

THE CONCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

CIRCULAR NO. 9.

SEPTEMBER, 1959
(Re-printed 1977)

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MEETING:

Our next meeting will be held at Millers Point on Sunday October 4th. This is our first field outing after the winter season and we hope that the weather will be good and that many members will be able to come. Anybody wanting transport should contact Mrs L. Kerr (Phone 75369), who will arrange lifts.

It will be springtide and low water is at 9.36 a.m. Members are therefore advised to come as early as possible so that they can make good use of the low tide. As usual, visitors will be welcome.

At about 11 a.m. we will hold a short meeting to deal with the following matters:-

- (1) Minutes of last meeting.
- (2) Matters arising out of the Minutes
- (3) Election of members
- (4) Proposal of new members
- (5) Any other business.

ABOUT MEMBERS:

New members. At our last meeting, held on August 11th., the following new members were elected:-

S Miss C. Barnett, 11 Forest Place, Pinelands, C.P.
S Miss W. Brown, "Guilford", Greenways, Rondebosch, C.P.
S Master R. Day, 47 Liesbeeck Road, Rosebank, C.P.
S Miss P. Rayner, 32 Severn Road, Plumstead, C.P.
Mrs J. Uys, Erstekop, Heidelberg, C.P.
Dr E.C.N. van Hoepen, "Rendezvous", P.O. Box 6, Hluhluwe, Zululand.
S Miss P. Whitehead, Phystan", Pitt St., Plumstead, C.P.
S Miss S. Wood, "Hawequa", St. Thomas Road, Newlands, C.P.

Proposed members. Apart from those listed in Circular No. 8, the following were proposed on August 11th:-

	Proposer:	Seconder:
Dr H. Ackert	D.W.J. Ackermann	M.G. Kempthorne
Mrs H. Ackert	D.W.J. Ackermann	M.G. Kempthorne
Miss Jill Gould	L. Kerr	C. Swaneveld
Mrs M.H. Wallers	D.W.J. Ackermann	M.G. Kempthorne

At our next meeting the following will be proposed for membership:-

	Proposer:	Seconder:
Mrs S.D. Clouts	D. Greeff	L. Kerr
Mr E.C. Wicks	D.H. Kennelly	C. Swaneveld

GENERAL NOTES:

Subscriptions for the year 1959/1960 are now due, and members who have not yet paid are kindly requested to send us their remittances. Please do this now, so that we do not have to send out reminders. This will save us a lot of time, worry and unnecessary expense.

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Many thanks to Mrs Joan Weakley for donating two guineas to the Society which was given to her after giving a lecture on shells at Monterey School at Wynberg.

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We want to correct an impression which may have been created by a notice which appeared in our last circular. We mentioned that Mrs Weakley had been corresponding with a Miss R. Cleverley in New Zealand. This is incorrect, In fact, this name was given to Mrs Weakley by one of her many

exchange friends and she is, therefore, not a personal acquaintance of Mrs Weakley.

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Our corresponding member, Mr J. Drijver, 10 Sleedoornplantsoen, Wagening, Holland, writes that his stock of duplicates is nearly exhausted and wants to know whether any of our members is interested in exchanging shells for stamps. All undamaged fresh shells are welcome and they do not need to be identified. This is a good opportunity for stamp collectors to get some stamps from Europe.

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Mrs Joan Tuer writes us from Bulawayo as follows:-

"In connection with the Notes on the Genus "Bullia" on page 4 of Circular No. "8, I thought perhaps Mr Kennelly might be interested to know that during a "holiday at St. Lucia in August 1956, I collected live specimens of Bullia natalensis. These molluscs were feeding voraciously on Physalia on the "shore-line, much in the manner of rhodostoma, and were present in very "large numbers. A specimen which I sent subsequently to Dr Barnard was "identified by him as Bullia natalensis (Krauss). No other Bullia were "seen either alive or dead on this coast - in fact the shell life generally "was very sparse".

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Miss Kempthorne feels that some extracts from letters which she has received from overseas conchologists may be of interest to members who would like some idea of the value of shells they possess or would like to acquire.

From Queensland, information received is that:- "Some very rare volutes are being found at Keppel Bay on the Great Barrier Reef. Voluta pulchra pulchra at £1. 5. 0. per inch. Voluta canaliculata which is very rare at £15. each. These deep trawled specimens will be on the market later on and could be obtained on application to the writer of this information. Prices of shells in Australia appear to be very high, Charonia tritonis at £3, Voluta grossi £10, Voluta nelsoni £4. The hobby of collecting shells certainly seems highly commercialised.

A correspondent in Florida who sent some beautiful small spondylus she had caught alive in exchange for S.A. Shells writes, after being asked for larger specimens:- "Only the sponge divers get the large ones, and these canny gentlemen want from 10 to 20 dollars apiece, while a dealer charges 25 dollars and up. The fine large spiny specimens come from protected locations in deep water. The sponge divers also do good business in lion's paws at 5 dollars a piece and up. We have many wealthy collectors in Florida!!"

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A MEMORABLE VISIT TO A SHELL COLLECTOR: by Helene Boswell

During a recent trip to Japan, I was given the name and address of a shell collector, living about 50 miles from Tokyo. I was a little hesitant about arranging to visit this Mr Kakujiro Hosoya, as it meant using up a whole day of the precious time at our disposal in that city. However, I am deeply grateful that I did, as I am left with a vivid memory of a few hours in my life that I shall never forget.

We arrived at what was apparently Mr Hosoya's mealtime, so were shown, by a relative, to the room he occupied in the house. In due course, he came in and I was surprised to see that he was a tiny and very wizened old man. In true Japanese fashion he extended to us the utmost courtesy, and showed me tray after tray of the shells he had collected. Apparently, he confined himself to the seashells of only Sagami Bay, and every single specimen he collected personally. He gave shells away but was not interested in exchanging. Through the medium of an interpreter, he told me he had been collecting for over 50 years, and during that period had accumulated over 800 different species from the one locality. These, of course, included deep water species from trawlers.

He very kindly gave me one or two lovely varieties, and a copy of an illustrated catalogue he had compiled of the larger species he had collected. The names were written in Japanese, but he had laboriously pencilled in the Latin names, copied from one or two modern Japanese shell books. That catalogue - now leather bound - is one of my treasures.

As we were about to take leave of this dear old man, he asked if we had a few minutes to spare, as he would like to show me his shell paintings. With that, he opened a flat cardboard box and showed me sheet after sheet of the most exquisite and delicate paintings of shells, done on rice paper. For certain species he had applied the merest trace of silver dust to give the effect of iridescence. He informed me that it usually took him a week to paint one shell. Such is the infinite patience of the Japanese. He must have seen how deeply impressed I was, and said that he would do a painting for me and post it on. It was with such pleasure that I looked forward to this painting, but the old man was not able to keep his promise. His son wrote to say that he died a week or two after our visit.

I like to think, as he sits in the company of his ancestors, that the old man still passes his time painting those beautiful pictures.

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NOTES ON TWO UNUSUAL CONES FOUND AT PORT ALFRED: by John S. Hutt

The first is listed in Turton's book under the name Conus elongatus, Chemnitz 1785? He expresses a doubt as to whether the specimen he found, illustrated on Plate III, is indeed C. Elongatus. I have two; one, the exact duplicate of his illustration, is a uniform greyish chocolate brown. This has a winding "ramp" as a shoulder from which the spire rises in cylinder form with almost parallel sides. I have another almost the same but very much bigger and also dark brown in colour. If the illustration of C. elongatus in Dr Barnard's book is correct, as it must be, then I have found one yellow shell of the exact proportions ringed with several fine bands of brown spots.

The second is 16 x 7 mm., brown, elongated with a high sharp spire and shouldered whorls. On the shoulder of the main whorl there are 8 deeply incised spiral lines all equidistant from each other and from the periphery, below which the shell is quite smooth. On the light brown ground colour can be seen 9 bands of dull reddish spots, and there are several flat cords right at the base of the shell.

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GENUS "BULLIA" ON THE SOUTH AFRICAN COAST; by D.J. Bosman

This genus is well known along the South African coast. Bullia rhodostoma is the best known of the genus.

In Circular No. 8, Mr Kennelly mentions that he only knows of Bullia rhodostoma which occurs alive between tide marks. This species occurs along the coast from Cape Town as far as Port Elizabeth.

Other species occur in smaller numbers and only in certain areas, and are also found alive between tide marks. Bullia digitalis, Meush; Bullia diluta, Krauss; and Bullia pura, Mellville, are all found alive in The Strand, Cape and are as far as I know only found in one confined area; all of them are scavengers and feed on stranded jellyfish, dead Donax serra and even dead fish.

Bullia annulata, Lamarck, and Bullia laevissima, Gmelin are also found alive between tide marks at Knysna, this is the only place where the writer has found them alive, in other parts of the coast they occasionally wash up dead and probably live below the low water mark.

Bullia digitalis is found in a variety of colours; all these are, however, one species and are wrongly listed as different varieties which are based purely on colour variations.

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MELAPIUM BULBOSUM, WOOD: by Helene Boswell

It is with regret that I have to contradict a statement made by my good friend Mr D.H. Kennelly, in Circular No. 8, with regard to my specimen of Melapium bulbosum.

The shell which I showed to Mr Kennelly some three or four years ago is undoubtedly a South African species, and was given to me by the late Mr. William Falcon, who was a collector of the highest integrity. The locality of the specimen he said was "ex pisce - off Durban". In other words, it was taken from the stomach of a musselcracker, from which source of supply we get such treasures as Cypraea fultoni, Voluta ponsobyi, etc.

I consider Melapium bulbosum a rarity, and Mr Falcon advised me that over a period of more than 20 years of diligent collecting in the vicinity of Durban, he was only able to acquire three specimens,

The shell is more angular than Melapium lineatum, is heavier, and also two or three times as large.

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NOTES ON "PHOLADIDAE" IN SOUTH AFRICA: by D.H. Kennelly

Some years ago, the writer had an opportunity to examine a collection of Marine shells from Jeffreys Bay, which included several single valves of a species of "Pholas".

On consulting the available literature it was rather surprising to find how little appears to be known of representatives of this genus in S.Africa.

The writer was able to find one species of Pholas and one of Barnea.

Sowerby (1892) lists Pholas dactylus Linn. as occurring at Port Elizabeth. Bartsch (1915) described and figured a new species from Port Alfred as Pholas alfredensis. Turton (1932) lists both these species as occurring at Port Alfred.

Subsequently Prof Tomlin examined specimens of the shell known in S. Africa as Pholas dactylus. He reported that the name was not correct and described and named the shell as Pholas jordani. At the same time the shell described by Bartsch was placed in the genus Barnea, and is now known as Barnea alfredensis.

As far as can be ascertained, Barnea alfredensis has been found only at Port Alfred, while Pholas jordani occurs at Port Alfred, Port Elizabeth and Jeffreys Bay.

Specimens of single valves are very scarce, and it seems that no complete specimen of these shells have ever been recovered - alive or dead.

The writer has seen several fragments of a blue black shale ex beaches in these parts. These fragments are of varying thickness and have perfectly circular holes drilled through, presumably the work of Pholas jordani.

Further comments from our members will be of interest to all.

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NOTES ON THE GENUS "BULLIA", FOLLOWING MR D.H. KENNELLY'S ARTICLE IN CIRCULAR NO. 8: By John S. Hutt

Here in Port Alfred, B. rhodostoma, Gray, is indeed the only live specimen to be found, but they do not all of them have the golden mouth given by Turton as a distinguishing feature.

The three varieties of B. digitalis are indeed colour varieties, but sufficiently striking as to be worthy of a place in the collection of an ordinary collector like myself. Indeed, I have added two more sufficiently distinct in my opinion to go into my collection.

The four varieties listed by Turton and named by Bartsch are indeed very rare for in more than a decade of beach-combing I have not been able to find a single specimen of any of them.

Turton's new variety B.pellucida is a pretty little shell, but rare. I have found three specimens which answer well to Turton's description except that I would substitute the word "translucent" for transparent. This new variety B.jucunda is also rare; rarer than pellucida. Those are the only two of the fourteen new varieties which he found and named that I have been lucky enough to find.

At a place called Clayton's Rocks, halfway between Riet Point and the Three Sisters, B.annulata, Lamarck, appears by the million and must form well over 50% of the shell debris washed up.

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