

*the* **Strandloper**



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Strandloper 291 2016



## Shell Collectors SA

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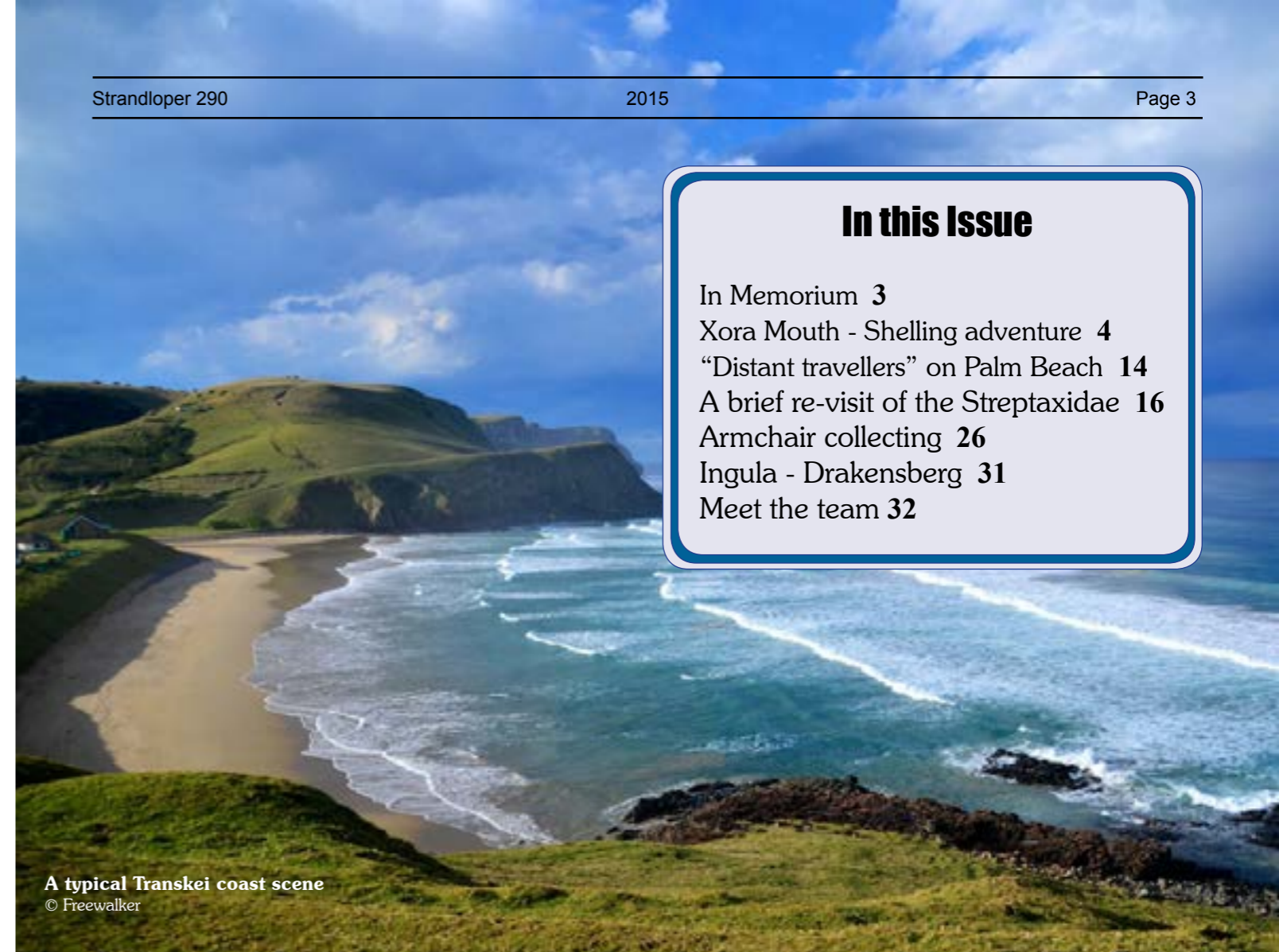
### FRONT PAGE

*Marginella ornata* Redfield, 1870  
Dived at 18m off Coffee Bay, Transkei, in sand on reef.

Photo: Mike Els

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A typical Transkei coast scene  
© Freewalker

## In Memorium



**Medea** was born in the Kruger House, Pretoria, which in 1929 was the local maternity home. She matriculated at Loreto Convent Skinner street, in 1946. She then served articles with a firm of Chartered Accountants with a starting salary of R10 per month. At that

stage it was difficult getting articulated, as accountancy was then regarded as a man's profession!

At that time it was the custom that when you married to stop working. So Medea left before completing the board examination. In 1951 she married Geoffrey Mark Hussey, an architect. They had a son Richard (now also an architect), married to Jenny. They have three children: Alan (20), Steven (13) and Michelle (10) who are granny's pride and joy. Her accounting training was put to good use in many voluntary jobs she had done

in nearly 50 years.

Medea held various positions in the Catholic Woman's League since joining in 1952 - two terms as National President 1973 - 1975 and 1987 - 1989. Started and run a welfare agency in Pretoria for 30 years. Still Chairman of Finance Committee. Served on Headquarters of Girl Guides for 30 years. Was responsible for Public Relations; started a Publication Department to provide the handbooks and literature needed by girls and adults. She was Chief Commissioner during 1976 - 1985. She also served on the Finance Committee of World Association in London for 9 years.

In 1989 Medea married Iorry Evans who introduced her to conchology and with whom she has spent 10 very happy years searching the beaches of Southern Africa for "good" finds.

Iorry collected cowries of the world. Medea's collection of South African beach shells included many species of micro shells which she loved and which she had great difficulty in identifying.

# Xora Mouth

## Shelling Adventure

by Johan & Alwyn Marais



Super fresh dead *Semicassis labiata* (Perry, 1811) collected by Christelle.

It has been a long time since our last shelling excursion to the southcoast of Natal and it was therefore with great enthusiasm and expectations that our small party of 8 members (Alwyn, Hildie, Danny, Smily, Christelle, Eddy, Johan and Carol) set off on the long journey to Xora Mouth, well off the beaten tract along the Wild Coast of South Africa. Xora has long been regarded as one of the best shelling spots in the region, and for many of us it was our first visit. In order not to have to drive on Transkei roads at night we slept over at Elliott and were surprised the next morning to find it snowing. However, this unusual weather and the forecast of two cold fronts approaching the Transkei coast did not dampen our spirits. Heavy rain in the hilly terrain, especially near the coast, could render the dirt roads slippery and eroded, and low-water bridges unpassable for everything but 4X4 vehicles.



**Unusually fresh chocolate brown *Festilyria africana* found by Christelle**

Xora consists of a row of about 8 cottages on the banks of the Xora River, two of which are occupied permanently. About 1 km beyond the estuary as the crow flies, lies Bulungula Lodge, catering mainly for backpackers. To reach Bulungula from Xora by road, however, takes the best part of 2 hours driving due to the steep, winding road and inland crossing of the Xora River. Like most of the accommodation, our cottage was rather rustic and was part of the “Wild Coast” experience. From the cottage we had a clear view of the river estuary, its mangrove-covered banks and the coloured huts on distant hills. A canoe would have been ideal for reaching the mangrove swamps, crossing the river mouth and observing the abundant bird life on the river banks. At dawn each day one could hear the familiar cry of fish eagle way up the river valley, and we regret to this day not taking along a small boat.

The beach, only 100 m away, could be reached by one of several footpaths leading through lush coastal vegetation, mainly of beautiful evergreen milkwood trees. The evergreen White Milkwood

(*Sideroxylon inerme*) occurs widespread in coastal regions of southern Africa and is not endangered, but has been declared a Protected Species and may not be moved, damaged or felled. In Greek the genus *Sideroxylon* means “Iron-wood”, referring to its very hard timber. In the past the wood was used for plows, constructing bridges and for ship building.

The “Post Office Tree” in Mosselbay, which is believed to be 600 years old, is a Milkwood of considerable historic significance, since it is considered to be the first (unofficial) post office in South Africa. It was declared a provincial heritage site in 1938 and is marked with a plaque reading: “This post office tree stands near the fountains where the Portuguese navigators regularly drew water at the present Mossel Bay from 1488 onwards”. According to tradition messages were placed in an old shoe and tied to the tree.

The dense coastal bush would have been of great interest to Maurice, our land snail enthusiast, who unfortunately could not join us, but we made a special effort to collect some interesting species for him. From the river estuary the rocky coastline bordered by the white sandy beach stretched for several kilometres in a south-westerly direction, forming an ideal shelling area. Many hours were spent on hands and knees searching for those gem specimens hiding in piles of shells cast ashore in the numerous gullies between the rocks. Christelle, Carol and Danny were our most dedicated shellers, with Christelle finding a beautiful, dark *Festilyria africana* and some *Phalium labiatum* in mint condition. Of interest were also the large variation in colour of the common *Cabestana cutaceus*. Danny and Johan, the micro-shell enthusiasts, worked until sunset searching through bags of shell grit for some elusive shells such as the recently re-discovered *Phycothais texturata* and the newly named *Vaughtia dawnbrinkae*, formerly known as an aberrant form of *Vaughtia scrobiculata*, and



Johan Sr searching the gully.



Christelle searching for hidden gems



Carol on the high water mark

several good specimens were eventually found.

Unfortunately the sea was fairly rough, with high swells, making it impossible to explore the deeper pools and for Smiley to go spear fishing to provide fresh fish at mealtimes. Eddy and Alwyn tried their hands at rod and reel in the estuary, but also with little success. However, with Alwyn, Hildie and others preparing meals, and the local inhabitants providing fresh oysters at a reasonable price, we fortunately never went hungry. The open-fire grilled oysters prepared by Smiley were a special treat for us all.

On our last day we paid a visit to the famous Hole-in-the-Wall not far north of Xora. There appears to be several roads leading to our destination, all in different stages of disrepair and with the GPS often malfunctioning due to the hilly topography, we lost our way on several occasions. Locals at Hole-in-the-Wall always have shells for sale, but we were disappointed in the poor quality of those on offer. However, Hole-in-the-Wall was impressive and certainly one of the most stunning landmarks

along the entire South African coastline. Hole-in-the-Wall was named by Captain Vidal of the vessel Barracouta, sent by the British Admiralty in 1823 to survey the coastline between the Keiskamma River and the present Maputo. Situated at the mouth of the Mpako River, the cliff wall consists of dark-blue shales, mudstones and sandstones dating back some 260 million years. These formations were subsequently intruded by a dolerite sheet, and the 'hole' was formed over millions of years by the pounding waves, which eroded away the soft rock underneath the dolerite to form an arch. The cliff was eventually also separated from the mainland by the same process.

Although bad weather was forecasted for the whole of our stay at Xora, we were blessed with good weather throughout; hardly any rain, lots of sunshine, sometimes overcast, and moderately windy in the afternoons:- no reason for not shelling! After this excursion everyone agreed that such outings should be organized on a more regular basis.



The group fltr: Hildie, Alwyn, Johan Sr., Johan (Smiley), Eddie, Christelle, Carol, Danny.



Johan Sr. searching the undergrowth for landsnails.



Johan Sr. and Danny sorting the grit and searching for micro's.



Hildie and Alwyn preparing dinner.



Dinner time.



The group walking through the Milkwood forest on their way to the Hole-in-the-wall.



View of the lagoon from our patio.

## Shells collected



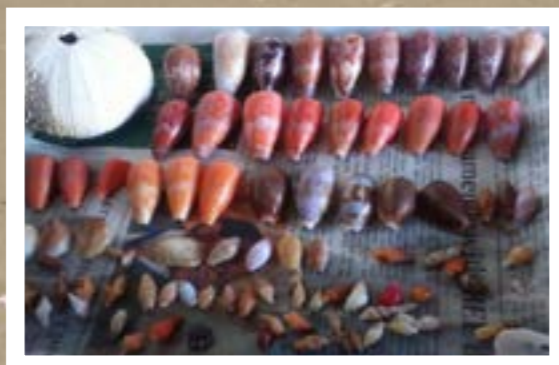
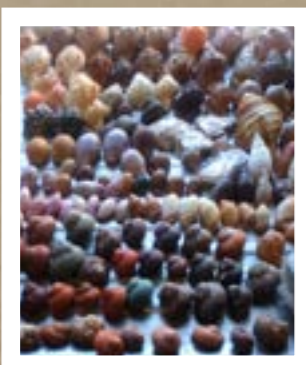
The following species were collected on the Xora shelling trip. Some specimens are indicated as sp. as they have not been identified as yet.

In total the number of species found was just over 390, which reflects the amazing diversity of species found in this small area.

The species are listed alphabetically.

*Acteocina smithi* Bartsch, 1915  
*Agagus agagus* Jousseume, 1894  
*Akera soluta* (Gmelin, 1791)  
*Alcira elegans* H. Adams, 1861  
*Alvania fenestrata* (Krauss, 1848)  
*Amalda contusa* (Reeve, 1864)  
*Amalda obesa* (G. B. Sowerby II, 1859)  
*Amalda reevei* (E. A. Smith, 1904)  
*Amalda* sp  
*Amblychilepas platyactis* McLean & Kilburn, 1986  
*Anachis kraussii* (Sowerby I, 1844)  
*Aspella acuticostata* (Turton, 1932)  
*Austromitra canaliculata* (G. B. Sowerby III, 1900)  
*Austromitra capensis* (Reeve, 1845)  
*Austromitra rhodarion* (Kilburn, 1972)  
*Austromitra* sp  
*Bostrycapulus aculeatus* (Gmelin, 1791)  
*Buchema dichroma* Kilburn, 1988  
*Buchema* sp  
*Bullia diluta* (Krauss, 1848)  
*Burnupena cincta* (Röding, 1798)  
*Bursa granularis* (Röding, 1798)  
*Cabestana cutacea* (Linnaeus, 1767)  
*Canalispira fallax* (E. A. Smith, 1903)  
*Cerithium crassilabrum* Krauss, 1848  
*Cerithium* sp

*Charonia lampas* (Linnaeus, 1758)  
*Chicoreus austramosus* E. H. Vokes, 1978  
*Cingulina* sp  
*Cingulina trachealis* (Gould, 1861)  
*Cinysca* sp  
*Clanculus mixtus* E. A. Smith, 1903  
*Clathranachis angusta* (G. B. Sowerby III, 1886)  
*Colina pinguis* (A. Adams, 1855)  
*Columbellid* sp  
*Conus natalis* G. B. Sowerby II, 1858  
*Conus tinianus* Hwass in Bruguière, 1792  
*Cosmetalepas africana* (Tomlin, 1926)  
*Costoanacchis* sp (1137)  
*Costoanachis beckeri* (G. B. Sowerby III, 1900)  
*Costoanachis stimpsoni* (Bartsch, 1915)  
*Crepidula porcellana* Lamarck, 1801  
*Crithe algoensis* (E. A. Smith, 1901)  
*Cuspidolva singularis* (Cate, 1973)  
*Cycloscala semidisjuncta* (Jeffreys, 1884)  
*Cymbula miniata* (Born, 1778)  
*Cymbula sanguinans* (Reeve, 1854)  
*Demoulia ventricosa* (Lamarck, 1816)  
*Diodora calyculata* (G. B. Sowerby I, 1823)  
*Diodora crucifera* (Pilsbry, 1891)  
*Diodora fuscocrenulata* (E. A. Smith, 1906)  
*Diodora kraussi* Herbert & Warén, 1999  
*Diodora levicostata* (E. A. Smith, 1914)  
*Diodora parviforata* (G. B. Sowerby III, 1889)  
*Diodora spreta* (E. A. Smith, 1901)  
*Drillia caffra* (E. A. Smith, 1882)  
*Drillia* sp  
*Epitonium simplex* (Sowerby III, 1894)  
*Eratoena sulcifera* (Gray in G. B. Sowerby I, 1832)  
*Erosaria helvola* (Linnaeus, 1758)  
*Eulima cylindrica* Thiele, 1925  
*Euterebra capensis* (E. A. Smith, 1873)  
*Euterebra tantilla* (E. A. Smith, 1873)  
*Favartia natalensis* (E. A. Smith, 1906)  
*Festilyria africana* (Reeve, 1856)  
*Fissurella mutabilis* G. B. Sowerby I, 1835  
*Fissurella natalensis* Krauss, 1848  
*Gibberula burnupi* (Sowerby III, 1897)  
*Gibberula dulcis* (E. A. Smith, 1904)  
*Gibbula tryoni* Pilsbry, 1890



- Gyroscaia coronata* (Lamarck, 1816)  
*Haliotis spadicea* Donovan, 1808  
*Haminoea alfredensis* (Bartsch, 1915)  
*Hastula rufopunctata* (E. A. Smith, 1877)  
*Helcion concolor* (Krauss, 1848)  
*Homalopoma rotundatum* (G.B. Sowerby III, 1892)  
*Homolopoma* sp  
*Homolopoma* sp (960)  
*Hyalina lucida* (Marrat, 1877)  
*Impages apicitincta* (G. B. Sowerby III, 1900)  
*Latirus filmerae* (Sowerby III, 1900)  
*Lienardia siren* (E. A. Smith, 1904)  
*Lienardia* sp (31)  
*Macroschisma africanum* Tomlin, 1932  
*Maculotriton serriale* (Deshayes, 1834)  
*Manthilla* sp  
*Marginella albocincta* G. B. Sowerby I, 1846  
*Marginella ornata* Redfield, 1870  
*Marginella* sp  
*Melanella* sp  
*Microvoluta euzonata* (G. B. Sowerby III, 1900)  
*Mitra latruncularia* Reeve, 1844  
*Mitrella albuginosa* (Reeve, 1859)  
*Mitrella floccata* (Reeve, 1859)  
*Mitromorpha striolata* (Turton W. H., 1932)  
*Monoplex aquatilis* (Reeve, 1844)  
*Monoplex klenei* (G. B. Sowerby III, 1889)  
*Murexsul nothokieneri* E. H. Vokes, 1978  
*Nassarius capensis* (Dunker, 1846)  
*Nassarius formosus* (Turton, 1932)  
*Nerita albicilla* Linnaeus, 1758  
*Nquma rousi* (Sowerby III, 1886)  
*Odostoma* sp  
*Orania castanea* (Küster, 1886)  
*Parvioris dilecta* (E. A. Smith, 1899)  
*Peristernia forskalii leucothea* Melvill, 1891  
*Persicula shepstonensis* (E. A. Smith, 1906)  
*Phycothais texturata* (E. A. Smith, 1904)  
*Pilosabia trigona* (Gmelin, 1791)  
*Pisinna dubitabilis* (Tate, 1899)  
*Primouula beckeri* (Sowerby III, 1900)  
*Pseudorhaphitoma alfredi* (E. A. Smith, 1904)  
*Psittacodrillia bairstowi* (Sowerby III, 1886)  
*Pteropurpura graagae* (Coen, 1943)  
*Pyrene flava filmerae* (Sowerby III, 1900)  
*Pyrene obtusa* (Sowerby I, 1832)  
*Ranella gemmifera* (Euthyme, 1889)  
*Retusa truncatula* (Bruguière, 1792)  
*Sabia conica* (Schumacher, 1817)  
*Scalptia foveolata* (G. B. Sowerby II, 1849)  
*Schwartziella leucophanes* (Tomlin, 1931)  
*Scutellastra barbara* (Linnaeus, 1758)  
*Scutellastra exusta* (Reeve, 1854)  
*Scutellastra tabularis* (Krauss, 1848)  
*Scutus unguis* (Linnaeus, 1758)  
*Semicassis labiata* (Perry, 1811)  
*Siphonaria capensis* Quoy & Gaimard, 1833  
*Siphonaria concinna* Sowerby I, 1823  
*Siphonaria serrata* (Fischer von Waldheim, 1807)  
*Tanea areolata* (Récluz, 1844)  
*Taranis* sp  
*Tricolia capensis* (Dunker, 1846)  
*Tricolia elongata* (Krauss, 1848)  
*Tricolia insignis* (Turton, 1932)  
*Tricolia kochii* (Philippi, 1848)  
*Trimusculus costatus* (Krauss, 1848)  
*Tritonoturris phaula* Kilburn, 1977  
*Trivirostra poppei* Fehse, 1999  
*Trivirostra turneri* Schilder, 1932  
*Trochidae* sp  
*Tropeas* sp  
*Turbo cidaris natalensis* (Krauss, 1848)  
*Valvarina* sp  
*Vaughtia dawnbrinkae* Lussi, 2012  
*Vaughtia scrobiculata* (Dunker in Philippi, 1846)  
*Vexilla vexillum* (Gmelin, 1791)  
*Vexillum patulum* (Reeve, 1845)  
*Viriola* sp  
*Viriolopsis alboguttata* (Tomlin, 1926)  
*Volvarina dunkeri* (Krauss, 1848)  
*Volvarina ingloria* (E. A. Smith, 1910)  
*Volvarina* sp  
*Zafra selasphora* (Melvill & Standen, 1901)  
*Zafrona lightfooti* (E. A. Smith, 1901)  
*Zafrona trifilosa* (E. A. Smith, 1882)



# "Distant travellers" on Palm Beach

by Henk Smit

It is places like Palm Beach, on the Natal South coast, that fuel my passion for this country and continent. Working your way through the numerous trees, filled with playful monkeys, you reach a beach with a pleasant assortment of shells.

It is here that I found a shell that never ceases to amaze me.



*Phos senticosus* (Linnaeus, 1758)



*Monetaria moneta* (Linnaeus, 1758)

Not contemplating ever collecting shells as a hobby, my wife Joey and I, went for a stroll on this lovely stretch of sand. Quickly we noticed that there was a huge variety of shells strewn around. Deciding to have a closer look we soon put together quite a selection in quite a short time. I wanted to see what was under the waves and soon I was scooping up shells in water probably a meter deep. I always stayed close to the boulders, blissfully unaware that it might be home to a stonefish. It was here that I found the only two shells that we kept that day. At home these two shells were displayed with my other specimens of natural curiosities.

It was only many years later that I decided to start collecting shells. Obtaining Steyn and Lussi's books I was able to identify the one shell as being a *Festilyria africana*. The other shell stayed a mystery until I joined the Pretoria branch of the Shell Collectors Society.

I e-mailed Alwyn Marais the (far from professional) photos of this enigma and he set to work identifying it. Alwyn contacted Prof Dai Herbert from the Natal Museum, who said this could possibly be a *Phos senticosus*. He suggested to Alwyn to confirm his suspicion with Koen Fraussen, the international authority on the family Buccinidae. Koen concurred and elaborated that this shell is actually not from Africa. This species occurs in the Indo-west Pacific, off Seychelles, Australia, Philippines, Taiwan and New Caledonia. Koen mentioned that he had a similar experience with shells like *Euthria cornea* (from England) and a polished strombus turning up on a Belgian beach. He speculated that this shell might have been introduced by travellers or it might be from a tourist shop.

Well, if this shell was "planted" on the 1st of April by a malicious conchologist, or if it travelled on

the keel of a boat for thousands of kilometres, or whatever its origins might be, it is still a dandy shell and thanks to the experts it is a nice conversation starter.

Years later I found my second foreign shell on Palm Beach. I was on the "Pick up anything, keep everything" stage of collection then. Whilst working though the grit (an exercise I would highly recommend on this beach) we found a *Cypraea (Monetaria) moneta*. The small weathered shell was also way out of place for this area. Reading an article in "The Strandloper" and with the help of the older members at the Pretoria Club, I was able to positively identify it as a shell from a shipwreck. The "money" shell was used as currency and transported on ships that occasionally wrecked on the Natal south coast more than 450 years ago. As far as I could establish the shipwrecks are found more to the south and are usually much larger in size than the shell we found. Nevertheless, this is still one of my prized possessions.

What have I learned from these two shells?

Firstly I mis-labelled both these shells to fit in with the locality. Only after being in the hobby for a year or two I realized that one must always expect the unexpected.

Secondly, even if these shells were placed on this beach by human intervention, they still remain fascinating objects, and deepened my appreciation of these miracles of nature that we collect.

Thanks to Alwyn Marais, Prof Dai Herbert, and Koen Fraussen. Also Strandloper 254 (June 1998) and the excellent article in Strandloper 267 (April 2002).



## A brief re-visit of the Streptaxidae and details of a new subgenus *Zulugulella* under the genus *Gulella*

by Ken Brown

The Streptaxidae are descended from a common evolutionary group, the origins of which are estimated to have occurred during the early Cretaceous period, about 120 million year ago. Fossil records, whilst scant, date to the late Cretaceous period. Whilst it is surmised that few lineages survived the mass extinctions of the Mesozoic and Cenozoic, the period following resulted in great streptaxid diversification mirroring the spread of modern forests about 100 million years ago. The streptaxids also pre-date Africa's rifting, as evidenced by their presence in both geologically old as well as volcanic areas.

Whilst the group has been existence since the time of the dinosaurs, it has never been abundant, being restricted to undisturbed remnants of once forested areas, many of which are disappearing at an alarming rate. Streptaxids are found in a wide variety of habitats, but nearly always associated with these sheltering micro-environments.

There are well over a thousand species. Streptaxids are widely distributed in the tropics and some subtropical areas. They are found in Africa and its offshore islands, Arabia, Asia including Indo-China and Indonesia, with South America having a relative paucity of species. No streptaxids are found in Australia or the eastern and southern Pacific regions.

However, most streptaxids are found in Africa, and their preponderance and diversity, coupled with the fact that African taxa occur in nearly all other areas, leads for the assumption of an African origin to the superfamily. Asian streptaxids almost certainly appear to have derived from dispersal from Africa, despite a lack of clarity as to the mechanisms for this. A hypothesis for the existence of many genera being found in tropical Asia, is based on local diversification in favourable conditions, after the splitting of the Gondwana and/or Laurasian plates. The issue of dispersal however is a complex and unclear one.

Within Africa there are clear zones where streptaxids are found. These are Southern, East, Central and West Africa, as well as the Comores, Mascarenes and Madagascar. These centres coincide with areas of endemism, largely inked to dwindling forest refugia in the arid phase. Climate change over a long period has split tropical rainforests so that West and East African forests have been separated for at least 17 million years, and drying of the continent has shrunk many forested areas to isolated remnants. This isolation has been the cause of profuse speciation. In addition to East Africa, Indo-China is another area where speciation has been significant, with concentrations of genera, hardly surprising as it is a convergence for Indian, Chinese and Malaysian elements.

Recent studies have highlighted the complexities and confusion within the family tree of the Streptaxidae, based largely on the historical identification of species primarily through their morphology and location. This has resulted in a bewildering plethora of individual names, descriptions, synonyms and classifications, but research based on molecular and radula data is moving us away from this status. A major re-examination of the DNA-based family tree, and of genera and subgenera has begun in earnest. When the dust of classification eventually settles, the field collector and amateur will have a sound scientific framework within which to operate, despite still relying on shell morphology as the primary basis for identification.

In 2006 an analysis was published by Wade, Mordan and Naggs, which set out the competing classifications in the family tree of landsnails, and specifically the taxon Stylommatophora, the terrestrial pulmonate gastropod molluscs. It seems that the Stylommatophora are divided into an achatinoid clade, which comprises the Achatinidae, Subulinidae, Coeliacidae, Thyropellidae, Ferussacidae and a sister group, the Streptaxidae, as well as a non-achatinoide clade which serves as a basket for all other Stylommatophoran groups. A revised classification for the Streptaxoidea proposed by Rowson in 2009 deviates from proposals by Schileyko in 2000, and of Bouchet and Rocroi in 2005, and represents the most comprehensive and scientific approach to-date to apply a sound and coherent overview to what has been traditionally been a fairly laissez faire grouping.

Rowson's classification accepts two families within the superfamily, the Diapheridae and the Streptaxiidae, with 5 genera in the Diapheridae, and 93 genera and subgenera in 7 subfamilies for the Streptaxiidae. He introduces the new subfamilies Gullellinae and Primigulellinae as well as a number of new genera, such as *Embertonia*, *Dadagulella*, *Gerlachina*, *Juventigulella* and *Tanzartemon*, and re-assigns a number of genera and subgenera as follows:

### 1. **Diapheridae** Panha and Naggs 2009

with the following genera:

*Bruggenea* Dance 1972 - Kalimantan  
*Diaphera* Albers 1850 – Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Philippines, Kalimantan  
*Platycochlium* Laidlaw 1950 - Kalimantan  
*Sinoennea* Kobelt 1904 – India, China, Malaysia, South East Asia, Japan, South Korea, Sumatra  
*Tonkinia* Mabilie 1887 – Vietnam

### 2. **Streptaxiidae** Gray 1860

The following seven subfamilies are identified by

Rowson:

**Enneinae**  
**Gibbinae**  
**Gullellinae**  
**Marconiinae**  
**Odontartemoninae**  
**Primigulellinae**  
**Streptaxinae**

The following **genera** are found **within each subfamily**:

#### 2.1. **Enneinae** Bourguignat 1883

*Avakubia* Pilsbry 1919 - West Central Africa  
*Conogulella* Pilsbry 1919 - Cameroon, DRC  
*Costigulella* Pilsbry 1919 - West of the Ruwenzori range, central East Africa  
*Digulella* Haas 1934 – Eastern Congo, Cameroon, Gabon, Uganda  
*Mirellia* Thiele 1933 - East Africa, east of the Albertine rift  
*Paucidentella* Thiele 1933 – Cameroon, Gabon, Nigeria, DRC  
*Pseudavakubia* DeWinter & Vastenhout 2013 – Ghana and Liberia  
*Pseudelma* Kobelt 1904 - Mayotte, Comores  
 Subgenus: *Fultonelma* Haas 1951 – Mayotte, Comores  
*Marielma* Abdou, Muratov and Bouchet 2008 – Mayotte, Comores  
*Pupigulella* Pilsbry 1919 – DRC, East Africa  
*Ptychotrema* L Pfeiffer 1953 - West central Africa

**Subgenera:**  
*Adjuva* Chaper 1885 – West Africa  
*Brasilennea* Maury 1935 – Brazil ( extinct)  
*Ennea* Adams and Adams 1855 - West central Africa  
*Excisa* d'Ailley 1896 - Cameroon  
*Haplonepion* Pilsbry 1919 - DRC, East Africa  
*Nsendwea* Dupuis and Putzeys 1923 – West Africa  
*Parennea* Pilsbry 1919 - Afrotropical, Ethiopia, Somalia  
*Ptychoon* Pilsbry 1919 – West Africa  
*Sinistrexscisa* DeWinter, Gomez and Prieto 1999 –

Cameroon, Equatorial Africa  
*Rhabdogulella* Haas 1934 - Cameroon  
*Silvigulella* Pilsbry 1919 – Angola, Zaire, Cameroon  
*Sphinctostrema* Girard 1894 – Annobon, Principe  
*Sphincterocochlion* Verdcourt 1985 – Central Africa  
*Streptostele* Dohrn 1866 – Afrotropical, Seychelles, Comores, Mauritius, Rodrigues, Reunion, Gulf of Guinea Islands

#### Subgenera:

*Grapostele* Pilsbry 1919 – East Africa  
*Obeliscella* Jousseau 1889 - Southern Arabia  
*Raffraya* Bourguignat 1883 – East Africa, DRC  
*Textostele* Venmans 1959 – Congo Basin  
*Tomostele* Ancey 1885 – Gulf of Guinea archipelago  
*Varicostele* Pilsbry 1919 - Central Africa

#### 2.2. Gibbinae Steenberg 1936

*Acanthennea* VonMartens 1898 – Mahe, Silhouette, Seychelles  
*Augustula* Thiele 1931 - Seychelles  
*Conturbatia* Gerlach 2001 – Fregate Island, Seychelles  
*Gerlachina* - Rowson 2009 - Seychelles  
*Gibbus* Montford 1810 – Mauritius (extinct)  
*Glabrennea* Schileyko 2000 - Seychelles  
*Gonidomus* Swainson 1840 – Mauritius (extinct)  
*Gonospora* Swainson 1840 – Mauritius, Reunion, Rodrigues  
*Imperturbatia* Von Martens 1898 - Seychelles  
*Plicadomus* Swainson 1840 - Mauritius  
*Seychellaxis* Schileyko 2000 - Seychelles  
*Silhouettia* Gerlach and Van Bruggen 1999 - Seychelles  
*Stereostele* Pilsbry 1919 - Seychelles

#### 2.3. Gulellinae Pfeiffer 1856

*Austromarconia* VanBruggen and DeWinter 2003 – southern Malawi highlands  
*Dadagulella* Rowson and Tattersfield 2013 – East and south eastern Africa  
*Gulella* Pfeiffer 1856 - Afrotropical, Southern

Africa, Arabia, Madagascar, Comores, Seychelles, Mauritius

#### Subgenus:

*Huttonella* Pfeiffer 1856 - India  
*Maurennea* Schileyko 2000 - Mauritius  
*Molarella* Connolly 1922 – East Africa, Chad, Comores  
*Paucidentina* Von Martens 1895 - Cameroon, Gabon, Nigeria  
*Plicigulella* Pilsbry 1919 - East Africa, DRC  
*Tortigulella* Pilsbry 1919 – East central Africa  
*Wilmattina* Pilsbry and Cockerell 1933 – Equatorial Africa  
*Zulugulella* Rowson and Herbert 2016 – Northern KwaZulu, South Africa

#### 2.4. Marconiinae Schileyko 2000

*Gonaxis* Taylor 1877 - Equatorial and Southern Africa, Comores  
*Stenomarconia* Germain 1934 – East Africa

#### 2.5. Odontartemoninae Schileyko 2000

*Lamelliger* Ancey 1884 – West Africa  
*Pseudogonaxis* Thiele 1932 – Congo basin  
*Tanzartemon* Tattersfield and Rowson – East Africa  
*Tayloria* Bourguignat 1889 – East Africa

#### Subgenus:

*Macrogonaxis* Thiele 1932 – Afrotropical, Comores, Seychelles  
*Somalitayloria* Verdcourt 1962 - Somalia

#### 2.6. Primigulellinae Pilsbry 1919

*Juventigulella* Tattersfield 1998 - Tanzania  
*Microstrophia* VonMollendorf 1887 - Mauritius, Reunion  
*Primigulella* Pilsbry 1919 – Tropical east Africa

#### 2.7. Streptaxinae Gray 1837

*Afristreptaxis* Thiele 1932 – Afrotropical and Southern Africa  
*Artemonopsis* Germain 1908 – Ivory Coast  
*Carinartemis* Siriboon and Panha 2014 – Thailand

*Discartemon* Pfeiffer 1856 – South East Asia  
*Edentulina* Pfeiffer 1855 - East Africa, Seychelles, Comores  
*Elma* Adams 1866 – Taiwan, Vietnam, South China  
*Embertonia* Rowson 2009 - Madagascar  
*Fischerpietteus* Emberton 2003 - Madagascar  
*Glyptoconus* VonMollendorf 1894 - Philippines  
*Haploptychius* VonMollendorf 1905 – Andamans, India, South East Asia, China, Sulawesi  
*Hypselartemon* Wenz 1947 – Brazil, Columbia  
*Indoartemon* Focart 1946 – Sri Lanka, South East Asia, Hainan  
*Makrokonche* Emberton 1994 – S E Madagascar  
*Martinella* Jousseau 1887 – Ecuador and S Brazil  
*Micrartemon* Von Mollendorf 1890 – Philippines  
*Oophana* Ancey 1884 – South East Asia  
*Parvedentulina* Emberton and Pearce 2000 - Madagascar  
*Perottetia* Kobelt 1905 – India, South East Asia  
*Reartemon* Baker 1925 – Brazil, Venezuela, Caribbean  
*Sairostoma* Haas 1938 – Brazil  
*Stemmatopsis* Mabile 1887 - Vietnam  
*Streptartemon* Kobelt 1905 – Brazil, Bolivia, Columbia, Guyana, Venezuela  
*Streptaxis* Gray 1837 – Brazil, Venezuela, Caribbean

#### The following genera cannot confidently be placed in families at this time:

*Careoradula* Gerlach and VanBruggen 1999 - Seychelles  
*Gibbulinella* Wenz 1920 - Canary Islands  
*Priondiscus* Von Martens 1898 – Seychelles

Many old names are reduced to synonymy:

#### 1 Family

Original name	Synonym for
Artemonidae	Streptaxinae
Gonidiminae	Gibbinae
Odontartmoninae	Odontartemoninae
Orthogibbidae	Gibbinae
Paucidentella	Enneinae

Ptychotrematinae	Enneinae
Streptocionidae	Enneinae
Streptostelidae	Enneinae
Tonkinia	Diapheridae

#### 2. Genus

Original name	Synonym for
<i>Aberdaria</i>	<i>Primigulella</i>
<i>Acanthennea</i>	<i>Acanthennea</i>
<i>Aenigmigulella</i>	<i>Primigulella</i>
<i>Alcidia</i>	<i>Streptaxis</i>
<i>Aclidia</i>	<i>Streptaxis</i>
<i>Alcida</i>	<i>Streptaxis</i>
<i>Artemon</i>	<i>Streptaxis</i>
<i>Campylaxis</i>	<i>Streptostele</i>
<i>Carychiopsis</i>	<i>Ennea</i>
<i>Colpanostoma</i>	<i>Tayloria</i>
<i>Diaphora</i>	<i>Diaphera</i>
<i>Enneastrum</i>	<i>Ennea</i>
<i>Eustreptaxis</i>	<i>Streptaxis</i>
<i>Eustreptostele</i>	<i>Tomostele</i>
<i>Gibbonsia</i>	<i>Tayloria</i>
<i>Gigantaxis</i>	<i>Tayloria</i>
<i>Idolum</i>	<i>Gonidomus</i>
<i>Indoennea</i>	<i>Sinoennea</i>
<i>Ischnostele</i>	<i>Raffraya</i>
<i>Luntia</i>	<i>Tomostele</i>
<i>Marconia</i>	<i>Gonaxis</i>
<i>Marigulella</i>	<i>Primigulella</i>
<i>Mirigulella</i>	<i>Primigulella</i>
<i>Miragulella</i>	<i>Primigulella</i>
<i>Nevillia</i>	<i>Microstrophia</i>
<i>Obeliscus</i>	<i>Obeliscella</i>
<i>Odontartemon</i>	<i>Indoartemon</i>
<i>Odontartemon</i>	<i>Lamelliger</i>
<i>Oppenheimiella</i>	<i>Gibbulinella</i>
<i>Orthogibbus</i>	<i>Gonospora</i>
<i>Paucidentata</i>	<i>Paucidentina</i>
<i>Pseudartemon</i>	<i>Haploptychius</i>
<i>Ptycotrema</i>	<i>Ptychotrema</i>
<i>Sphinctotrema</i>	<i>Sphinctostrema</i>
<i>Stemmatopsis</i>	<i>Stemmatopsis</i>
<i>Thauamatogulella</i>	<i>Mirellia</i>
<i>Uniplicaria</i>	<i>Paucidentina</i>
<i>Webbia</i>	<i>Gibbulinella</i>

### 3. The following are no longer considered part of the Streptaxoidea:

#### 3.1. The following extinct fossil families:

Anadromidae Wenz 1940

Anostomopsidae Sandberger 1871

#### 3.2. The following extant genera:

*Franzia* – the type species belongs to the Vertiginidae

*Chalepotaxis* – belongs to the Bradybaenidae

*Franzia* – the type species belongs to the Vertiginidae

*Granoenna* – belongs to the Arginidae

*Gibbulinopsis* – the type species belongs to the Pupillidae

*Passamaella* – this belongs to the Cerastidae

*Ptychostylus* – the type species belongs to the Bradybaenidae

*Rillya* – belongs to the Clausiliidae

*Scolodonta* – this belongs to the Scolodontidae, a non-achatinoidean Stylommatophoran, and includes the genera *Ammonoceras*, *Guestieria*, *Happia* and *Systrophia*

Focussing on the Gulellinae, and in specific the genus *Gulella*, it is clear that this genus has historically been used as a repository to lump poorly defined species under a vague and poorly defined umbrella. The most recent catalogue lists 400 *Gulella* species and a further 200 subspecies or synonyms. About 160 valid species occur in East Africa, but that number could be as high as 500, and remains the largest genus of streptaxids in the area. Central and West Africa also are home to a large number of nominal *Gulella* (nominal in the sense that it is likely that future study will prove that many West African species are not referable to as *Gulella*), whilst the Comores and Madagascar house a large diversity of species, including many edentate shells which it is presently unclear should be included. Southern Africa remains home to many *Gulella* species, although certain species such as *Gulella browni* Van Bruggen 1969 belong to the genus *Dadagulella*, and *Gulella peaki*

*continentalis* Van Bruggen 1975 belongs to the genus *Juventigulella*. *Gulella salpinx* Herbert 2002 belongs to *Microstrophia* or *Juventigulella*. Other *Gulella* species such as *Gulella johanna* Van Bruggen 2006, *Gulella incurvidens* Van Bruggen 1972, *Gulella hamerae* Bursley and Herbert 2004, *Gulella dejae* Bursley and Herbert 2004, *Gulella latimerae* Bursley and Herbert 2004 and *Gulella newmani* Bursley and Herbert 2004 will in all probability be moved from the genus *Gulella* in the future.

An interesting anomaly recently came to light when the type species for the genus *Gulella*, namely *Gulella menkeana*, was found to be based on a misidentification of the recently re-assigned species *Zulugulella albersi*.

Herbert and Rowson in 2016 added a new subgenus to the genus *Gulella*, naming it *Zulugulella*. The diagnostic feature for identification of this subgenus is its radula, with a large number of teeth and rows of teeth, the small attachment area of each tooth, and the absence of basal tooth anchors. All *Zulugulella* are large species being over 10mm in height, and have weak to strong apertural one to five-fold dentition. They vary in shape and sculpture, and a bi-conical profile was suggested by Herbert and Kilburn in 2004 as diagnostic (although this would include *Gulella burnupi* (Melvill & Ponsonby 1897) and *Gulella pondoensis* (Connolly 1939) which are excluded on molecular data).

The subgenus includes the following previously described and re-assigned *Gulella* species:

*Z albersi* (Pfeiffer 1855), as the type species

*Z natalensis* (Craven 1860)

*Z planti* (Pfeiffer 1856)

*Z queketti* (Melvill & Ponsonby 1896)

*Z triglochis* (Melvill & Ponsonby 1903)

*Z zuluensis* (Connolly 1932)

Whilst the scientific data is definitive, the morphology of *Zulugulella albersi* appears considerably different from that of the remaining shells in the new subgenus, with its strong axial

ribbing and strongly flared aperture. Looking further at shell morphology, *Gulella calopsa* (Melvill & Ponsonby 1903), *Gulella consobrina* (Ancey 1892) and *Gulella aperostoma* (Melvill & Ponsonby 1892) would appear to also fall within this grouping, but molecular and radula data exclude them.

The following is a brief description of the species within the new subgenus:

#### *Zulugulella albersi* (Pfeiffer 1855)

*The Albers hunter snail*

**Etymology:** Named after the collector J.C. Albers

**The Shell:** A large to very large, silky, robust shell

**Shape:** Cylindrical and slightly swollen

**Whorls:** Eight

**Sutures:** Shallow

**Length:** Up to 17,2mm

**Width:** Up to 6,3mm

**Profile:** Sides nearly straight, first two smooth, and remainder with strong, close and regular axial ribbing

**Umbilicus:** Narrow

**Aperture:** Short and wide, apertural margin strongly flared

**Apertural dentition:** Fivefold

- a strong angular parietal lamella
- two labral teeth, set on a broad base, the lower one being larger
- a narrow basal tooth to the left of centre
- an almost horizontal ridge-like columella lamella set on a triangular base

**Location:** Recorded from Port Shepstone to Scottburgh, Kwa Zulu Natal. Early records from Durban and further north appear incorrect.

**Things to Note:** Herbert and Rowson set out a clear detailing as to why *Gulella menkeana* has been historically misidentified, and is in fact *Zulugulella albersi*

#### **Description taken from:**

Herbert D G and Rowson B (2011). *Pupa menkana* Pfeiffer 1853, type species of the speciose land snail genus *Gulella* Pfeiffer 1856: correction of long-standing misidentification and designation of neotype (Mollusca: Eupulmonata: Streptaxidae). African Invertebrates Vol 52 (2), Dec 2011, p1

#### *Zulugulella natalensis* (Craven 1880)

*The Natal hunter snail*

**Etymology:** Named after the province in South Africa where it is predominantly found

**The Shell:** A reasonably large, mostly smooth shell with indistinct close-set axial sculpture

**Shape:** Oval to bi-conical

**Whorls:** Eight and a half

**Sutures:** Puckered and shallow

**Length:** Up to 9,2mm

**Width:** Up to 4,4mm

**Profile:** Sides convex tapering from the penultimate whorl to the blunt apex

**Umbilicus:** Closed (open in juveniles)

**Aperture:** Quadrate but rounded at the base

**Apertural dentition:** Fivefold, but variable

- a short, nearly vertical parietal lamella
- a mid-labral tooth, sometimes with a weaker tooth above this
- a basal tooth set inside the lip, to the left of centre, sometimes with a slight bump to the right of this
- a tooth inside the columellar lip
- a low, deep-set columella lamella

**Location:** Endemic to the Transkei and KwaZulu Natal. Found from Dwesa in Transkei, Eastern Cape to Dukuduku Forest near St Lucia, KwaZulu Natal, but also inland as far as Botha's Hill and Kranskop

**Things to Note:** All teeth in the shell are relatively weakly formed. No dentition in juveniles

**Described by:**

Craven A.E (1880). Description of three new Land-Shells from the Cape Colony and Natal. Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London, 1880, p619

**Similar morphology:** It is similar to *Zulugulella zuluensis* and *Gulella pondonesis*

***Zulugulella planti*** (Pfeiffer 1856)

*Plant's hunter snail*

**Etymology:** Named after the collector R.W. Plant

**The Shell:** A large, transparent silky shell

**Shape:** Oval to cylindrical

**Whorls:** Eight and a half

**Sutures:** Simple and shallow

**Length:** Up to 21,5mm

**Width:** Up to 10mm

**Profile:** Sides convex with microscopic with close, regular oblique striae

**Umbilicus:** Narrowly open

**Aperture:** Trigonal but rounded at the base

**Apertural dentition:** Unifold to bifold

- a weakly developed parietal lamella
- a low mid-labral or basal tooth may exist in adult forms

**Location:** Endemic to central KwaZulu Natal. Found from Umkomaas north to Eshowe, and inland to Drummond and Kranskop

**Things to Note:** This is the largest *Gulella* species found in Southern Africa, and is a voracious predator

**Description taken from:**

Connolly M (1939). A Monographic Survey of South African Non-marine Mollusca. Annals of the South Africa Museum Vol XXXIII, December 1939, p 23

***Zulugulella queketti*** (Melvill and Ponsonby 1896)

*Quekett's hunter snail*

**Etymology:** Named after the collector J.F. Quekett, the first curator of the Natal Society Museum

**The Shell:** A large nearly smooth, glossy shell

**Shape:** Subcylindrical

**Whorls:** Eight, with a broad low cone

**Sutures:** Simple and shallow

**Length:** Up to 15,5mm

**Width:** Up to 6,8mm

**Profile:** Sides slightly convex and with weak, regular, nearly straight, oblique ribbing

**Umbilicus:** Closed

**Aperture:** Quadrate but rounded at the base

**Apertural dentition:** Threefold

- a short, incurved parietal lamella
- a weak labral tooth one third to half way up the outer lip
- a very low, obtusely-angled columellar lamella

**Location:** Recorded from Port St Johns northwards to Port Shepstone, Pennington and Durban

**Described by:**

Melvill J.C and Ponsony J. (1903) Descriptions of new Terrestrial Mollusca from South Africa. Annals and Magazine of Natural History Vol 18, Series 6, 1896 p315

**Similar morphology:** It is similar to *Zulugulella triglochis*

***Zulugulella triglochis*** (Melvill and Ponsonby 1903)

*The Three-toothed hunter snail*

**Etymology:** Named the three-toothed hunter snail, for its obvious three apertural teeth (and ignoring the fourth discreet columella lamella)

**The Shell:** A large nearly smooth, glossy shell

**Shape:** Subcylindrical

**Whorls:** Seven and a half

**Sutures:** Simple and shallow

**Length:** Up to 12,5mm

**Width:** Up to 4,2mm

**Profile:** Sides slightly convex and with weak, regular, nearly straight oblique ribbing

**Umbilicus:** Closed

**Apertural dentition:** Fourfold

- a short, incurved parietal lamella
- a weak labral tooth one third to half way up the outer lip
- a small tooth inside the basal lip, to the left of centre
- a very low, obtusely-angled columellar lamella

**Location:** Endemic to the north coast of KwaZulu Natal, southern Mozambique, including Inhaca Island, and south eastern Swaziland. It is locally common in Mkuze Game Reserve

**Things to Note:** *Gulella virgo* named by Melvill and Ponsonby in 1903 is a synonym for the shell.

**Described by:**

Melvill J.C and Ponsony J. H.(1903) Descriptions of thirty-one Terrestrial and Fluvial Mollusca from South Africa. Annals and Magazine of Natural History Vol 12,1903 p600

**Similar morphology:** It is similar to *Zulugulella queketti*, but is considerably smaller

***Zulugulella zuluensis*** Connolly 1932

*The Zulu hunter snail*

**Etymology:** Named after the area of north eastern KwaZulu Natal where it is found

**The Shell:** A reasonably large, thin smooth, glossy white to transparent shell

**Shape:** Oval to biconical

**Whorls:** Eight, nearly flat, with rounded apex

**Sutures:** Simple and shallow

**Length:** Up to 13mm

**Width:** Up to 5mm

**Profile:** Sides mildly convex with microscopic transverse striolae

**Umbilicus:** Closed

**Aperture:** Sub-rhombic but rounded at the base

**Apertural dentition:** Threefold

- a strong, incurved pointed parietal lamella
- a mid-labral tooth
- a flat slab, deep-set within the columella angle

**Location:** Endemic to north-eastern KwaZulu Natal, in coastal regions from Stanger to Kosi Bay

**Things to Note:** All teeth in the shell are relatively weakly formed. Moderately common in the St Lucia area

**Description taken from:**

Connolly M (1932). New South African Gulellae, with notes on certain other Species. Annals of the South Africa Museum Vol VIII, part 1, Feb 1932, p 81

**Similar morphology:** It is similar to *Zulugulella natalensis*

My sincere thanks to Prof Dai Herbert for the loan of the images of the different species.

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***Zulugullela triglochis***  
(Melvill & Ponsonby 1903)  
NMSA V2022



***Zulugullela albersi***  
(Pfeiffer 1855)  
NMSA V9667



***Zulugullela planti***  
(Pfeiffer 1856)  
NMSA 3404



***Zulugullela zuluensis***  
(Connolly 1932)  
NMSA V2187



***Zulugullela natalensis***  
(Craven 1860)  
NMSA B6406



***Zulugullela queketti***  
(Melvill & Ponsonby 1896)  
NMSA V2082



# Armchair Collecting

## Seashell Collecting for the Rest of Us

by Andre Meredith

People collect. Whether right or wrong, human beings seem to have an innate yearning to collate items of similarity, rarity, value or for whatever personal reason, and share the experience with fellow collectors and enthusiasts. Movie replicas, comic books, precious stones, plush toys, teaspoons, artwork, cars... collecting is highly varied, but one thing remains common: all forms of collecting require a source.

Shell collecting, our passion, is relatively unique in the sense that its source is nature itself. It forms part of the collective sphere of "natural collecting", sharing a common trait with collectors of other natural objects including gemstones, insects, rocks, flowers, taxidermy, fish, birds, and the like. In some ways, this aids the collector, providing the opportunity for people to self-collect; at the same time, it creates a potential obstacle for those not in a position to self-collect, due to, perhaps, proximity from the oceans (for those collecting marine species), proximity to specific habitats (for those collecting specific species), lack of required skill-sets and required equipment (diving skills and related equipment) and the associated costs.

Fortunately, there are other ways to collect shells, and this article aims at expanding on these methods, providing a few tips along the way for aspiring collectors. The article focuses specifically

on the collection of marine specimens, but is broadly applicable to the collection of terrestrial specimens as well.

### Self-Collecting

Before we get stuck into the alternatives, a quick look at one of the most popular (and arguably the best) ways to collect shells: self-collecting. Self-collecting requires that the collector visit the source location in person, and employ one or a number of methods to comb the ocean floor or shoreline for specimens. The method employed depends largely on the perceived habitat and depth at which the molluscs live. Some methods include beach-combing (usually for dead specimens washed-up onshore), searching the shallows on foot, snorkelling, SCUBA diving, hookah diving (surface-supplied air), tangle nets, dredging, *ex pisce* (from fish gut), and, a new method becoming



increasingly popular, via ROV (remotely operated under-water vehicle).

As can be deduced, most of the aforementioned methods require that the collector have some form of skill-set, specific experience and access to special equipment. In addition, in order to self-collect, the collector must get to the required location, which could either be as easy and as cheap as a short drive down to the coast, or a lengthy and very expensive effort, requiring perhaps travelling to another country. This is, for most collectors, out of the question, and many collectors may never see such opportunities.

Despite the potential for seemingly insurmountable hurdles, self-collecting does present the collector with many benefits: a sense of accomplishment, the opportunity to look for and keep the best specimens, and, once at location, all finds are essentially "free".

### Face-to-Face Collecting

The second "tier" of collecting, so to speak, involves having the collector work through a shell dealer, a "middle-man" or "reseller". This requires that the collector buy the specimens instead of self-collecting "for free". In many cases the dealer is the individual who self-collected the specimens being sold, while in other cases he or she is merely reselling specimens collected previously by others. Whatever the case may be, a popular way of acquiring specimens through a dealer is through face-to-face interaction.

Face-to-face collecting requires that the collector be in the physical presence of the dealer and the items being offered for sale. The three most popular ways to collect face-to-face are:

- Shell Shows. Shell Shows are held annually in various parts of the world, and attract dealers where collectors can view and buy specimens;
- Shell Shops and Dealer Shops. Collectors can sometimes (usually by appointment) visit dealers at their homes or businesses,

or visit a local shell shop, and view specimens for sale;

- Shell Clubs. Many shell clubs offer opportunities for dealers or fellow collectors to display specimens for sale or swap.

The two things that make face-to-face collecting so appealing are the opportunity to interact with and get to know the dealer, plus the chance to handle and closely inspect the actual specimens on offer before making a purchase. Face-to-face collecting does have a downside as well: it requires that the collector travel to the source, i.e. Shell Show, dealer premises or Shell Club. If any of these are not within reach, it could require a substantial capital outlay to get there (air fares, accommodation, car hire, etc), which may not be achievable for many collectors.



### Armchair Collecting

For those fortunate enough to be in a position to self-collect, or to deal face-to-face, there is no alternative, and indeed this type of collecting is encouraged. For the rest of us, there remains but one opportunity to fuel our hobby: collection from home. For many years, this has been a viable method of adding specimens to collections, but the advancement of technology has simplified armchair collecting to the point where physical interaction has become virtually redundant. Not that this should become the norm – nothing beats holding a shell in-hand before adding it to your

collection – but inevitably, this is the way things are progressing.

The origins of armchair collecting stretches back to the days when dealers placed adverts in local shell publications, and, on request, mailed (as in, posted, within a real envelope) shell lists, containing only descriptions and prices, to prospective buyers. Buyers then had to respond quickly (also in writing, unless a costly phone bill was warranted) in the hope that their response reached the dealer before someone else's. Once set aside, the dealer would then acknowledge reservation of specimens via mail, and then the collector could make the payment. An often lengthy process, without guarantees, the collector would only know what was actually paid for once the parcel arrived.

The advancement of the Internet and Social Media has changed the plight of the armchair collector forever. The world is now as small as the smartphone in your pocket, and as close as the click of an icon on-screen. Transactions are fast, payments are immediate worldwide, communication is as fast as an email, and, of course, all specimens on offer are accompanied with vibrant photographs, often showing many sides of the specimen being offered. Despite these advances, collectors need to be wary of the pitfalls of modern-day armchair collecting.

Collecting via the Internet comes in basically two flavours:

- Fixed Price Sales; and
- Auctions.

Each have their pros and cons.

### Fixed Price Sales

Many Internet dealers prefer to offer their specimens at fixed prices on custom-developed websites. The website acts as an electronic store-front, guiding the collector and prospective client through sections; in most cases, the website is navigated by shell family (Cypraeidae, Conidae, Pectinidae, Strombidae, etc), which, once accessed, are sometimes further split up into genera and species. This will inevitably

display a list of results, indicating to the collector what is available, plus the fixed price the item is being offered at. Additional information could include location data, collection method, collection date, grade and at least one photo.

Buying is easy. Prospective buyers usually need to register (create and account) with the dealer online within their website before any purchases can be made. Items are also usually selected for purchase simply by clicking on them and adding them to a virtual shopping cart. In other cases, the buyer will have to send an email to the dealer containing the unique serial numbers or descriptions, as shown in the website, to seal the deal. The most popular method to conclude payment for selected items is arguably via PayPal. Other less popular methods include payment via credit card, Western Union or direct bank deposit.

The main drawbacks of fixed price sales transactions are the following:

- Although not always the case, specimens offered on fixed price sales websites can be expensive;
- The “update intervals” on these websites can be frustratingly long; this is largely dependent on the supply tempo of new specimens, as well as the effort being made by the dealer to make updates.

### Auctions

A relatively new trend in armchair collecting is auctions. It is very popular, for two reasons:

- Each auction introduces many new specimens “to drool over”;
- There are bargains to be had...

Auctions have become so popular with shell collectors, in fact, that some fixed price dealers have begun running mini-auctions of their own, as a subset of their fixed price business.

As mentioned above, one of the major draw-cards for auctions is the possibility for a bargain. Many

dealers list items in the auctions at ridiculously low starting bid prices, sometimes as low as 1 Euro or 1 Dollar. Many times the cost will soar as the auction time ticks by, as bids are placed, but sometimes a buyer can walk away with a real steal.

Online auctions work much the same way their physical counterparts do: prospective buyers (“bidders”) place bids on the item(s) of interest, in the hope that they are not outbid by the time the auction draws to a close. To help avoid this, auction sites offer bidders the chance to place a “ceiling amount” on an item, and the website will bid on behalf of the bidder, as others place bids on the same item, up to the ceiling amount. As can be expected, things can get rather frenzied near closing time – especially on the more popular or rare items – and can lead to so-called “ninja-bidding”, where items end up heavily over-priced. But then, in the world of shell collecting, value is highly subjective: it is whatever it is worth to the buyer.

One of the pitfalls associated with auctions is self-control, or lack of it. It is very easy to get sucked into the frenzy and excitement of bidding, particularly near the end of an auction. Desperation can often overshadow sanity, and lead to impulsive bidding and overpriced purchases. Armchair collectors need to be wary of this, by applying a few simple

rules:

- Decide early on which item(s) you are going to bid on, and stick with it;
- Decide upfront what you can afford, and stick to it;
- Assign (virtually, at the onset) maximum values to each item you are considering bidding on, and stick with those maximums;
- Do not become discouraged if outbid – there will be more on offer next time, perhaps even something more special;
- Do not revert to impulsive bidding near the close of the auction – stick with your plan;
- Do not forget about shipping costs – factor it in when figuring out ceiling amounts.

Once an item has been won in an auction, the process is quite similar to that followed with fixed price dealer websites. The dealer (item “owner”) will send the winner an invoice, payment is made using one of the agreed methods, and the item is shipped to the new owner.

Participating in a shell auction requires pre-registration with the auction site.



## Shipping

Armchair collecting comes with one added burden: shipping costs. Whereas the self-collector and, in most cases, the face-to-face collector, does not have to ship the items found home via a postal service, the Internet buyer must have the item(s) purchased sent to them some way. As mentioned above, armchair collectors need to factor in the cost of shipping and taxes when budgeting for a potential purchase, especially in auctions.

The cost of shipping varies greatly from country to country, and is also dependent on volumetric mass, which takes into consideration parcel mass and size. Estimates can be found on many postal service websites, but the dealer is the best source for an exact quote. It is advisable to use at least Registered Airmail, since the slight addition in cost provides the buyer with a tracking number and the ability to trace the whereabouts of a parcel. Very expensive (and rare) shipments will benefit from insurance as well.

The fastest (albeit costliest) means of shipment is via courier service. Couriers (e.g. DHL, Fedex, UPS, EMS) provide the collector with the advantages of door to door delivery (no standing in post office queues to collect parcels), very fast shipping times (from 5 days to overnight), all costs included (including taxes) and detailed tracking. All the aforementioned comes at a premium, though: often the shipping cost for a courier service will outstrip the cost of the shells.

## Social Media

Social Media has paved the way for shell collectors and dealers to connect with each other, share ideas, photos of collections and specimens, news, trends and generally participate in the love for their common passion and hobby. Social Media also offers collectors the ability to do limited armchair collecting, as certain Social Media platforms allow dealers to showcase items for sale.

## Scams

The Internet may have opened up doors of opportunity for collectors and sellers alike, but, at the same time, it has opened up the doors for scammers to take advantage of those not weary enough or forewarned of such dangers. This stretches far beyond the realm of shell collecting, but it does affect us, and collectors need to be aware of this. A few golden rules can help collectors avoid these pitfalls:

- Only deal with trusted and recommended dealers with a good reputation;
- If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is;
- Use trusted and secure methods for payment only.

In any event, it would be advisable to double-check with other collectors and dealers on Social Media before plunging headlong into a deal. The Facebook International Seashell Collectors Club (ISCC) is a huge resource of information, and the collective mind of hundreds of fellow-hobbyists and collectors will provide the measure of sanity, reassurance or disapproval for any potential shady deal. In short, chances are, if it is a scam, someone else has probably had a similar run-in, and collaboration with other collectors can prevent you from making the same mistake.

## Conclusion

Shell collecting has evolved much over time, particularly for the collector, the advancement of technology making it so easy today to build up a collection. The Internet has opened up a gateway for buying and selling, and has ushered in a new era of armchair collecting, making it accessible to anyone with an Internet account, a bank account and a postal address. Despite the advances, the end result is the same: a passion for shells, the oceans, the mysteries within, and the thrill of adding an oceanic treasure to your collection – making it worthwhile to invest in this hobby, in whichever way you choose.



# INGULA

## HYDRO POWER PROJECT - DRAKENSBERG

I have found over the years that if someone has an interest in one area of collecting, their interests often cover many other topics. Like me, a bit of a Magpie. And this is basically what found me being invited by a friend to the monthly meeting of the Botanical Society in Emmarentia, Gauteng.

During the general chit chat of Club matters the subject of an impending visit to the Ingula Hydro Power Project to collect plant species came up. The low lying areas were shortly to be submerged under water and the Botanical Society was to assist Eskom in saving whatever species they could before being lost forever.

My interest was pricked and I could see the opportunity to get these members to look out for and collect terrestrial snails for me. After broaching the subject there was great interest, but wouldn't I like to join them and collect personally and add to the knowledge of the diverse form and fauna of the area.

A few weeks later on a Saturday morning, I was on the rolling hills of the Drakensberg Mountains next to the dam wall of the upper section of the

Project, sharing the beautiful panoramic views with a herd of cattle and some very enthusiastic plant collectors. After requesting everyone to look out for snails, we scattered in all directions to fulfil our collecting dreams. In the baking sun I searched high and low with no success and in the end was helping others in their collecting. But there was a silver lining to the day, one of the helpers brought along had found a living snail amongst the bulbs he was excavating. My hopes soared and I now had the location to concentrate on for the next day.

After a very pleasant evening shared with new found friends in two caves converted into a communal area and bedrooms, we were back on site. This time I was taken directly to the area where the snail had been found and I spent the next four or so hours searching inch by inch to find another four specimens of *Cochlitoma dimidiata fm burnupi*, (Smith, 1878) and a specie not as yet identified.

Once again it was proven that not only is personal collecting the most rewarding, but just to take a break from the humdrum of life in the city, is food for the soul.

**Maurice Evans**





# Meet the team

At our last Annual General Meeting it was reconfirmed that the Society would change its name to “Shell Collectors SA (SCSA)”, and the present Strandloper reflects this transition. A new Committee for SCSA was elected as follows:

Andre Meredith	President
Roy Aiken	Vice President
Maurice Evans	Treasurer
Anton Groenewald	Secretary
Christelle Deysel	Committee member
Ken Brown	Committee Member

Prof Dai Herbert remains as the distinguished Patron of the SCSA. and an editorial committee of the Strandloper consists of Alwyn Marias who will be handing over the reigns as the new team gets organised, as well as Ken Brown and Anton Groenewald with input from Roy Aiken. A major vote of thanks goes to Alwyn for his stalwart management of the Strandloper in the past years, elevating the magazine to a very high level of content, format and layout.

We thought that with the newly appointed Committee, it would be good to get to know them a little:



Andre and the family on holiday at the coast.

**Andre**, our President is an aeronautical engineer with a degree from the University of Stellenbosch. He is employed in the air certification department of the South African Air Force. He is married and has two young children. Apart from conchology his other interests include aircraft, drones and what he terms “the maker culture”.

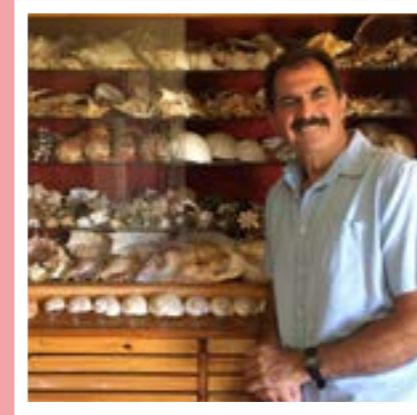
Andre is at present working on building up a collection of African Cypraeidae, including cowries of the East and North Western African Island groups, central Indian Ocean Island groups and the Mediterranean. The collection is growing steadily. He also has a passion for Strombidae, and has written two articles on this Family for American Conchologist – one on the genus *Harpago*, the other on the elusive *Thersistrombus thersites*.

**Roy** became a junior member of the then Cochological Society in 1967, collecting with his Dad for many years. He is a recent past President, and a low-key shell dealer.

His passion is worldwide Volutidae, as well as all South African molluscs. Favourite local families include Turridae, Colubraria, Mitridae, and especially Marginellidae.



Roy at his desk



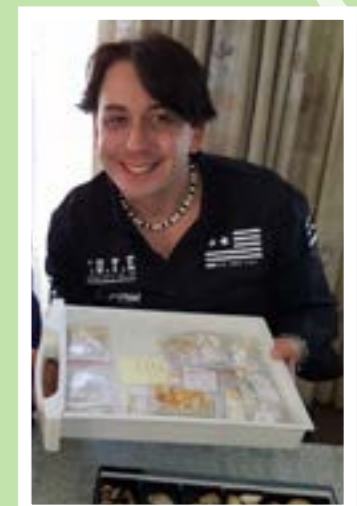
**Maurice** was born and bred in Rhodesia and spent many hours in the wild which ignited a love for all things nature. As a boy he started collecting minerals and many natural sciences specimens. He immigrated to South Africa in 1983 and was involved in sales, marketing and personnel consulting until 1993 when he opened a home improvement/handyman service which is still running today.

He married in 1990 and has a daughter. His annual holidays were spent by the sea in East London where his interest in collecting sea shells and land snails started, and he joined the CSSA in 1994, where he has served as Committee member and Treasurer as well as Chairman of the Pretoria branch of the Society for about five years.

His interests are general and worldwide with special interest in Strombidae, Ranellidae and Cypraeidae. He also has a love for the Achatinidae family.

**Anton** spent most of his childhood days outdoors, exploring the veld and his grandfather's farm in Schweizer-reneke. He is very passionate about his garden and grow unusual plants for his collection. He received his Horticultural Diploma in 2001 and spent 12 years in the nursery industry as horticulturalist and plant propagator. Anton changed his career ventures in 2012 working as a management secretary in a nursing facility.

Anton and his mother Anita spent the early years beachcombing the Pumula shores collecting South-African shells. He received his mother's shell collection that spans over a period of 30 years. His interest in identifying the shells led him to the Society in early 2015. He has a special interest in collecting world-wide Conidae, Terebridae and Muricidae.





**Christelle and her husband Eddie**

**Christelle** is married with two children and is employed as a laboratory information management system administrator at a forensic chemistry facility in Pretoria. Her interest in conchology was kindled through meeting an erstwhile editor of the Strandloper, Kobie du Preez, and she was introduced to the Society in 1999. She has served as Treasurer, and as secretary of the Pretoria branch.

Her interest in conchology had led her to take up scuba diving, and she has been to exotic locations such as the Red Sea. She undertakes an intensive examination of every site she visits and believes it is important to create a precise record of the living species she encounters. The Marginellidae is one her favourite families.



**Ken** has an LLB from Wits University and is an admitted attorney. However he has found that law and justice are mutually exclusive and that law by its very nature in focussing on the negative and confrontational leads one to become what you focus on. He left law and has owned and managed a travel business for special interest group travel, as well as corporate and conferencing divisions. This has fed into his passion for travel and he has travelled widely. He is married to a doctor and has a family of cats, dogs and marine fish. He also has a diploma in Marine Zoology from a UK varsity. His other interests are mineralogy, growing live corals and marine fish, wildlife, photography, and he is a keen hiker and skier. He was a keen caver and climber.

He has been a member of the Society since the 1970s and attended the Johannesburg branch for a number of years. There he met Dr H Van Hoepen and this kindled what was to become a lifelong interest in terrestrial molluscs. As a purist, he has for many years mainly collected his own specimens. His special interest is the Streptaxidae and Cyclophoridae, although he also has collected seashells as well, being fascinated by the beauty of the Costellariidae.