

# The Strandloper

BULLETIN OF THE CONCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA



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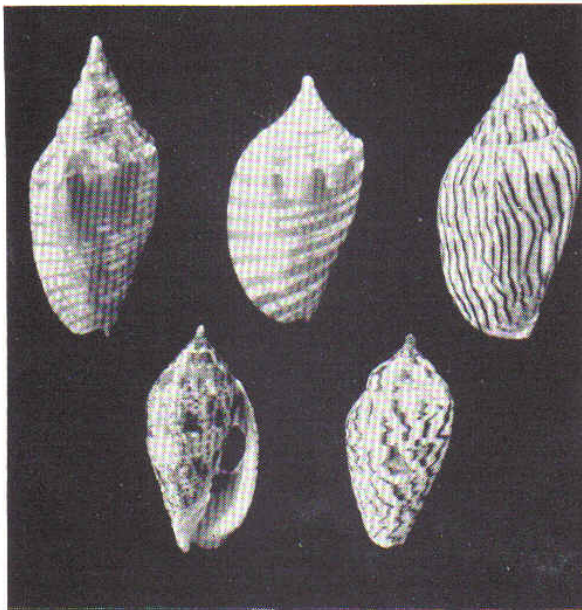
## FRESH SPECIMENS OF *VOLUTA ARAUSIACA* SOL, 1786 TRAWLED BY TAIWANESE

by  
P.W. CLOVER

On my trip to Ceylon (Sri Lanka) some ten years ago one of the shells I wanted to find most of all was the 'Orange Flag Volute' known then as *V. vexillum* Gmelin, 1791. This famous shell of the eighteenth century was called the Prince of Orange's flag volute because its colour pattern was similar to the stripes on a flag.

With my friend Rod Jonklaas we did manage to locate one or two specimens in old collections, but he had never found them alive nor learned of its actual habitat till the 1960's, when they were located off Trincomalee, in sand, at depths of from 5 to 10 fathoms (see HSN 171-5 and HSN 187-5). The typical flag patterned form is found in this area (photograph top centre, 69mm).

During the past few months Taiwanese fishermen trawling



Top left: *Voluta arausiaca* - brick pattern form  
Top centre: *Voluta arausiaca* - flag pattern form  
Top right: *Voluta laroisi*  
Bottom: *Voluta lapponica* - two colour forms

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\*\*\*\*\*  
\*  
\* The President, Vice-President, Group Chairmen  
\* and members of the Council  
\* wish to take this opportunity to wish  
\* all members the  
\* Compliments of the Season.  
\*  
\* May you all enjoy a Happy and Bright Christmas  
\* and a  
\* Prosperous New Year  
\*  
\*\*\*\*\*

## LITTORINIDS OF SOUTH AFRICA

by  
R. HUGHES  
(Bangor University, North Wales)

### (1) *Littorina knysnaensis*, A genetic cline?

While I was a visiting lecturer to the University of Cape Town from July-December 1975, I became embroiled in a bit of *Littorina* taxonomy. Littorinids hitherto recorded from South Africa include *L. africana*, *L. knysnaensis*, *L. pintado*, *L. punctata*, *L. kraussi*, *L. scabra* and *Nodilittorina natalensis*. In the warm temperate Cape Province most of the rocky shores are at least moderately exposed and the extensive splash zone is dominated by *L. knysnaensis*, a usually dark brown snail. There are no other littorinas further down on the shore, conforming with the general trend in warmer climates for littorinas to be confined to high shore levels. There is on the other hand, an exceedingly diverse guild of limpets - see recent papers by George Branch in *J. Anim. Ecol.* Among the *L. knysnaensis* from False Bay to Agulhas are occasional pale blue snails currently known as *L. africana*. Throughout most of the Cape Province these occur in frequencies of less than 0.1%. While searching for *L. africana* I found many *L. knysnaensis* with pale blue upper margins of the whorls. I often found it difficult to tell *L. africana* from *L. knysnaensis* and wondered if they were really two morphs of the same species. Later I made collections at points all along the coast from Lamberts Bay in the Atlantic to Cape Vidal in the sub-tropical Indian Ocean. Proceeding from Agulhas

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(Continued from page 1 column 2)

round to the Transkei, *L. africana* increases in frequency on certain types of light coloured rocks. On dark rocks it remains at a very low frequency or is virtually absent. In Natal, *L. africana* is more abundant than *L. knysnaensis* on all rocks and in Northern Natal only *L. africana* is present. An 'intermediate' kind of *africana* with the blue background overlain with brown markings was found in low frequencies in the Transkei and in Natal. The forms at Port St. Johns (Transkei) were superficially similar to *L. pintado* and previous records of this species probably refer to certain colour morphs of *africana*. Some populations of *africana* in Natal contained individuals with a heavy covering of dark brown dashes in a pattern similar to the tessellated morphs of *L. rudis*. These individuals were always very small, living in crevices and were reminiscent of *L. neglecta*. From the extensive collection brought back from S. Africa I have assembled a series of colour varieties ranging from the typical dark *knysnaensis*, through *knysnaensis* with pale blue bands and *africana* with brown markings to typical pale blue *africana*. Examination of many individuals failed to reveal any differences in radula or penis morphology. I strongly suspect therefore, that we have a single species showing a genetic cline along a temperature gradient, with pale blue morphs at the warmer end of the gradient being replaced by dark morphs at the cooler end. It is reasonable to assume that the pale blue snails remain cooler in strong sunlight than the dark brown snails.

Having set up this hypothesis I was particularly excited when Derek Roberts returned from his holiday at Ios, Greece with a collection of *L. neritoides* containing among the normal dark forms many pale blue varieties almost identical in colour pattern and tone to *L. africana*. A case of parallel evolution? We need collections and estimates of morph frequencies from representative points along the gradient from cool temperate to warm temperate or subtropical shores. Can anyone help? It is perhaps significant that *L. knysnaensis-africana* and *neritoides* are both splash zone littorinids facing very similar environmental problems.

### (2) *L. rudis*, a rafted immigrant?

The annual rainfall in S. Africa is so low that permanent estuaries are rare. Most rivers dry up to a trickle in the dry season and a sand bar forms across the mouth. Salt-marshes are consequently rare, but there are two good examples in the Cape Province, one on the west coast at Langebaan lagoon (not a proper estuary) and the other along the south coast at Knysna. At both these places there are extensive *Spartina* beds supporting dense populations of *L. rudis*. The Langebaan *rudis* are all tessellated with extremely thin shells, growing up to 15mm long. The background colour ranges from almost black through grey or pale brown to dirty white. The Knysna *rudis* are also tessellated, although some individuals show only the background colour. The range of background colours differs from Langebaan, being predominantly an unusual pale amber-brown. The thin shells never exceed 10mm long and they mature at about 5mm. Evidently the Langebaan and Knysna populations have considerably different gene pools. Several smaller estuarine habitats along the south coast support *L. rudis* but none have been found east of Knysna. None apparently occur

north of Langebaan and it is extremely unlikely that suitable habitats occur in S.W. Africa. How did *L. rudis* get to these isolated pockets in S. Africa? We need more information on the distribution of *L. rudis* from N. Africa down to the West African coastline. Does anyone have information on this? The S. African *rudis* is the salt marsh morph (tessellated) very similar to those from the same habitats in Europe. Perhaps *rudis* rafted down to S. Africa having been flushed out of a northern estuary; unfortunately the Benguela current runs in the wrong direction. Neither Langebaan nor Knysna are major shipping ports today, but in the days of the 'Voortrekkers' Knysna was the first and only safe harbour along the south coast so that *rudis* may have been a stowaway.

The dark, white-flecked individuals of *rudis* are superficially similar to *L. punctata* and records of the latter species probably refer to *rudis*. I never found *punctata* which (like *knysnaensis*) is in the subgenus *Austrolittorina* Rosewater, 1970 and an inhabitant of the splash zone on rocky shores. *L. punctata* extends from the Mediterranean to S.W. Africa where it peters out – perhaps replaced by *knysnaensis* as an ecological equivalent.

### (3) The other littorinids

I am glad to say there is no confusion with the other S. African littorinids, *L. kraussi*, *L. scabra* and *Nodilittorina natalensis*. All three are high shore-level tropical Indian Ocean species extending down to the Transkei. *L. scabra* tends to occur in more sheltered situations, especially in brackish water and is a dominant member of the Mangrove fauna further north. Populations of *L. kraussi* and *Nodilittorina* overlap with *knysnaensis-africana* and I didn't manage to disentangle the subtleties of their niche differences except to say that *kraussi* tended to occur highest on the shore. The general fauna begins to change from temperate to tropical in the Transkei, still under the influence of the south flowing limb of the Mozambique current and it is here that the guild of limpets, which had dominated the grazing gastropods in the Cape Province, becomes less diverse and is joined by *Nerita* spp. which are clearly the mid to low intertidal tropical equivalents of similarly zoned littorinids of north temperate regions. *Nerita albicilla* occurs at low tide level with *N. plicata* and *N. textilis* at the upper mid shore levels. *N. umlaasiana* appears fairly high up on sheltered shores in Natal, especially near the influence of freshwater.

We would welcome any article of interest to  
Shell Collectors for future publication.

### PUBLICATIONS FOR SALE

The Society has copies of the following publications for sale at the prices stated:

- A Preliminary list of S.A. Marine Shells found on the Natal/Zululand Coast by B.L. Cock **R0,50**
- Additional list of S.A. Marine Shells found on the Natal/Zululand Coast by B.L. Cock **R0,50**

Write to the Secretary, P.O. Box 98, Howard Place 7450.

## CHECKLIST OF THE FICIDAE OF THE WORLD

by

R.N. KILBURN

(Natal Museum)

The following checklist covers the known species of Ficidae, and is offered as a postscript to my account of the South African *Ficus*. A few unnecessary varietal names created by 19th Century authors are omitted. As an aid to identification, references are given to figures in recently published books. Synonymies are simplified by the omission of generic names.

*Ficus* Röding, 1798

## a) Indo-West Pacific species:

- (1) *ficus* (Linn., 1767)  
Synonyms: *variegata* Röding, 1798; *laevigata* Reeve, 1847.  
Figured: Habe, pl. 23, fig. 10; Kilburn, pl. 1a.  
Range: Japan and Indonesia to South Africa.
- (2) *subintermedia* (D'Orbigny, 1852)  
Synonyms: *ficoides* Lamarck, 1822 (*non* Brocchi, 1814); *margaretae* Iredale, 1931.  
Figured: Dance, p. 120; Kira, pl. 23, fig. 11; Wilson & Gillett, pl. 49, fig. 9.  
Range: Japan and Fiji to South Africa.
- (3) *ressellata* (Kobelt, 1881)  
Figured: Wilson & Gillett, pl. 49, fig. 8.  
Range: North-Western Australia.  
Note: *Pyrula eospila* Peron, 1807, may prove to be an earlier name for this species.
- (4) *dussumieri* (Kiener, 1840)  
Synonym: *elongata* Gray, 1839 (*non* Lamarck, 1822)  
Figured: Dance, p. 120; Kira, pl. 23, fig. 12 (as *gracilis*)  
Range: South China Sea and Gulf of Siam.  
Note: *Pyrula gracilis* Sowerby, 1825, has been used by recent authors as an earlier name for *dussumieri*. However, Kosuge & Nomoto (1972) regard the name *gracilis* as applicable to a species from East Africa and the Gulf of Aden (evidently *F. investigatoris* (Smith)), and utilize *dussumieri* for the eastern subspecies of this. I agree with C.H. Bayer (1939) that Sowerby's original description of *gracilis* contains too few details for identification and prefer to treat it as a *nomen dubium*.
- (5) *investigatoris* (Smith, 1894)  
Range: East coast of India, 98–102 fathoms, and probably elsewhere in the north-west Indian Ocean.  
Note: possibly a subspecies of *F. dussumieri*.
- (6) *sewelli* (Prasad, 1927)  
Range: Laccadive Seas, 167–180 fathoms.  
Remarks: Doubtfully distinct from *F. investigatoris*.
- (7) *filosa* (Sowerby, 1892)  
Figured: Habe, pl. 24, fig. 9.  
Range: Japan and south China Sea to east coast of Australia.

## b) Western Hemisphere:

- (8) *ventricosa* (Sowerby, 1825)  
Synonym: *decussata* Wood, 1828  
Figured: Abbott, col. pl. 6, no. 1880; Keen, fig. 952.  
Range: Gulf of California to Peru.
  - (9) *communis* Röding, 1798.  
Synonyms: *reticulata* Lamarck, 1816; *papyratia* Say, 1822; *gracili* Philippi, 1848 (*non* Sowerby, 1825);  
Figured: Abbott, col. pl. 6, no. 1796; Dance p. 120.  
Range: Gulf of Mexico to North Carolina.
  - (10) *carolae* Clench, 1945  
Figured: Abbott, fig. 1797.  
Range: Florida to Mexico, 100 fathoms.  
Note: According to Abbott this may be a deep water form of *F. communis*.
  - (11) *howelli* Clench & Aguayo, 1940.  
Synonym: *atlantica* Clench & Aguayo, 1940.  
Figured: Abbott, figs 1798, 1799.  
Range: Lower Caribbean and Brazil, 175–450 fathoms.  
Note: F.M. Bayer (1971) showed *atlantica* to be based on a female example, *howelli* on a male, the sexes differing slightly in colour pattern. An earlier name for the species may be *Ficus pellucida* (Deshayes, 1856).
- Thalassocyon* Barnard, 1960
- (12) *bonus* Barnard, 1960  
Figured: Kensley, p. 131, no. 442.  
Range: off west coast of Cape Peninsula, 2268–3036 metres.
  - (13) *tui* Dell, 1967  
Range: off North Island, New Zealand, and off the Kermadec Islands, 746–1692 metres.

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## THE IMPORTANCE OF LABELS

by A.C. VAN BRUGGEN

Unfortunately few people realise how important labels are for a good shell collection. Too many rely on their memories as far as locality is concerned, while putting great value on the names of the species on their labels. It has to be stressed, however, that we will always be able to check the name later on, but that it is utterly impossible for anyone but the finder or owner (and even they are liable to forget!) to check the locality. We may even go so far as to say that a specimen without a label has lost most, if not all, of its value to the serious collector.

The label tells us where the shell has been found and our knowledge of the distribution of a species is simply based on numerous labels belonging to numerous specimens. Consequently wrong labels give wrong information, such as species allegedly occurring outside their normal area, etc. Specimens without labels may give us unreliable information (from the often faulty memory of the collector) or no information at all.

A good label should contain the following data:

1. Locality; 2. Basic ecological information (if any);
  3. Date; 4. Name of collector and/or donor, and 5. Name of species (this is not imperative and can be added any time).
- It is not practical to have more information on the actual label, because space tends to be restricted. The catalogue should contain all additional data, such as name and qualifications of the person who identified the shell, additional remarks on the habitat, exchange, purchase price (if any), etc.

The following are (fictitious) examples of labels for various shells:

*Marginella spec.*  
East London, on rocks (tidal)  
23.X.1939, leg. J. Burns

*Afrivoluta pringlei* Tomlin  
Off Cape Recife, trawled at 50 fathoms  
13.VII.1959, leg. A.K. Young  
don. Port Elizabeth Museum.

*Achatina panthera*  
Natal, Dukuduku Forest,  
among dead leaves  
1.I.1949, leg. F. Smart

*Cypraea lamarecki*  
Durban, Salisbury Island (beach)  
2.II.1952, leg. S. Hell  
don. D.C. Drakensberg

*Gutella (?)*  
Alexandria Forest,  
on bark of trees  
3-10.VI.1960, leg. T. Thumb

*Lymnaca natalensis* Krs.  
Great Kei R., near bridge at Volksdorp, stagnant pools  
3.III.1963, leg. Portuguese Expedition 1962-63,  
don. Lisbon Zool. Museum.

The above-mentioned examples are concise labels to be

put in the box or tube with the relevant specimen(s). The abbreviation "leg." is short for the Latin term "legit", which means "has collected"; it has been dropped by many collectors, especially entomologists who must be more concise in their labels on account of their size. The abbreviation "don." stands for "donor" or "donation", although originally it also was a Latin term.

The date is of some importance for various reasons. Certain marine species come inshore to spawn at certain times of the year, others are fond of warm or cold water, etc.; the dates on the labels enable us to find out as much about the life cycle of the species as can be expected from a specimen in a collection. It also helps us to trace the whereabouts of the collector and his trips, especially in the case of old travellers. Finally, the source of donated or exchanged specimens should always be mentioned for the sake of the record: finding a specimen of a rare species in the collection of Mr. X, donated by the Port Elizabeth Museum, I can write to the Port Elizabeth Museum and ask them if they have seen more of this rare shell. Do never discard original labels that have come with your donated or exchanged specimens; They are also valuable records enabling us e.g. to trace handwritings, etc.: they should be kept in a box or tube with your own label. I know from experience in working in large museum collections overseas how important this is.

It is probably a well known fact that all labels should be written on good paper with indelible ink, preferably black waterproof drawing ink. Ballpoint and ordinary inks tend to fade over the years, more particularly when exposed to sunlight. Labels should be kept with the specimens and, in the case of closed boxes or glass tubes, kept inside these containers. Pasting on of labels is never really satisfactory, apart from the fact that no glue or paste holds indefinitely. There is no chance of losing your labels when they are inside; the larger the collection the more important this fact is. The same applies also to specimens in liquid preservatives.

One last point is of prime importance too. The specimen(s) and label should be kept together in the collection. This sounds in fact easier than it is. Especially in large collections where the specimens are being handled frequently, they are not always put back in their proper places. And sometimes the opening and closing of drawers makes shells jump out of their proper boxes. Therefore the catalogue number should appear both on the shell and the label; if this is the case, then the specimen can never be mislaid, notwithstanding the fact that it is taken out of its drawer and compared to a large number of similar shells or that it probably may jump out of its shallow box or tray.

Always remember: the better the label, the more valuable the shell.

(Editor's Note - This article was originally published in Circular No. 27 of November, 1961.)

(Continued from page 1 column 1)

off south west Ceylon have found an equally beautiful form that I call 'brick patterned' as the orange bands are crossed with lines and rectangular solid areas of orange which gives the effect of stacked bricks (photograph top left, 93mm). This is the form illustrated by Weaver and du Pont on plate 53 of their book.

While this shell remains very rare it would appear that there are two separate forms, due to different localities or habitats, to be found off Ceylon.

The two shells illustrated in the bottom of the photograph are typical *V.lapponica* Linne, with the one on the right being called '*loroisi*' in Weavers book. In fact the real *V.loroisi* is a separate and valid species also found off northern Ceylon (photograph top right).

**CHANGES TO JANUARY 1976 MEMBERSHIP LIST**

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**EXCHANGES WANTED**

- Mr. J. Billet, Residence Monthyon, Appt. No. 22 Rue Jacob, 97400 St. Denis, Ile de la Reunion. Is particularly interested in obtaining *Cypraea algoensis*, *C.amphitales* and *C.fusconubra* and would like to exchange for these shells.
- Mr. G.F. Baker, 2A Voorheesville Ave., Voorheesville, New York 12186, and his son aged 12 would like to correspond and exchange with members.
- Mr. N. Coleman, 17 Petter St., Glen Waverly, Victoria 3150 Australia offers specimen Australian shells and is interested in exchanging for S.A. specimens of all families.
- Mrs. P. Vause, P.O. Box 41, Albany, North Auckland, New Zealand wants to contact S.A. collectors in order to exchange New Zealand shells for S.A. specimens.
- Tish Parks, 159-91st Street, Stone Harbor, New Jersey, U.S.A. 08247 would like to contact members willing to trade local S.A. shells for those from her area.
- Mrs. K. Stewart, 19 La Rancheria, Carmel Valley, California 93924, U.S.A., would like to get specimens of S.A. Haliotidae, especially *H.queketti*, *H.speciosa* and *H.parva*, by means of exchange.

For its small reference library the Eastern Cape Group wants to buy a copy of Turton's "The Marine Shells of Port Alfred".  
Please contact the Secretary, Mr. F. Graeve, P.O. Box 2054, Port Elizabeth 6000

**INTERTIDAL TALK**

In the Strandloper No. 172 we published an article by Mr. R. Kilburn on the Ficidae in South Africa. As a result of this Mr. W.E.J. Walles wrote informing us that in addition to the two species mentioned by Mr. Kilburn he had found another two species within the area specified. Mr. Walles writes that he found one of them when in Kenya and determined it, according to samples in the Corryndon Museum at Nairobi, as *F.reticulata*. More of similar shells were found in Moçambique at Vilanculos, Inhambane and Zavora. In the same habitats another species (unnamed), also about 70mm long, was found, sometimes alive. These are distinguished from the former species by being smaller and by distinctly finer spiral and axial sculpture.

Mr. Kilburn was asked to comment on these remarks and


in reply submitted an article entitled "Checklist of the Ficidae of the World", which we publish elsewhere in this issue. It is interesting to note that Mr. Kilburn agrees with other authorities by stating that *F.reticulata* is a synonym of *F.communis* and is a North American shell.

Mr. Fred Graeve informs us that lately he has been looking at shelly sand through a magnifying glass and has found quite a number of interesting minute shells. At least four species have been sent to Mr. Kilburn which he did not have in the collection of the Natal Museum, two of these being species of Vitrinellidae. Best of luck to Mr. Graeve on this eye-straining way of collecting shells. The main problem is that when such small shells are found, it is very difficult to identify them as these miniatures are seldom, if ever, mentioned in the books.

Shell shows seem to be the in-thing at the moment. In July the Eastern Cape Group exhibited at the Hobbies Fair in Port Elizabeth. This month the Pretoria Group are putting on their annual show and the Natal Group are planning a show for Durban early in the New Year. And now, the Cape Town members have been asked to put on an exhibition for the 1977 Cape Town Festival some time in April next year. Further details to be announced later.

We have to announce that Mr. and Mrs. Watt have resigned from the Council of the Society and we would like to take this opportunity of thanking them for their faithful service as Council Members over the last couple of years. The Council will, in terms of the Constitution, co-opt members to fill the vacancies until the next Annual General Meeting.

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## AROUND THE GROUPS

**CAPE TOWN:** The shells on display at our October meeting were the Volutes and after these had been discussed and admired our guest speaker, Mr. Rees, Secretary of the False Bay Conservation Society, took us on a skin diving tour, illustrated with slides, of Madagascar. This was very interesting and thoroughly enjoyed by all present.

**EAST LONDON:** At our October meeting an illustrated talk on Tonnidae was given. There were some fine specimens on display, including some large ones taken alive off the East London coast (*Tonna variegata* measuring 4½ by 3½ inches). There was also a perfect *Tonna dunkeri* with periostracum intact and showing a slight orange colour on the columella. With the display were some echinoderms and dried crustaceans to illustrate what these shells mainly live on.

**DURBAN:** We all met for our last meeting at the home of John and Pat Dalgarno in Umkomaas. The family discussed was Harpadae and some beautiful specimens were displayed. Jack Scheepers gave a talk on the family in general. Pat then showed her well displayed collection which was admired by all and her super teas was thoroughly enjoyed. Work is progressing favourably on the cases for our show and members are starting to plan their displays — each member will display a specific family. Our field outing to Vetch's Pier on 23rd September, although not very well attended, did produce some rather good finds including a very nice pair of *Maculotriton serriale* and a 116,5mm long *Cymatium parthenopeum*.

**PORT ELIZABETH:** Our October meeting started promptly with members immediately getting to grips with the family for discussion — Patellidae. Most members had brought very good collections and by studying and comparing all collections were brought up to date with the correct names being added. Mrs. Ball had found a live *Demoulia ventricosa* in a rock pool in Algoa Bay, while she also showed two *Patella compressa* taken alive from washed up kelp, which had drifted along the coast from the Western Cape some years ago. Also out of its range was a *Polinices sebae* found by Mrs. Burnett at Jeffreys Bay.

**PRETORIA:** Most of our October meeting was taken up with discussions and arrangements for the Shell Show. It was recorded that Mr. Kilburn had agreed to attend as judge. Dr. E. van Hoepen then demonstrated his 'cleaning machine' which proved to be most effective. The family Bursidae was then discussed and the meeting ended after the tea break.

### MEMBERSHIP LIST

A new up-to-date list of members is at the moment being compiled. To assist us it would be appreciated if you would let us know if your address as shown on the envelope is correct — especially the postal codes. If you intend changing your address between now and the end of January please let us have your new address now for incorporation in the new list.