffreys Bay, Port Alfred, East London district (2 localities), and Mbotjie, Pondoland, so it is obvious the range is more extensive than recorded by Joyce Allan.

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EASTERN PROVINCE NOTES. by D.H. Kennelly

The writer was fortunate in being able to pay a weekend visit to Uitenhage recently, and lost no time in contacting our "lucky" member, E.C. Wicks.

Certainly "Ginger" does not allow the seaweed to grow under his feet when collecting at Jeffreys Bay. The catch during the past month revealed a very good show of shells, both in variety of species and quality of specimens.

Outstanding is a specimen of Argonauta hians, Solander, in perfect condition.

The most unusual shell found is a one inch, unbroken example of Haliotis sanguinea, Hanley. Examination revealed that this species had originally possessed the usual seven open holes, but for an unknown reason every hole had been closed with nacre, probably causing the death of the animal.

The writer has collected this species for years and has also seen innumerable examples collected by others, but this is the first time a shell has been seen in the condition mentioned.

It would be interesting to learn if more Haliotidae have been collected by members, which exhibit the peculiar condition detailed above.

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CAPE NOTES. by L. Kerr

Our recent stormy weather has provided Mrs Connolly and the writer with some very interesting field trips. At Muizenberg, shells were washed up that are rarely seen alive. A good number of Cymatium africanum, Cymatium doliarum, Xenogalea zeylanica (Cassis achatina), Tellina madagascariensis, Fusus verruculatus, Pupillaea aperta, Lutraria capensis, Tapes corrugata, Lima rotundata and Natica genuana were found. The Cymatium africanum were exceptionally good, being in three different colours - bright orange, yellow and purple-brown. The honours, however, went to Clarice Connolly, for finding at low tide, several Demoulia abbreviata living in the sand. This is indeed a record, and specimens were presented to the Museum and the University. Not content with this, Clarice found two Demoulia retusa, the first taken alive from the False Bay shore. Mrs Connolly is to be congratulated on her patient field work.

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P.S. The writer found a large Conus simplex, alive, 2 1/10 ins. long, also at Muizenberg among the rocks. (Record for my own collection)

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