

# The Strandloper

BULLETIN OF THE CONCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA



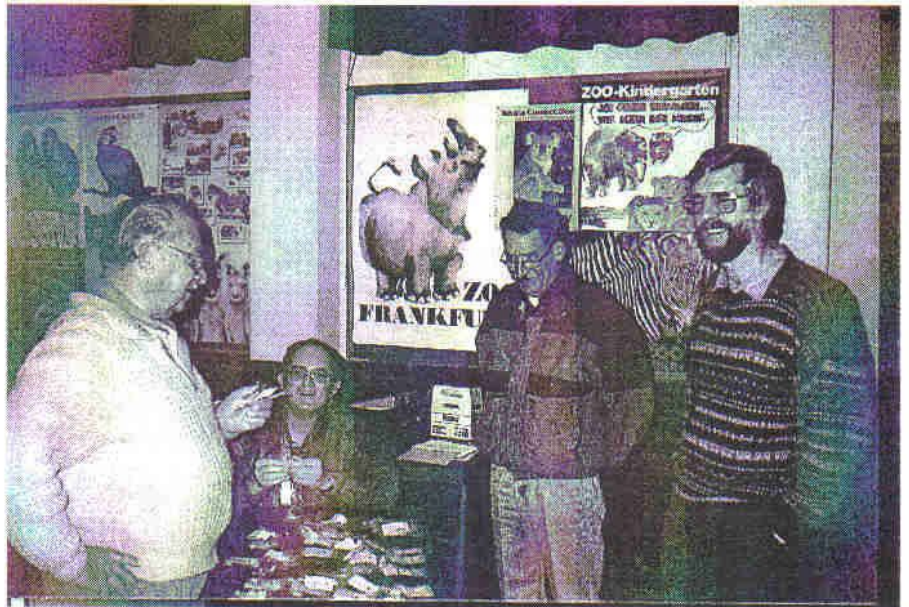
Strandloper 246

June 1996

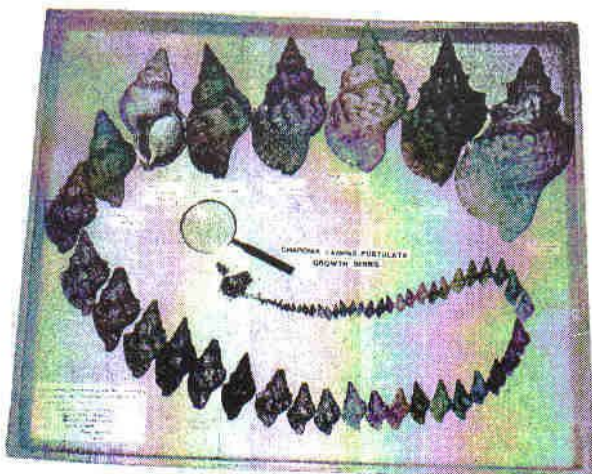
Page 1

## The 1996 Conchological Society Conference and AGM

The Society's two-yearly shell conference and annual general meeting was held on the 1st June in the Frank Brand Hall at the Pretoria Zoo. The Pretoria Group, who hosted the event, put on a magnificent display of shells. The first speaker was Brian Hayes, Chairman of the Port Elizabeth Group, who kicked off with a well-illustrated talk on the Marginellidae of Southern Africa. He mentioned that over 20 new species have been recorded from Southern Africa in the last two years alone. Unfortunately, the situation is complex due to the shells and animals exhibiting great variation within species and sometimes lots of similarity between species. Next Laurie Smith, Society Secretary and Chairman of the Pretoria Group gave a similarly well-illustrated talk on the Pectinidae of



Members Laurie Smith, 'Vellie' Veldsman, D. Spengler and Brian Hayes admire Brian's display of shells for sale.



A magnificent growth series of *Charonia lampas pustulata*.

Southern Africa, and he highlighted the many attractive species available to the South African collector. After a coffee break Mrs Kobie du Preez presented a fascinating video and talk of the underwater landscape off Kenya. Kobie mentioned that there is a problem getting shells, even beach shells, out of Kenya. Therefore, we suggest that you spend your hard-earned holiday money somewhere else.

After an excellent lunch, members went on into the 1996 Annual General Meeting. The Executive committee was thanked for its effort to date and re-elected unopposed. Treasurer Mr Bill Kruger reported that the financial affairs of the Society were sound and that it had ended the year with a net income of R2330 and reserves in excess of R10 000. Bill has been conducting an energetic and successful campaign to get in overdue subscriptions. We had 268 members at the end of March 1996. However, we always need new members and the Society's membership has ac-





The Society's Vice-President,  
Lizieke van den Berg

tually declined since last year due to attrition. A bigger membership could encourage the establishment of new local groups, and would allow a somewhat more comprehensive *Strandloper* to be produced. Next, the issue of the Society's 'library' was raised. Members of longer standing may remember that this library included some rather old and valuable books donated to the Society by Dr Cohen some 30-odd years ago. The Director confirmed that the books were in the safe keeping of Mr David Strong, ex-Cape Town group, and that negotiations were continuing for a suitable home for them.

There was then a discussion of the regulations pertaining to the collection of live shells. It was noted that while the 'old' South African regulations still apply (except in the Transkei which presumably now follows the 'Cape' rules), they could eventually be replaced by something new. Any members who become aware of any pending legislation should notify the Executive as soon as possible so that we can make the appropriate input into the legislative process. The new constitution states in Clause 24 that "Everyone has the right ..... to have the environment protected, for the benefit of present and future generations, through reasonable legislative and other measures that - (i) prevent pollution and ecological degradation, (ii) promote conservation; and (iii) secure ecologically sustainable development and use of natural resources while promoting justifiable economic and social de-

velopment". It is our belief that shell collecting, even for commercial gain, is catered for in the third category.

There was also discussion regarding the promotion of the Society. If people don't know about us, then they would not even think of joining us! We heard that both the Pretoria and the East London groups plan to run public exhibitions later this year. This is a tried and proven way to draw in new members. Pamphlets and application forms were sent down to East London for use at their exhibition, and 100 introductory letters and application forms were sent to the Meyers in Shelly Beach so that any visitors to their sea shell museum who ask about collecting can be directed to us. In a similar vein the Strandloper Museum at Gold Reef City in Johannesburg was visited and an arrangement made for the Society's contact address there to be updated. Information on the Society was also placed at various locations on the Internet. This has generated about two dozen letters or enquiries.

There has been quite a lot of administrative activity since our last Society AGM, held just over two years ago. In particular, your Executive Committee has focused on improv-

ing the professionalism and financial affairs of the Society with good results. We have also made a concerted effort to sell back-issues of the *Strandloper* and have had a fair amount of success in this regard. Also, after a lapse of more than 20 years, the Society has produced two Special Publications. These are booklets or articles that are too long or too specialized for the *Strandloper*. In particular, the late Don Aiken's *Streptaxidae of Southern Africa* has generated unprecedented interest with dozens of copies being ordered by various people from overseas. Please contact the editor of the *Strandloper* if you are interested in producing a Special Publication.

As far as the coming year is concerned, **keep up the good work**. Shell collecting and conchology is a great hobby, which reaches a spectrum of people from artist to scientist, with children, parents and grandparents in-between. We have beach shells, intertidal fossicking, snorkeling, dredging, diving, freshwater shelling, scratching for land snails, extraction of radulae, old and new books, pleasant company, classification, arrangement, international pen friends and writing articles for the *Strandloper* to keep us busy!! Wishing you all an exciting year ahead!!



Mrs K. du Preez presents a video showing underwater life filmed during a holiday in Kenya.





# Flotsam

## Chris Pye, on the aesthetics of seashell geometry...

Last year I was lucky enough to attend a conference in Australia on 'theoretical conchology'. Among the many interesting people I met was Mrs Chris Pye, an artist then engaged in writing a Masters thesis on the relationship between theoretical conchology and aesthetics in the visual arts. Shells in art turned out to be more than, well, just putting a shell into the picture. Shells have form and pattern and symbolic significance. There is the mysterious Golden Section and the Equiangular Spiral to consider too. While most of Chris' paintings are beautifully abstract, her line drawing of a piece of beach-worn shell that she had picked up caught my eye as being just the ticket for a logo for our *Flotsam* column!

I. Yeroslavsky, P.O.Box 6085, Beer Yaakov 70500, ISRAEL

Exchange worldwide/Red Sea pectens, murex, *Conus*, volutes and *Cypraea* for some families from S.A. Also sell/buy/exchange freak & unusual cowries.

## West African Marginellas

The very interesting Dutch magazine *Vita Marina* (P.O.Box 64628, NL-2506 CA DEN HAAG, The Netherlands) has amongst its March 1996 articles, a well-illustrated paper on the *Marginella*'s of northwest Africa'. Connoisseurs of these shells should try and acquire the original article since no summary of mine could do justice to it. However, it may be worth noting that the authors endorse the decision last year of Coover & Coover to split the Marginellidae into Cystiscidae and Marginellidae.

### Reference

1. Goud, J. and Neefs, J. The larger marginelliform gastropods (Cystiscidae and Marginellidae) collected during the CANCAP and MAURITANIA expeditions in the south-eastern part of the North Atlantic Ocean. The genera *Persicula*, *Prunum*, *Dentimargo*, *Marginella* and *Glabella*. *Vita Marina*, vol.43(3-4), 1996. pp.25-50.

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## More on the 'net

All kinds of interesting information on molluscs may be found on 'Mollia', described as a 'web site of information for malacologists'. For example, once you have reached Mollia you can search the past transactions of the Molluscs discussion group. Out of curiosity I tried the search term 'gulella' to see if anybody had mentioned these little land snails and sure enough up come a reference.

> Mollia is located at <http://ucmp1.Berkeley.Edu/mologis/mollia.html>.

## Exchanges wanted

Mr Emilio F. Garcia of 135 Oak Crest Dr., Lafayette, LA 70503, USA is interested in trading rare or uncommon Caribbean shells for rare or unusual South African specimens. He already has most of the common Southern African species, so write to him first to ascertain his needs.

Mr Art Weil of 5662 Delhi Pk, Cincinnati, Ohio, 45238, USA specializes in Epitoniidae and is interested in "anybody who drags the beaches for them". Why not write to him if you share his interest in the family?

Mr Matt Grote of 640 Deale Rd, Deale, MD 20751-9617, USA wishes to swop a *Conus excelsus* 8 mm F/ F- very minor flaws (photo on request) for an example of *Triva spendidissima* or other rare *Triva*.

Mr George Muehleisen of 3512 Bayview Drive, Chesapeake Beach, MD 20732, USA is a novice collector who wishes to swop Indonesian cones & cowries for South African cones and cowries.

## Opisthobranch Newsletter

This interesting publication is available from Steven J. Long, 20220 21st Ave. NW, Shoreline, WA 98177, USA at \$20 per volume.



## Van Kowiemond Ooskaap tot Olifantsmond (Weskus) - 'n Ontdekkingstoer langs die kus

deur Johel van den Berg

(Vervolg van vorige uitgawe)

**T**oe was dit aanstryk na **Saldanha baai**, geboorte grond. 'n Swem in die Weskus-kouewater bly ongelooflik verfrissend! Maar aan die Weskus het skulpe bar, lomp en vervelig geword.

By Pepper Bay, naas die hawe, was dit egter 'n ander storie. Daar kon ek 'n paar *Philine aperta* optel, plus 'n *Gari depressa*, wat toe later 'n jong *Lutraria lutraria* blyk te wees (ek raak mos 'n halwe deskundige).

Toe ek die troppe swart mossels begin wegskop, kry ek aan hulle gekoppel *Burnupena catarrhactra*, *Burnupena limbosa* en *B. papyracea*, asook 'n jong *Clionella s. sinuata*. En glo my, die *Venerupis corrugata* neem hier enorme afmetings aan.

Terug by ons kamp het ek op die albestrooide strand gaan snuffel. Die oes was egter net reuse *Amblychilepas scutellum* en oranjeleurige *Bullia digitalis*, en 'n enkele *Tellina trilatera*, nou egter grof gerif en nie soos Muizenberg se gladde moffietjies nie.

Die enkele *Crepidula capensis* het my regtig daarvan oortuig dat hulle inderdaad skaars is.

By **Tabakbaai** doen die branders hul ding en daar was seetonge, *Sepiella papillata*, van piepklein tot uitermarte groot, 'n eienaardige roomkleurige *Aulacomya ater* en nie minder nie as drie *Protomella capensis* (kerse) wat as gevolg van strandverwering heeltemal glad is. Die poeding bly vir laaste, 'n *Macoma crawfordi ordinaria*!

**Jacobsbaai** se losstaande rotse steek oral kop uit soos beeldhoustrukture in die glimmende blou baaitjies. Ai die see bly darem maar bekoorlik. En as 'n aspirant-kunstenaar inspirasie soek, kyk net in die hart van 'n *Patella granatina*.

Dan is daar die ongelooflike

groot *Patella tabularis* (swartpuntbakkie), die Weskus-soort wat skaars word, en *Patella argenvillei* (bakkie) wat maklik sy 104 mm sokkies volstaan, en natuurlik gatsby-tyd se diepdotjies *Patella compressa* (opskeplepel).

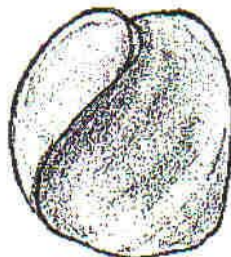
*Marginella rosea*, Weskusvorm, is taamlik volop maar die meeste ongelukkig verbleik. Aan die ander kant is daar hope groot (13 mm) vuilpienk *Gibbula benzi* wat die son weer, in plaas van verbleik, 'n ekstra kleurwoema gee.

Die *Burnupena catarrhacta* is uiters mooi gemerk en deurgaans met 'n titseltjie violet (Kilburn). Hoekom is almal van hulle so onderontwikkeld? Ek kon sweer een van hulle is die ontwykende *Burnupena delalandii*, die riwwe is te duidelik sigbaar soos in *B. lagenaria*.

Een waaroor ek nie twyfel nie,



*crepidulla porcel-  
iana met  
wit blerts.  
23 mm.*



*philine aperta.  
30 mm.*

## A tour of discovery along the Cape coast, Part 2

by Johel van den Berg

(This is a condensed version of the Afrikaans text. Unfortunately much of the charm and language usage of the original does not make it across in my translation. In the last issue she described her beach shelling experiences as she travelled from Port Alfred to Muizenberg. Mrs van den Berg lives in the little town of Burgersdorp in the Eastern Cape. Anybody who is interested in beach-collected shells from the Eastern Cape may write to her at 30 Murray Str., Burgersdorp 5520, South Africa - Ed)

**A**nd then it was on to **Saldanha Bay**, birthplace. A quick swim in the cold West coast water remains unbelievably refreshing, but the shells on the West Coast were not nearly as interesting as those of the East. Nevertheless, Pepper Bay, near the harbour was profitable; there I found a *Philine aperta*, a '*Gari depressa*', which later proved to be a juvenile *Lutraria lutraria*. And then, when I began to kick aside the mounds of black mussels, I found attached to them examples of *Burnupena catarrhactra*, *limbosa* and *papyracea*, as well as a juvenile *Clionella s. sinuata*, and, believe me, the *Venerupis corrugata* around here are enormous.

Back at our caravan park I went straight on the beach to scratch around, but my harvest was only giant *Amblychilepas scutella*, orangey *Bullia digitalis*, and a single *Tellina trilatera*, now coarsely grooved, unlike the smooth softies from Muizenberg. I found only one *Crepidula capensis*, proof enough that they really are quite uncommon.

Next to **Tabakbaai** where the ocean waves roll in unimpeded. There I found an odd cream coloured *Aulacomya ater*, three well-worn *Protomella capensis*, and then, for dessert, a *Macoma crawfordi*



is 'n pragtige *Fasciolaria lugubris*, die kouewatersoort.

Toe **Tietiesbaai** en hoe beskrywend die twee wellingkies met 'n enkele delikate kliptorinkie as tepel, te pragtig. In die baaitjie het dit gebruik en gekook terwyl massas swart mosselpunte moedeloosheid onder my kaal voete ingespoel het, maar kon ek darem hier en daar 'n lomp *Argobuccinum pustulosum* (lê-os) vind, asook sy slanker neef *A. proditor*.

Later, om die draai verdereaen, kon ek my versadig aan een van ons oudste aangetekende skulpe, die reusagtige *Nucella cingulata*, wat gewoonlik heel gemiddeld vertoon. Dit was egter 'n heerlike afleiding om te kyk hoeveel koorde ek kon vind, van nul tot ses!

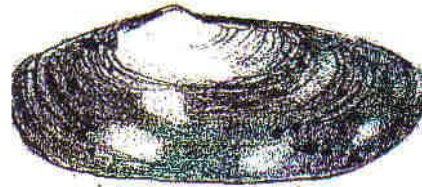
Een snaakse vorm het my laat kopkrap. Besonder uitgereek, bleek, met een koord op elke winding. Die kleure was net so mooi. Bruin koord op wit, wit op ligbruin, heeltemal roomkleurig, en selfs die seldsame een, roomkleur bande tussen wit koorde.

Daar was ook 'n pragtige *Fusinus cinnamomeus* en 'n *Afrocominella capensis*. Was ook verbaas dat *Patella compressa* nie altyd ingedoke is nie want ek het 'n vorm gekry wat aan 'n *Patella miniata* herinner, baie rond.

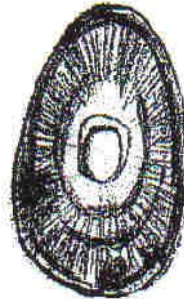
Ook was ek verbaas om 'n jong *Mactra glabrata* hier te vind. Daar was 'n mooi gevormde *Ostrea atherstonei* (rooi oester) en heelwat *Clionella sinuata sinuata*.

Onderweg terug na Paternoster sien ek hope skulpe op 'n soort eilandjie rondlê. Om dit te bereik, moes ek die yskoue water aandurf. Nouja, ons skulpmense skrik mos nie vir 'n klein ongeriefie nie ...veral as die beloning drie lieflike groot *Conus mozambicus mozambicus* was - een duidelik gestippel en een feitlik swart!

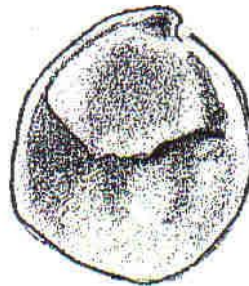
Terug by Saldanha moes ek, synde laagwater, gou na Pepper Bay terugkeer. Wat vind ek toe op pad soontoe in die breekwater? Hierdie sogenaamde "delicately sculptured with finely crispate concentric threads" (weer eens Kilburn),



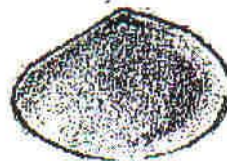
*Lutraria lutraria*  
*ala gari depressa*  
50 mm.



*Amblychilepas*  
*scutellum*  
40 mm



*Crepidula capensis*  
30 mm.



*Macoma crawfordi*  
*ordinaria*  
18 mm.



*Marginella rosea*

*ordinaria*. Loose rocks rise like statues in the shimmering blue bays of **Jacobsbaai**. If any artist needs inspiration, go to the beach there and look into the heart of a *Patella granatina*! And then there were unbelievably big *Patella tabularis*, *Patella argenvillei* of 104 mm, and naturally heaps of *Patella compressa*. There were numerous West Coast *Marginella rosea*, but unfortunately all bleached in the sun. But on the other hand, weathering on the beach adds an extra kick to the colour of the drifts of *Gibbula tryoni* lying around. Rather attractive *Burnupena catarrhacta* with a hint of violet were also to be found, but these seemed a little underdeveloped, reminding me of *Burnupena lagenaria*. Finally, a beautiful *Fasciolaria lugubris*, the cold water kind.

And then **Tietiesbaai**, where the swells surged and boiled in the bay, driving weary black mussel shells past my legs. Here and there in the mountain of black mussels I found an *Argobuccinum pustulosum*, and its slimmer cousin, *A. proditor*. Further on I became saturated with examples of *Nucella cingulata*. It became a game to see if I could get samples of all the variations - from none to six ridges! At the same place were attractive examples of *Fusinus cinnamomeus*, a single *Afrocominella capensis*, and some rather oddly shaped *Patella compressa*, the latter reminding me of *Patella miniata*. I was surprised to find a juvenile *Mactra glabrata*. There was also a well-formed example of *Ostrea atherstonei*, and numerous *Clionella sinuata sinuata*. En route back to the land, I spied a heap of shells on a sort of island. To reach it I had to wade through the ice cold water. Well, we shelly people are not afraid of a small inconvenience and in I went, to be rewarded with three lovely *Conus mozambicus mozambicus*. One was stippled and the other nearly black!

And then back to Saldanha, where, at low water, I paid a quick visit to Pepper Bay again. There, on the path to the break water I found an abun-



*Venerupis corrugata*. Van pienk strepies tot donkerbruin kon ek kus en keur.

Ook geslote *Lutraria lutraria*, die periostrakum nog dig en omgekrul nes bruin herfsblare.

**Lambertsbaai** kon my net een eksotika aanbied, 'n Weskus *Venerupis corrugata* met 'n verskil. Hierdie ou lomp geriffelde javel had nou 'n ingewikkelde hiërogliefiese geskrif op sy oppervlak, so asof dit 'n boodskap van die faraos wil oordra - verruklik!

**Elandsbaai** het taamlik gehawende *Crepidula capensis* opgelewer, en 'n *C. rugulosa*. Meer *Tellina trilatera* het uitgespoel - 'n gele, grysbloues met konsentriese lyne - en hope *Patella granatina*, waaronder twee pikswartes.

Ons laaste oorbly was by **Strandfontein**, die kersie op die hele toer se koek. Skaars uitgepak of ek sak af na Vrotbaaitjie, soos ek hom laas gedoop het, skuins oorkant die winkeltjie. Was dit dan nie daar waar ek twee jaar gelede die *Conus moz. mozambicus* en skaars *Nucella wahlbergi* opgetel het nie?

Hierdie keer moes ek tevrede wees met 'n heel klein *mozambicus*, 'n verdwaalde *Conus tinianus* en 'n soortgelyke *Trimusculus costatus* en weer eens *Afrocominella capensis*.

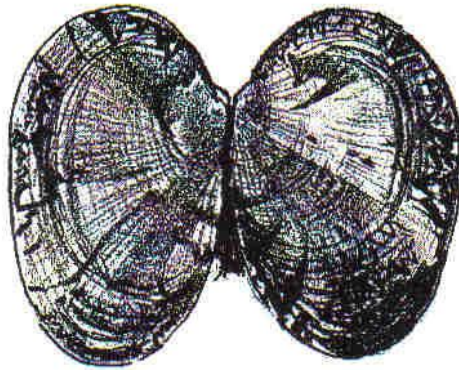
*Nucella cingulata* is nou weer heel stemmig, nie so buitensporig soos by Tietiesbaai nie, en een se columella spiraal glad uit. Hoekom spiraal skulpe in elk geval so uit sal ek graag wil weet.

Ai, is die *Chaetoplera papilio* (kiton) tog nie mooi nie? Wens ek kon so gelukkig wees om 'n volledige een op te tel. Sal maar met my drie segmente "whose shell resembles polished wood" tevrede wees.

Manlief en ek het ons toer afgesluit met 'n stywe tien kilometer se stap na die Olifantsriviermond, vir oulaas op soek langs die see.

Al wat ek later kon sit en beskou, met stywe spiere en knakkende knieë, was 'n paar *Lutraria capensis* en *L. lutraria* (een geel getint), 'n enkele reusegroot *Dosinia lupines orbignyi* in blou, en *Tellina trilatera* van 48 mm, ook geel getint soos laas by Muizenberg gevind.

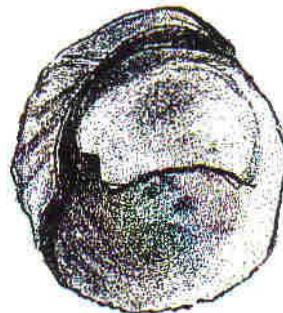
Wat 'n heerlike tog, 'n ontdekkingsreis langs die see.



*Venerupis. corrugata.*  
68mm.



*Conus mozambicus*  
*mozambicus.*  
68 mm.



*Crepidula rugulosa*  
38 mm.



anderantwikkeld  
*Burriupena catar.*  
*acta*  
18mm.

dance of pink to brown *Venerupis corrugata*, as well as a fresh and complete *Lutraria lutraria*, with its periostracum still thick and curled, like autumn leaves.

**Lamberts Bay** could offer only one new shell, a *Venerupis corrugata* with a difference - its exterior was covered with hieroglyphics, as if it bore a message from the Pharaohs! **Elandsbaai** produced some

*Crepidula capensis*, a single *Crepidula rugulosa*, and many yellow or grey-blue *Tellina trilatera*, as well as mounds of *Patella granatina*, amongst which I found two pitch-black specimens.

Our last stop was at Strandfontein, the cherry on the cake. No sooner had I unpacked and I was off to the beach opposite the little shop, where two years ago I had found *Conus mozambicus mozambicus* and the scarce *Nucella wahlbergi*. However, this time I had to be content with a small *Conus mozambicus*, a second cone that looked very much like a *Conus tinianus*, another out-of-place shell which looked like *Trimusculus costatus*, and once again *Afrocominella capensis*. At this beach *Nucella cingulata* were rather common, not unusual as at Tietiesbaai. And my, aren't the segments of the chiton *Chaetoplera papilio* beautiful? I wished that I could be lucky enough to find a whole one but had to be content with three segments.

To finish off our marathon tour, husband and I took a brisk ten kilometre walk to the mouth of the Olifants River. However, all that I could subsequently admire amidst my stiff muscles and creaking knees was few *Lutraria capensis* and *L. lutraria*, a single giant blue *Dosinia lupines orbignyi*, and a yellow-tinted *Tellina trilatera*. Still, what a wonderful experience, this voyage of discovery along the coastline.



## Presidents Report - 1996

Dr R.N. Kilburn

This year I will again give a brief account of some of the malacological happenings of 1995/96, or at least those that concern South Africa.

Three overseas malacologists visited South Africa during 1995. Dr Stephen Ridgeway of the Natural History Museum, London, spent several weeks in the field, collecting limpets for a study of their taxonomy at a genetic level. He has previously applied such techniques to the Atlantic *Patella* species, with much success in resolving their true relationships. Dr Klaus Bandel (University of Hamburg) and a student came out to collect the fossil molluscs of the Mzamba Cretaceous beds, and (despite our gloomy predictions as to the desecrated state of these beds) was very successful. He also looked at local estuarine molluscs and discovered some amazing new records of *Neritidae*! Ms Alison Trew (National Museum of Wales), who has published a series of extremely important catalogues of the molluscs described by Melvill, Tomlin, Smith and others, paid a fleeting visit to Pietermaritzburg.

At the end of last year Chris Appleton completed a little identification manual to South African freshwater molluscs. Publication of this (Natal University Press) is imminent.

The Twelfth International Malacological Congress in Vigo, Spain, was well attended by South Africans (this was before the collapse of the rand!), including myself, Dai Herbert, Chris Appleton, and Willem Sirgel (University of Stellenbosch). These Congresses are the only opportunities of meeting one's overseas colleagues in mass, and discussing a wide spectrum of problems.

While in Europe, both Dai and I independently spent time at the Natural History Museum (London) looking at

types and consulting their library. In addition I spent a week at the Oxford University Museum, working on the Turton collection. For certainty of identification, it has proved essential to compare specimens with the actual Turton types, as his photographs were so heavily (and ineptly) retouched that they are often very deceptive. Dai went the Swedish Museum of Natural History in Stockholm to scrutinise the Wahlberg collection for any surviving Krauss types. Ferdinand Krauss is usually called the "Father of South African Malacology", as he was not only the first scientist to collect molluscs here, but he wrote the first book on South African shells in 1848, and in it described many of our best-known species. Some of these were collected by Wahlberg, who was in South Africa at the same time as Krauss. The actual Krauss collection was destroyed when Stuttgart was bombed during the last World War, but some of his types survive in Stockholm.

Research activities at the Natal Museum have been at a low ebb, because of a series of upheavals over the past two years. Major building works on top of the Natal Museum building forced us to relocate departments to a new building. Although we did not have to move the mollusc collection, the down-side has been the inconvenience of walking two blocks and climbing 3 flights of stairs every time we wish to consult it (and at times access to the entire collection has been closed). Then in September, PWD (who own our temporary premises) had our library sprayed with the highly toxic insecticide chlordane, poisoning our librarians and placing our entire library in quarantine for many months!

Despite the above, we have managed to persevere in our work on marine molluscs: I completed a manuscript

on our *Ungulinidae* (bivalves of the general *Diplodonta*, *Felaniella*, *Microstagon*, etc), most of our species proving to be undescribed. I also began a revision of our *Limidae*. Recently I submitted a paper correcting some of the flawed station data published by the "Valdivia" (1898- 1899), and showed that one of their supposed Angolan samples was actually collected on the Agulhas Bank! Dai Herbert wrote up his study of the trochoidean types in the Bordeaux Museum, and his revision of the genus *Calliotrochus* is nearing completion. Dai was able to again accompany the Sea Fisheries Research Institute on a cruise to the Agulhas Bank, and brought back some valuable specimens for the Natal Museum collection.

For years we have been concerned at the omission of land snails from environmental impact studies and conservation proposals, despite the obvious fact that the recent drought years and habitat destruction together have decimated our pulmonate populations, particularly in eastern South Africa. We now have funding from the FRD's "Sustainable Environment" program to prepare a manual on the slugs and snails of KwaZulu-Natal. The aim is to produce a book treating these as living creatures (as I attempted to do in Kilburn & Rippey) rather than objects, illustrating most species with colour photographs (where possible also showing live snails), and stressing ecological and conservation aspects. We will also deal with side issues such as snail-farming and pest control, providing information not normally accessible to the lay reader. Our deadline is the end of 1997.

Two eminent United States malacolo-

*continued overleaf*



## President's report - continued

gists passed away in 1995. R. Tucker Abbott is a household name among collectors, through the large number of popular guides that he published or edited over the years. His death will sadden thousands of fans around the world. The name of Harold Harry will probably be unfamiliar to collectors, but his work on the classification of oysters, in particular, was a major contribution to bivalve knowledge.

### Strandloper

The editor welcomes original articles, news, shelling reports, feedback, advertisements (rates on application) and any other material likely to be of interest to members of the Society. If possible, send articles on a MS-DOS diskette in Word for Windows, WordPerfect, or ASCII format. Photographs and line drawings are especially welcome. Please address correspondence and submissions to

Dr M.B.Cortie,  
P.O.Box 1664,  
Ferndale, Randburg 2160  
South Africa

or e-mail  
MIKEC@MSINFO.MINTEK.AC.ZA

## Beach collecting at Shelly Beach, Kwazulu-Natal

Members John and Blanche Cunliff live in South Port, on the Kwazulu-Natal South Coast, which is well-known for its drifts of beached sea-weed, shells and miscellaneous flotsam. John reports that he has been systematically studying beached material from Shelly Beach and other locations along the South Coast in order to get an idea of which shells are uncommon and which not. In the course of the work he and fellow member Val van der Walt have gone through some 85000 shells or bits of shells, all of which have been sorted and identified where possible. Recently, he sent me a spreadsheet with a summary of the data for Shelly Beach. Although that list is not quite complete - there are still a few shells to be identified - they list some 211 species of mollusc from about 23000 fragments collected. Shelly Beach is a popular launching site for ski-boats, but is nevertheless still subject to strong wave action. As a consequence, the in-shore molluscan fauna is dominated by species that can adapt to either exposed rocks or the coarse sand in-between. However, there are some interesting dive locations off-shore which are presumably the source of the occasional more exotic species that wash up here too. Good beach specimens of such interesting finds such as *Conus natalensis*, *Cypraea citrina* and the odd *Phenacovolva* (family Ovulidae), have been reported from Shelly

*pustulata* that occasionally wash ashore after fierce storms. Indeed, snorkelers who care to venture beyond the back line of the breakers at the ski-boat launch site may find that the sea bottom is littered with dozens of empty shells of that species (see *Strandloper* no.182, February 1977).

The species more commonly represented in the fragments that John and Blanche collected and classified are listed in the accompanying table. The bivalve families Arcidae, Veneridae and Mytilidae figure prominently while on the gastropod side examples of the rock-dwelling Patellidae and Fissurellidae stand out. However, the single most common shell fragment by far was of the attractive little phasianellid *Tricolia capensis* which may be found live on weed towards the lower part of the shore.

### Bivalves

*Arca avellana* Lamarck, 1819, family Arcidae  
*Arcopsis symmetrica* Reeve, 1844, family Arcidae  
*Barbatia obliquata* (Gray, 1837), family Arcidae  
*Carditella rugosa* Sowerby, 1892, family Carditidae  
*Gafrarium pectinatum alfredense* (Bartsch, 1915), family Veneridae  
*Glycymeris connollyi* Tomlin, 1925, family Glycymeridae  
*Lima nimbifer* Iredale, 1924, family Limidae  
*Loripes rosacae* Smith, 1899, family Lucinidae  
*Parvicardium turtoni* (Sowerby, 1894), family Carditidae  
*Perna perna* (Linnaeus, 1758), family Mytilidae  
*Septifer bilocularis* (Linnaeus, 1758), family Mytilidae  
*Sheldonella lateralis* (Reeve, 1844), family Arcidae  
*Sunetta contempta bruggeni* Fischer-

Beach. However, you will have to be an early bird to get these, since according to John, they are very likely to be picked up by one of the hundreds of holiday makers or local residents who take walks on the beach. Shelly Beach and neighbouring Oslo Beach are also known for large shells of *Charonia lampas*

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Piette, 1974, family Veneridae  
*Tivela* sp., family Veneridae

### Gastropods

*Anachis kraussi* (Sowerby, 1844), family Columbellidae  
*Cellana capensis* (Gmelin, 1791), family Patellidae  
*Dendrofissurella scutellum* (Lamarck, 1822), family Fissurellidae  
*Diodora crucifera* (Pilsbry, 1890), family Fissurellidae  
*Fissurella mutabilis* Sowerby, 1834, family Fissurellidae  
*Fissurella natalensis* Krauss, 1848, family Fissurellidae  
*Hipponix pilosus* (Deshayes, 1832), family Hipponicidae  
*Nassarius formosus* (W.H. Turon, 1932), family Nassariidae  
*Oxysteles tabularis* (Krauss, 1848), family Trochidae  
*Patella aphanes* Robson, 1986, family Patellidae  
*Patella concolor* Krauss, 1848, family Patellidae  
*Patella granularis*, Linnaeus, 1758, family Patellidae  
*Patella oblecta* Krauss 1848, family Patellidae  
*Patelloida profunda albonotata* (E.A. Smith 1910), family Acmaeidae  
*Turritella carinifera*, Lamarck, 1822, family Turritellidae  
*Tricolia capensis* (Dunker, 1846), family Phasianellidae  
*Siphonaria oculus*, Krauss, 1848, family Siphonariidae  
*Siphonaria aspera* Krauss, 1848, family Siphonariidae  
*Siphonaria capensis* Quoy & Gaimard 1833, family Siphonariidae  
*Trimusculus costatus* (Krauss, 1848), family Trimusculidae

### Scaphopods

*Dentalium regulare* E.A. Smith, 1903, family Dentaliidae

## Catalogue published of shells on stamps

by Joh Groenewald

A pleasant new publication is the *Stanley Gibbons Thematic Catalogue, Collect Shells on Stamps*, published in November 1995 (Stanley Gibbons Ltd, London).

The catalogue lists over 3 200 stamps which show over 750 identified living molluscs, many unidentified shells and over 30 fossil shells. Only one stamp of each stamp issue is illustrated, so if a stamp issue comprised four different stamps picturing different shells, only the first (lowest value) is depicted. Illustrations are in black/white.

Many of the stamps show shells to advantage, as the centrepiece. Some stamps feature a shell as important element of an overall design, like a Greek stamp of 1963 which shows a Boy Scout blowing an Atlantic trumpet triton, *Charonia variegata*.

Other stamps have shells as a rather minor part of the design. These are often described as "unidentified scallops". Stamps picturing living molluscs like octopi are included in the catalogue.

Perhaps the most popular shell in Africa, stamp-wise, is the money cowrie, *Cypraea moneta*. Countries in West, Central and East Africa

have had it on stamps, also Angola (1961) and South West Africa (1984). In 1968 Botswana issued a 7c stamp with unidentified shells in a necklace.

Fossil shells are recorded on stamps of Transkei, but South Africa's set of shell stamps of November last year came too late for inclusion in the catalogue.

The publication is well indexed: by English name; zoological name; class, superfamily, family and specie; and by subject such as shells shown with hermit crabs, shells used as musical instruments, and paintings showing shells.

Collecting of stamps showing shells is an increasingly popular theme. The RSA Shells stamps was the SA Post Office's best-seller for 1995 in overseas markets for new stamps.

Locally, Jeannie Willemse won the 1992 Pretoria club competition with her novel exhibit of "shells on stamps, and the real shells depicted"

*Collect Shells on Stamps* is available directly from the Stanley Gibbons distributors, Republic Stamp & Coin Accessories, PO Box 11199, Johannesburg 2000, Tel 011 887 1903, at R155 VAT inclusive. A copy has been donated to the Society's library.

### Coralliophidae and Olividae

The Jan/March 1996 issue of *La Conchiglia* carries articles on several topics of interest to South African collectors. In particular the Coralliophilidae and Olividae of Reunion are addressed. The former are found in very close association with coral. Some of the species are quite cryptic and are

known only from a few dead shells, dredged up in the sand between coral formations. Reunion, which has far less coral than the nearby island of Mauritius, has 24 species of Olividae and 18 of Coralliophilidae.

1. Drivas, J. and May, M. The Olividae from Reunion, *La Conchiglia*, No. 278, 1996. pp. 13-16, also, The Coralliophilidae of Reunion, pp. 53-58.
2. Lorenz, F. The habitat of some Coralliophilid species from Tanzania, *La Conchiglia*, No. 278, 1996. pp. 22-24.

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## Poems from the Joan Weakley scrap book

Joan Weakley was one of the founder members of the Conchological Society. Amongst her several interests was the collection of poems about sea shells and shell collectors. I guess that most of us are not only attracted to shells by a scientific curiosity but also by an appreciation of the unique aesthetic properties of shells. (How many people do you actually know personally who collect earthworms or spiders??)

There is something very satisfying and magical about the shells of molluscs and, whether your immediate interest is in the shapes of the shells, their patterns, or their taxonomy, a shell is almost guaranteed to look 'right'. Not surprisingly, quite a few poets and would-be poets have had a go at composing verse about poems. A few of these examples are reproduced here.

### To a shell collector

Come stroll with me along the rocky shore,  
The surf is foaming through the reefs -  
listen to its roar.  
Here in this tiny bay lie jewels, left by  
the ebbing tide :  
Glistening Venus Ears, and shells of  
many hues lying side by side.  
Select your choice from nature's store -  
there is no lack,  
Before the greedy, restless waves come  
rushing back.

written for Mrs Smit of Zululand  
by E. Knowles Jordan, Port Alfred  
1954.

### Rhyme for a shell collector

Here's to the sunburn, the sprain in your back,  
The windburn, the chill, the weight of the sack  
And bottles and bags, the unpackable gear  
Strapped round you and playfully banging your  
rear.

Here's to the barnacle gash and the bruise,  
The salt in your eyes and the sand in your shoes.  
Here's to the stink in the kitchen at night,  
The cleaning and scraping and sorting outright,  
The searching through books till your eyes dull  
with strain

For the needed, elusive, unspellable name.  
Here's to the polishing, boxing, arranging,  
Consulting, re-sorting, re-naming and changing.  
Yes, here's to the weariness, bruises and cuts,  
But most of all - here's to you wonderful nuts  
Who go on collecting, foul weather or fair,  
Not minding at all, with a glassy-eyed stare  
For the sake of the world who look on with  
surprise  
And miss all the grief, and the fun - and the  
prize.

Margaret Whitehead

### Shells of the Ocean

One summer eve with pensive  
thought  
I wandered on the sea-beat shore,  
Where oft in heedless infant sport  
I gathered shells in days before.

The splashing waves like music fell  
Responsive to my fancy wild,  
A dream came o'er me like a spell,  
I thought I was again a child.

I stooped upon a pebbly strand  
To cull the toys that round me lay,  
But as I took them in my hand  
I threw them one by one away.

O thus, I said, in every stage  
By toys our fancy is beguiled;  
We gather shells from youth to age,  
And then we leave them like a  
child.

Cherry.

The soul of music slumber in the shell,  
Til waked and kindled by the master's spell;  
And feeling hearts - touch them but rightly -  
pour

A thousand melodys unheard before

from 'Human Life' by Rogers.



## Silly season for seashells

by Mike Cortie

I remember being quite intrigued some years ago when I read that the shells of *Epitonium scalare* were once regarded as so valuable that Chinese craftsmen made counterfeit versions out of rice paste for sale to rich European collectors<sup>1</sup>. However, it seems that the practice of counterfeiting shells did not die out in the Nineteenth Century (nor indeed did counterfeiting in general) and there has lately been some discussion in overseas magazines and on the Internet of this phenomenon. Some of this latest interest seems to have been sparked off by articles on the subject in *La Conchiglia*<sup>2</sup> and *World Shells* by Mr Guido Poppe and Dr L. Raybaudi Massilia respectively. Actually, artistic copies of shells have an ancient history and, for example, a magnificent 300 mm long alabaster *Charonia* shell dating from circa 1500 BC turned up in excavations of a Minoan cemetery<sup>3</sup>. More recently, huge wooden versions of famous shells have become something of an art form in the Philippines. One of these, a magnificent wooden *Charonia tritonis* may be seen in the Sea Shell Museum at Shelly Beach (see *Strandloper* No.241, March 1995).

Of course there is a bit of a continuum between outright artificial shells, made possibly of wood or plastic, and natural shells whose appearance has been somewhat modified. And there is rather a big philosophical departure between artificial shells made to amuse or delight the eye, for example the *tritonis*, and those intended for more nefarious purposes.

By now some of you are thinking that only a novice collector would be deceived by these new counterfeits. Think again! Both Dr Luigi Raybaudi Massilia, publisher of the magazine

*World Shells*, who is also a leading international dealer in shells not to mention being a conchological researcher of note, and Mr Guido Poppe, author and major international shell dealer, were completely taken in recently by a series of fake *Cypraea* "*lobettiana*" and "*splendida*"<sup>4,5</sup>.

Naturally, it is only worth making counterfeits of rare and expensive shells but it may still be worthwhile "improving" less expensive shells prior to their dispatch to moneyed collectors. Some of the techniques used include taking some other shell and painting on a new pattern (good for cowries, cones and volutes) or perhaps actually making a pseudo-shell out of a new material. Alternatively, existing shells of the species can be enhanced by drawing on new and improved patterns with coloured ink, while the gloss may be "improved" by applying a glaze, the latter possibly coloured to boot. Shells treated in this way have included *Cypraea sakurai* and *Ovula ishibashii* respectively<sup>6</sup>. Even fossil shells have been harnessed in this moneymaking venture, and the *Cypraea lobettiana*'s that so misled dealers in Europe had actually been painted onto polished fossil cowries. Other tricks of the trade include "repairing" natural growth lines by filling them with glue, filling holes with epoxy or whatever, or gluing together pieces of two or more shells of the same species. The latter practice is especially suitable for large *Pleurotomaria* or murexes. Other tricks include building up a damaged lip with wood glue or plastic, or perhaps filing down a damaged lip.

Even left-handed *Conus gloriamaris* have been produced! In this case the "artist" takes a real *gloriamaris* and grafts on a new wooden lip, which of course points in the other way (the clue here is to look carefully to see which way the textile triangles point!)<sup>2</sup>.

In one of the most audacious of the forgeries a "*Murex anomaliae*" is made from the body of a *Murex scorpio*, a siphonal canal from a *Haustellum* sp., spines are grafted in from a *Murex anatomicus zamboi* and an operculum from yet a another species is put into the aperture<sup>2</sup>!

So how do you tell whether that fine *Cypraea guttata* you have been offered is the real thing or a clever imitation? An X-ray image might help sort out a completely synthetic job from a cleverly altered natural one since the former is unlikely to contain the necessary internal structure. Alternatively, a drop of trichloroethylene (a powerful solvent used in chemical cleaning) could be quite handy. This will melt or attack almost any polymeric substance on the surface of a pseudo-shell but will do no harm to natural objects (except maybe your nose... do not breathe it in too heartily!). The plastic and wooden shells can possibly also be identified by touch since they will feel significantly warmer (plastic and wood being poorer conductors of heat than normal molluscan shell material). *Caveat emptor!*

### References

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2. Poppe, G. Impressions of a hot summer - double-handed *gloriamaris* and other faked shells, *La Conchiglia*, no.277, 1995. pp.12-16.
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4. Power, E.J. CONCH-L on the Internet, 28th April 1996.
5. Poppe, G. CONCH-L on the Internet, 29th April 1996.
6. Rosenberg, G. CONCH-L on the Internet, 29th April 1996.





### Book Reviews

#### Pleurotomariidae

Members who are interested in the living species of the Pleurotomariidae may wish to consider a new and beautifully illustrated book by Y. Goto and P. Anseeuw, entitled *The Living Pleurotomariidae*. The publisher was not mentioned on the pamphlet I received but copies of the book can be ordered from

Takashell Company Incorporated  
P.O.Box 14, Kashiwara  
Osaka 582, JAPAN

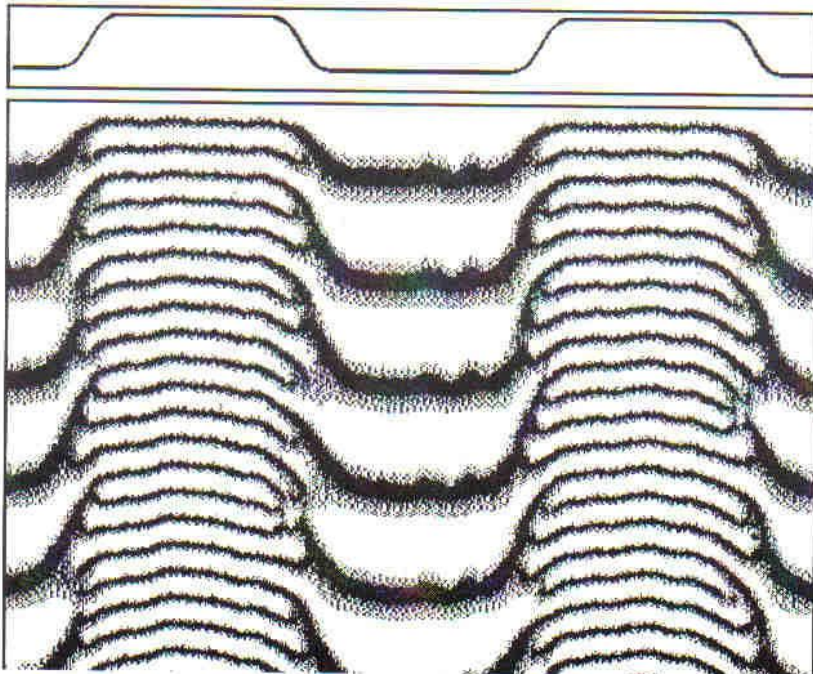
The cost is US\$200, which includes surface postage.

#### Mathematics of sea shells

The more mathematically inclined may be interested in *Foundations of Theoretical Conchology* by applied mathematicians C. Illert and R.M. Santilli, or in the *Proceedings of the First International Conchology Conference*, C. Illert (ed.). Either book could be of interest to computer scientists or mathematically-inclined zoologists. To order contact

Ms Pamela Fleming,  
(fax <USA>+813-934-9275)  
Hadronic Press Inc,  
35246 US 19 North #115,  
Palm Harbor, FL34684, USA

On the other hand if the patterns of shells fascinate you then there is no more complete reference than H. Meinhardt's *Algorithmic Beauty of Sea Shells*, published in 1995 by Springer-Verlag, Berlin. This beautifully illustrated book also comes with a computer program that can generate simulations of various patterns (see below). I bought my copy from Jutas in Cape Town for about R260.



Many shell patterns are characterized by a stable pattern that influences oscillations  
Natica euzona

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