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X THE CONCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA X
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CIRCULAR NO. 6.

APRIL, 1959

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(Reprinted January 1975)

MEETING

Our next meeting will be held at the Zoology Department, University of Cape Town, Rondebosch, on Thursday April 23rd. 1959, at 8 p.m. Professor Day will be in the chair.

Agenda:-

- (1) Minutes of last meeting.
- (2) Matters arising out of the Minutes.
- (3) Election of members who were proposed at the last meeting.
- (4) Proposal of new members. (see below).
- (5) Any other business.
- (6) Mr. Talbot will show slides of underwater life in East Africa.
- (7) General discussion of cypraeidae (cowries).
All members are invited to bring a representative collection of their cowries which should be set out for display before the meeting begins. There will be ample time to view the various collections and to discuss this family during and after the tea interval.

NEW MEMBERS:

At our last meeting, held on March 8th. 1959, the following members were elected:-

(S = Student Member)

S Miss Ann Kerr,	Ryde Villa, Kenilworth Rd., Kenilworth, C.P.
S Miss Elizabeth Kerr,	Ryde Villa, Kenilworth Rd., Kenilworth, C.P.
Mrs. E. Lowry,	Fairholme, Bathurst Rd., Wynberg, C.P.
Mrs. M. Reilly,	Bar-B-Q, Jeffreys Bay, C.P.
Mrs. A. Short,	Levystraat 19, Pietermaritzburg, Natal.
Mr. G. Sole,	The Cottage, Rustenburg Ave., Rondebosch, C.
Miss P. Ashby Spilhaus,	Colenso Rd., Newlands, C.P.
Mrs. M.S. Talbot,	Ashley, Lovers Walk, Rondebosch, C.P.
The Transvaal Museum,	P.O. Box 413, Pretoria, Transvaal.
Mrs. M.B. van Heerden,	213, Plein Street, Paarl, C.P.
S Master Bobby Wakeham,	5, Beach Court Mansions, Muizenberg, C.P.

PROPOSED MEMBERS:

(C = Corresponding Member)
(S = Student Member)

	<u>PROPOSER:</u>	<u>SECONDER:</u>
Mr. J.E. Bell	Mrs. M. Pelletier	Mrs. L. Kerr
C Mrs. Carl B. Chandler	Mr. C. Swaneveld	Mr. J.N. Ackermann
S Miss Patricia Preston	Mrs. L. Kerr	Mr. C. Swaneveld
Mr. K. Sprighton	Mr. P. Elston	Mr. C. Swaneveld
C Mr. J. Viergever	Mr. S. Swaneveld	Mr. J.N. Ackermann.

GENERAL NOTES:

The Council regrets that Mr. D.W.J. Ackermann has been obliged to resign from the Council, due to the fact that he finds it very difficult to attend meetings while living at The Strand. We sincerely thank Mr. Ackermann for all he has done for our Society and hope that in the future we may count on his assistance and advice whenever required.

Mr. F.J. Talbot, the marine biologist at the South African Museum, has been elected to fill this vacancy.

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Mrs. H.G. Freebairn, P.S. 1029, Gympie, QLD., Australia, wants to exchange shells with collectors in South Africa. She offers trawled material from Tin Can Bay.

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Our member, Mr. D.J. Bosman, P.O. Box 1728, Bloemfontein, unfortunately had to move away from the seashore and would like to correspond with some of our members with a view to obtaining marine material. Will members who are interested in helping Mr. Bosman kindly contact him. At the moment, he has a quantity of Unio's, which were collected near Bloemfontein, for exchange. He would also like to get some shell-grit from various localities.

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With reference to Mr. Kennelly's notes in Circular No. 4, Mrs. Weakley reports having found specimens of Charonia pustulata near Knysna, in large sizes, tapering, if not to a pin-point, certainly to a pinhead; in other words, specimens that can be classified as perfect, quite the most graceful she has seen in a life-time of collecting.

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In response to Mr. Kennelly's reference to Murex ramosus in Circular No. 5, Mr. P. Elston writes as follows:-

"Whilst I agree with our member, Mr. Kennelly, that dead shells can be discarded from ships and carried by currents hundreds of miles, Murex ramosus can be found on the Natal coast, though nowadays rarely. I hope to collect some more this year from May to August by means of skin diving. Authentic specimens are in Durban Museum - Casey collection - habitat Durban; Natal Museum - Burnup collection - habitat Durban; both vouched for and checked by the respective museum authorities and described also from Natal by Sowerby 1892 appendix 1897. My two specimens were collected from Durban North Pier, June '58, but have been exchanged for Volutes with a collector in Australia".

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There seems to be some confusion about membership. The Secretary had had quite a few requests from people living in South Africa to become corresponding members. Although the Society was founded in Cape Town and most members are living around Cape Town, The Society covers the whole of Southern Africa, and anybody living in South Africa or South West Africa can become ordinary members. In the Constitution it was laid down that only people living outside Southern Africa can become corresponding members.

Student membership at an annual subscription of only 5/- is open to bonafide students or scholars of recognised educational institution in Southern Africa.

We are sure that there are still many people who would be interested in becoming a member but who, so far, have not heard about this Society. Members are, therefore, kindly requested to let the Secretary have names and addresses of those whom they feel may be interested, so that he can contact them.

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One of the main purposes of our circulars, apart from giving news about the Society's activities, is to give members an opportunity of telling others about their experiences and ideas. So far, only a few members have made use of this facility, and most contributions to the circular have been from one or two members.

We would like to invite all members to send in notes, articles, etc. for publication in future issues. We want to keep our circulars interesting, but without everybody's help this will be difficult.

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METHERLANDS MALACOLOGICAL SOCIETY, 1934-1959.
by A.C. van Bruggen, biol.drss.

At the end of June of this year, the silver jubilee of the Dutch Malacological Society will be celebrated with a programme of lectures, excursions and exhibitions in Amsterdam and Leiden during three consecutive days. It should be interesting for the members of our local Society to know what this overseas society has done for malacology in general and more in particular for its members (about 200) during the years 1934-1959. For an annual fee of 6/-, the Netherlands Malacological Society offers its members the following facilities:

A stencilled newsletter (4-6 issues of 10-14 pages each every year, so far 79 nos. with nearly 800 pages), two or more excursions (collecting trips to interesting localities), two or more meetings (usually filled with lectures, films, demonstrations and exhibitions), the use of the library (this library contains the more important periodicals, books and pamphlets on nearly every branch of malacology and conchology), and the optional membership free of charge of one of the so-called "work-groups" in the cities Amsterdam, The Hague and Rotterdam (these groups have monthly meetings and sometimes work on special subjects, e.g. The Hague concentrated some time ago on marine shells of Dutch New Guinea).

For an additional fee of 14/-, members can subscribe to the scientific journal of the society, "Basteria"; this journal publishes illustrated articles on every possible malacological subject though mostly taxonomy, in English, French, German and Dutch in annual volumes of 70-100 pages each. So far, 22 volumes with more than 1600 pages have been published. Many Dutch and foreign zoologists contributed their papers to Basteria; a high scientific standard is scrupulously maintained.

The society draws its members from every part of the country and from many different professions. There usually are a fair number of professional zoologists, among these the curators of the malacological departments of the big museums. Generally, they are the society's office bearers, and on the whole there is a very happy co-operation between amateurs and professional biologists.

During the relatively short period of its existence the society has greatly fostered the interests of conchology and malacology among its members. The result is that a sound general knowledge of the recent and fossil Dutch molluscs is now available both for the scientist and the amateur. Many people devoted their attention to European or exotic shells and a number of magnificent private collections have been brought together while some amateurs have achieved considerable results in their research. They are experts in their fields and sometimes have fine libraries and other necessary facilities, e.g. for preparing and studying radula's of snails. Another advantage has been that many more zoologists took up the study of molluscs.

It is expected that a number of foreign zoologists will attend the jubilee celebrations. One of the lectures will be delivered by Professor Thorson from Copenhage, Denmark. Unfortunately, it seems hardly likely that members of our Society will go to these meetings.

The author, who served for years on the council of the Netherlands Malacological Society, sincerely hopes that the future of the Conchological Society of Southern Africa will be as prosperous as the past 25 years of its Dutch colleague have been.

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NOTES ON CLEANING SHELLS:
by P. Elston.

To those of us who like to display our shells clean and polished, the following hints may be of use.

Removing the animals from the larger Univalves:- Contrary to the opinion of some of our members, I find that boiling is quite satisfactory and does not crack the shell or spoil it in any way. Charonia, most of the Murex, Thais, etc., place in a pot of boiling water for about three minutes, remove and let cool, do not plunge into cold water, then endeavour to remove the entire animal by withdrawing with a suitable wire hook, when entire animal should come out easily. If it seems that part may break off and remain in the shell, place again in boiling water for a further period and try again. The writer finds the best hooks are easily made by obtaining some thin steel wire about 8" long, make three extractors, bend each wire at one end to form a handle and twist round the stem at a suitable place. At the other end form a hook, say at a 45° angle, 1/8" long, and sharpen the end. Make three of these, on 1/8", one 1/4" and one 1/2". You will find these three sizes useful for different sizes of shells. The larger ones needing a better grip, the writer finds that a steady even pull with perhaps a slight twisting motion usually does the trick. Shells with hermit crabs in them can also be treated successfully in this manner. Should one be unfortunate and break the animal, leaving a portion in the shell, the following two methods can be used to complete the job. The first, and what the writer terms the "smelly method", is to place the shell in fresh water in a screw topped glass bottle - a preserve bottle is ideal - screw down the lid hard and then release a quarter turn. Change the water every day and by the third day the remains can be flushed out in a basin of water. The second method is to leave the shell in the same type of bottle covered with methylated spirits for a week to ten days, then remove and dry under shade. You will find the shell then entirely odourless. The spirit does not colour the shell or have any corrosive effect. All small shells, such as Turritella, Epitonium and Cerithium, etc., from which the animal cannot be removed, should be treated in this manner, but remove the operculum first and put on one side with the name of the shell marked against it. What the writer does is to place the operculums on a piece of writing paper and cover with a strip of "Scotch tape", write the name of the shell above the operculum and keep for placing again in the shell when ready. This also keeps the operculum in the natural state when dry. When the shell is ready, a slight rubbing with clear petroleum jelly or clear mineral oil will bring up colour and remove any salty matter from the surface.

Bivalves, of course, only need boiling, when after a short time they gape and the animal can be removed with a suitable instrument, the exceptions being Pinctada and other bivalves having a central ligament - these do not gape after boiling - and after cooling use a thin-bladed sharp penknife gently worked between the valves to cut the muscle and then gently prise apart near the posterior adductor muscle.

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NOTES ON "NERITA ALBICILLA", LINN.

by D.H. Kennelly.

This well known shell is of special interest, for it has an extremely wide range.

Investigations by the writer reveal that the species occurs all over the Pacific, but not in New Zealand.

It also occurs living all over the Indian Ocean from the Red Sea to the coast of South Africa.

With regard to the range on our coast, Dr. Barnard mentioned it as occurring living in Natal, but had no record of other localities.

However, the writer has traced N. albicilla occurring alive from Natal, through Pondoland, the Transkei coast (East London, Port Alfred, the Alexandria coast, and as far as Cape Receife.) Its appearance alive at this last locality was first noted by the writer nearly twenty years ago.

Sowerby in 1892 lists N. albicilla as occurring at Port Elizabeth, on the advice of two well known collectors, Bairstow and Crawford.

Investigations at Jeffreys Bay to date have failed to reveal the presence of this species alive, but within the last year two dead shells in good condition were found on the beach.

In the opinion of the writer, these dead shells are probably drifts from Cape Receife, being brought over by South East winds.

It will be interesting to continue further search, for it is possible that N. albicilla may be gradually extending its range westwards.

References: A Beginner's Guide to S. African Shells.
Dr. K.H. Barnard.
Marine Shells of South Africa.
G.B. Sowerby, 1892.

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