

*the*  
**Strandlooper**

BULLETIN OF THE CONCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA



*No. 275*

*June 2004 (2004/05 no. 1)*



## Conchological Society of Southern Africa

Founded 1958

Patron : Dr R.N. Kilburn

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Please contact me for more details.

Ed.

*The Strandloper*, official bulletin of the Conchological Society  
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It is published in March, June, September and December.

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### In this Issue:

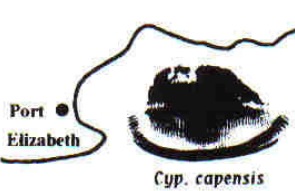
1. Contact details of CSSA .... 2
2. From the Editor .... 3
3. What's in a Name? .... 4
4. Flotsam .... 5  
Pallaeolophid and liostreine oysters
5. AGM 2004 .... 6  
*President's Report*  
*Treasurer's Report*  
*Minutes*
6. In Memoriam.... 9  
*Dr. Marjorie Courtenay-Latimer*
7. Letters & E-mail .... 11  
*Argonauta argo*
8. A new *Favartia* from S.A .... 11
9. Excitement at Shelley Beach .... 12

## In Memoriam

Dr Marjorie Courtenay-Latimer



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## What's in a Name?

- Geoff Wallace\*

For many years now I have been collecting shells in a very amateurish way. I say amateurish because I would never dare to call myself a conchologist. That would sound as if I knew something about the science.

I think that shell collecting is probably the most beautiful and mentally rewarding hobby. Numismatics I leave to the misers of the world. Philately is extremely educational but there are too many countries that have new stamp issues as a major source of revenue to the extent that collecting their stamps is a joke! Stamps too, are two-dimensional and, although sometimes very picturesque, are rather flat!

Other hobbies such as bird watching, or twitching as it is termed nowadays, is an excellent hobby as it gets one outdoors and is obviously very connected with nature...

There was a time when I collected snakes, not for myself, but for the Medical Research Institute who extracted the venom to make snakebite serum. I gave that hobby up when a puff adder collected me and it cost me more in medical bills than I had made from selling the snakes to the said institute.

As a result of my interests I have acquired quite a collection of books on ornithology, philately, botany, herpetology, zoology, hunting and fishing, etc. Latterly my wife has been very active in the garden and we have quite a few books on gardening too. (I have to admit that I do take part in her hobby, but only as a sideline critic.)

Now to get to the point of my long winded introduction. WHY, repeat WHY do conchologists have to refer to a shell or mollusc by its name and the name of the author and the date of its baptism. Mr Austin Roberts never mentions who the author is of the name of, for example, the Natal Robin, *Cossypha natalensis*, or the Trumpeter Hornbill, *Bycanistes bucinator*. Nowhere in the Sasol Book of Birds of Southern Africa is the author of the name of the bird ever mentioned. In none of my reference books on birds do they record who the author of the name is, let alone the date of the Christening! The above can be said for all my reference books on trees, flowers, animals, reptiles, etc. with one notable exception! Hooray for Dr J.A. Pringle, Ph.D., who published a book in 1954, titled "Common Snakes". He, for example refers to the Berg Adder as *Bitis atropos* (Linnaeus). (Wow, that guy gets in everywhere) but no mention of the date! I suppose we can safely assume the date to be 1758! After all Mr Linnaeus only worked for one year and then retired. Our other well known friend, Mr Gmelin also got a bite in when he named the African Rock Python, *Python sebae* (Gmelin), Note no

date or comma between the author's name and the non-existent date.

I totally support the use of the scientific names for shells and deplore the use of common or colloquial names, which can be very misleading and confusing and always seem to be so laboured. There seems to be a tendency among American conchologists to use common names in preference to the scientific nomenclature, but the less said about that the better. (I can hear, in the background, an American voice shouting, "Objection!", followed by a stern voice saying, "Sustained!".

I will eat this copy of *Strandloper*, without any form of condiment, the day anyone can show me two different shells named, for example, *Epitonium simplex*, one named by Mr Sowerby, 1894, (Sorry, put that between brackets please) and one named by another author, with or without brackets! The same applies to any other shell illustrated in any of the many books on shells that have been published over the years. Why do we conchologists have to be so pedantic? Is it really necessary? Why?

I know of some groups where it is No. 11 and starts, "Thou shalt..." It is a sin not to mention the author's name and the date of the baptism when speaking of a shell. We will have to learn how to pronounce punctuation marks when speaking in conchological circles.

Sure, there have been many instances of shells being incorrectly named for one reason or another and then given another name, presumably so that brackets can be used. Forget the wrong name! For those who are interested let someone write a book on the name changes in conchology that have been made over the past centuries. Of course it will have to be in Soapy Serial form, as I don't think it will ever be completed.

Lastly, when are the scientists among conchologists going to use the DNA system to establish the generic and specific categorising of molluscs? Will this not put an end to all the splitting and lumping controversy presently confusing all us humble amateur conchologists?

---

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# Flotsam

Article about fossil shells in Durban Museum Novitates,  
Volume 27 p.28-60

Palaeolophid and liostreine oysters (Bivalvia: Ostreidae) from the  
Cretaceous of southeast Africa, with comments on oyster biostratigraphy  
and biofacies

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C. Pye

Durham University  
British Library

## Summary:

Cooper, M.R. 2002. Palaeolophid and liostreine oysters (Bivalvia: Ostreidae) from the Cretaceous of southeast Africa, with comments on oyster biostratigraphy and biofacies. *Durban Mus. Novit.* 27:28-60. The palaeolophid and liostreine oysters are describe, as a group, from the Cretaceous deposits of southeast Africa for the first time. The first to appear, in the Late Aptian (*martinioides* Zone), is *Gyrostrea besairiei* (Collignon), a species which becomes very abundant in offshore deposits of the lower Upper Albian (*cristatum* Zone). In the Shallow-water nearshore deposits at the bas of the Mzinene Formation (upper Lower Albian) it is joined by thick-shelled *Rastellum allobrogensis* (Pictet and Roux); *R. cf. ricordeanum* (d'Orbigny) is known by a single fragment from the low Upper Albian (*cristatum* Zone), and *R. deshayesi* (Fisher de Waldheim) occurs only in Santonian-Lower Campanian deposits of the Mzamba Formation associated with *Curvostrea tevesthensis* (Coquad). *Acutostrea mesenterica africana* subsp. Nov. Oysters are shown to have biostratigraphic significance, at least within the Cretaceous of the South Mozambique-Zululand coastal basis; they also have value as indicators of water-depth, and perhaps salinity, and six oyster biofacies are proposed.

KEYWORDS: *Bivalvia*, *Ostreoidea*, *Paleaiolophidae*, *Ostreidae*, *Liostreinae*, *Cretaceous*, *southeast Africa*, *systematic palaeontology*, *stratigraphy*, *biofacies*.

## Who is Masai Corporation??

Can the overseas member who paid money into our account from Switzerland in the name of Masai Corporation please contact me? I don't know who you are and don't know who to credit!!

To all our members - when you pay any fees directly into the Society's account and you use your corporation or business account to transfer from - PLEASE make sure that YOUR name appear on the transaction and NOT that of your business. It is very costly to try to find out who you are, and most of the time we are unsuccessful. Banks are very strict on confidentiality and usually only tells us from where the transaction came. Sometime we can figure out from the locality, but sometimes not.

Secretary, P.O. Box 8760, Sonpark, Nelspruit, 1206, South Africa. [secretary@conch-sa.org.za](mailto:secretary@conch-sa.org.za)

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## AGM Minutes

### Minutes of the AGM meeting held on the 10<sup>th</sup> July 2004 at the Pretoria Bridge Club, 26<sup>th</sup> str. Menlopark, Pretoria

1. **Welcome:** The president welcomed all members of the Conchological Society of Southern Africa and visitors present at the AGM on behalf of the committee. A quorum was present and the meeting was pronounced open. A moment of silence was held in memory of members that have passed away during the year, two of our Honorary Life Members, Laurie Smith and Marjorie Courtenay-Latimer.
2. **Approval of minutes of the AGM held on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2003:** The minutes was proposed for approval by Alwyn Marais and seconded by Rina Matthee. The minutes were approved by the meeting.
3. **25 Year membership certificates** – Only two members qualified: Marion Cross from Somerset-West and Margaret Johnson from Anerley. Certificates to go out with the Strandloper. All the old Life Members will receive certificates after many have complained.
4. **Presidents Report: (Attachment 1)** – Dr. Johan Marais read his Presidents Report. The President's report was accepted by the meeting
5. **Financial Report: (Attachment 2)** - Christelle Deysel read her Financial Report with the new fee structure. The financial report was accepted by the meeting.

#### Fees for 2004/05 –

Members	R140-00
Life (Pay only for Strandloper)	R100-00
Overseas	\$70-00 US
Membership without Strandloper	R40-00

6. **News from the Groups: (Attachment 3)** - The secretary read a summarized version of the information received from the different shell groups.
7. **Prize for best article in *The Strandloper*** – Tom Rice from the *Of Sea and Shore* magazine is the sponsor for this year's prize. The judge was the editor of *Strandloper*. She proposed the winner at a committee meeting where it was approved. The winning article were 'The Southern African Cancellariidae' by Alwyn and Johan Marais, and the runner-up 'The cleaning and caring of shells' by Danny Spengler. First and second prize is a shell from the sponsor.
8. **Exhibition** - The theme of the exhibition was 'Message in a bottle' (Any amount of shells, any size of bottle) and was enthusiastically portrayed by several members. An outstanding exhibit from a Pretoria member made the biggest impression on the judges – congratulations to Lana Kruger.

Trophy	CSSA AGM	Winner
Silver <i>Afrivoluta pringlei</i>	Best exhibit	Lana Kruger
Silver cowry	Best Scholar exhibit	Not contested

#### 9. General

- 9.1. **Books in Natal Museum** – The president reported that the Natal Museum has books belonging to the Society dating back to the early 50's, and they say no one has accessed it in the last 20 years. It is becoming a problem for them to store the books. Alwyn Marais proposed that it is graded and put on a blind auction. Maurice Evans seconded the proposal. The secretary mentioned that it has to be put as a

voting item at the next years AGM for the members to decide, this meeting can't decide on it's own, as it is an asset of the Society. The President and vice-president to make a list of books at museum. Not all the books are shell related.

**Thank You's** – Dr. Marais thanked the Pretoria Group for organizing the AGM. As no other matters were brought on the table, the meeting was declared closed.

## Presidents Report

One of our main objectives is to improve the quality of The Strandloper and to bring it on par with similar journals overseas. Cost is a major factor to be considered, but we now manage to have a colour issue printed at almost the normal cost of a black and white copy. Attempts are also being made to improve the quality of articles by revising whole families, also including the small and/or less known members of these families. I would like to encourage our members to support us in this respect and to submit suitable articles for publication. A major problem for prospective writers is to produce high quality illustrations to accompany the manuscripts. Our Committee is now providing a service to our members in that we will photograph or scan shells for the prospective authors and will assist with the manuscripts if necessary.

During the past year we have had difficulty in producing the Strandloper on time, which was due to quite a number of factors. We would like to thank Kobie for her dedication under difficult circumstances and trust that we will be able to produce a high quality journal on a regular basis in future.

Over the past year members of our Committee have reached out to other groups to promote our Society. A slide show on shells was presented at the Breakaway Scuba Club to encourage their members to take an interest in shells. Talks to other Scuba clubs have been arranged for later this year. A talk, including a slide show on shells, was also presented at the Fairlands Primary School. Teachers and 200 enthusiastic pupils attended. It is important for us to expose our children to nature and shells at an early age. An article on cone shells was published in Getaway to bring shells to the attention of the general public. Our aim is to continue publishing articles of this nature, to achieve the widest possible exposure to the man in the street and to bring to his attention the existence of our Society.

An important function of our Society is to organise field trips like the visit to Hluleka in the Transkei. This gives our members the opportunity to study shells in their natural habitat and to learn collecting techniques from more knowledgeable members. A field trip to Durban and the Natal south coast has been organised for September and I hope it will be well supported by our members. This is also an important opportunity for the different groups of our Society to interact.

Over the past year we have tried to establish and maintain contact with overseas malacologists of high standing, such as Roland Houart, Koen Fraussen, Daniel Geiger etc. We have sent interesting shell finds, provided by some of our members, to these experts for study and possible description. A new buccinid found by Danny Spengler will be described shortly. Congratulations. With the recent retirement of Dr Kilburn and the fact that Dr Herbert is mainly concentrating on land snails, official research on marine molluscs has virtually ceased. To my knowledge there are no upcoming scientists with an interest in marine molluscs to fill this gap. The Society members can partially address this responsibility by adopting a scientific approach to collecting and by making accurate field observations. It is therefore important that members bring new shell finds to the attention of the Society, so that these shells can be photographed and the scans sent to local or international expert on that particular family. This will then give these experts the opportunity to include the shells in future publications that in turn will contribute to our knowledge of South African molluscs.

It is encouraging to note that Prof Steyn and Markus Lussi are preparing a publication on deeper water shells of Southern Africa. We are looking forward to this new book.

I would like to thank the members of our committee for their dedication and support during the past year.

Dr. JP Marais

## *Treasurers Report*

### **FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2004**

Mr President and Fellow Members,

The books of account have been scrutinised by Magda Odendaal C.A. (S.A) and have been found to be in order. The Financial Statements are tabled.

We end the year with a loss of R 2121.92. Income for the year amounted to R15736.29, while expenditure totalled R17858.21. The outstanding membership fees amounts to R3600.00, which would cover the loss. Members are urged to pay their subscription as soon as possible.

The printing costs for *The Strandloper* were R12131.88. The last publication of *The Strandloper* was a double issue and in full colour. The editor hopes to continue to bring us *The Strandloper* in colour. Postage increased by R419.00 to R3696.05 and will increase in the new financial year.

Distribution of *The Strandloper* has been limited to paid up members only. The CSSA have 142 paying members to date and a total of 195 active members. Unfortunately only 112 members paid their membership fees for this financial year. Accounts were sent to the members instead of *The Strandloper*.

The committee increased the membership fees to R140.00 per annum for members and R100.00 per annum for Life members. This is to keep up with increases in printing costs and postage. The CSSA is on the path to financial recovery and to keep it that way, it is necessary to increase the subscriptions. The projected cost for producing and mailing 4 issues of *The Strandloper* for next year is R19 000.00.

Subscriptions were the main source of income for the past financial year and an amount of R15 143.51 was received. Thanks to every member that contributed.

Virtually no donations were received.

There were a few sales of books, back-issues of *The Strandloper* and shells for this financial year. An amount of R 562.00 was earned through these various sales.

Due to the strengthening of the value of the Rand, an increase in postage and banking fees, the subscriptions for our overseas members will increase to \$70.00 for 2 years. The overseas members remain a very valuable part of the CSSA.

Our membership figures are as follows:

Honorary Life members	6 (3 not receiving <i>The Strandloper</i> )
Life members	16
Full members	112
Payment outstanding	30
Non-Paying	15
Exchange	16
Total	195

2 Members resigned and 1 member passed away.

10 Members joined the CSSA. The two are exchange members.

The CSSA finances are still fairly healthy due to reserves in the bank. Members are urged to pay their membership fees to enable the editor to continue producing an excellent publication as *The Strandloper*.

Mrs. C. M. Deysel  
Treasurer



## In Memoriam

Dr Marjorie Courtenay-Latimer



Dr Marjorie Eileen Doris Courtenay-Latimer, former director of the East London Museum, Honorary Life-member of our Society and Freeman of the City of East London died after a short illness on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2004. She was 97 and had earned an international reputation for saving the famous living fossil fish for science.

“Lass, your discovery will be on every scientist’s lips throughout the world. It is a coelacanth!” With these words JLB Smith greeted Miss Latimer on 16<sup>th</sup> February 1939 when he first saw ‘The Fish’ in the East London Museum. Sixty four years later scientists at the *International Coastal and Ocean Exploration conference* held in East London in October, 2003, were more interested in seeing her and having their photographs taken with her than with her name-sake *Latimeria chalumnae*, and many knelt before her the better to speak with her.

Marge was guest of honour at the reception and delegates

listened spellbound as she told the story for the thousandth time “... of how I got entangled with the Coelacanth. I was born an immature baby on 24 February, 1907 in... East London...”

The coelacanth story is so well documented there is no need to repeat it here; but it could never have happened if Marge hadn’t been the curious, energetic, determined, fearless, persistent and inspired naturalist she was.

### Early collecting

Marge was the eldest of five daughters born to Eric H C Latimer and his wife Willie. At that time her father served as Station Master at various stations in the Eastern Cape including Waverley (Tarkastad), Thomas River, Stormberg, Bayley, Thebus, Debe Nek, and eventually Chiselhurst and Southernwood in East London. From the beginning the parents encouraged their daughters to take pleasure in nature and ensured that each child had an interest wherever they were. So it was that the girls collected birds’ eggs and nests, insects and butterflies, all manner of plant specimens while their mother assembled a collection of cultural artefacts of the Xhosa speaking people.

### A young curator takes over

With this background it was no wonder that the East London Museum Board appointed Miss Latimer, then a young woman of 24, the first curator of their newly erected Museum at a salary of £2-0-0 per month. Her immediate work was to put together the first displays, for an official opening a month away. Marge was not impressed with the stones, stone artefacts, guns, paintings and mounted birds in the museum collections and brought the Latimer family collections to create the displays. Having returned to East London, the collections now included seashells, which were to form the nucleus of the Conchological collection at the East London Museum.

JLB Smith writing in *Old Fourlegs* (1957) takes up the story; “While there were some who found it strange that a relatively young woman should have been selected for this position, it is plain that those responsible had perception and sound judgement, for they scarcely could have made a better choice. Miss Latimer showed herself able, capable and energetic, and was soon at grips with the many difficulties that beset her ideas and ambitions for the museum. She had great difficulty, not only in



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managing all that she desired with such limited means, but also in convincing the Board and especially its Chairman of that time, that their museum could be developed into one of the best known in South Africa and even beyond, as indeed it is now."

JLB went on to say, "From the start Miss Latimer ... concentrated on building up exhibits representative of the life of the area served by the Museum, and this she carried out with characteristic energy and enthusiasm. As Miss Latimer realised that angling is the chief sport and hobby in that area, ... she wisely made contact with the officers and crews of the trawlers, and infected them with some of her own enthusiasm so that they watched for unusual specimens of all kinds from the trawl, many of which were kept and brought to port." In this way she received a constant stream of valuable marine specimens, not just the coelacanth, the giant Manta Ray, the Oar Fish and the sail fish which she mounted and exhibited at the Museum but also special molluscs including *Cypraea fultoni*, and *Pleurotomaria africana* for the East London museum collection and the type-specimen of *Afrivoluta pringlei* which was later selected as the emblem of our Society.

Apart from the early collection Marge did not formally collect shell specimens. Her greatest contribution to conchology was to encourage others in the discipline. It

was she who persuaded DH Kennelly to donate his extensive shell collection to the East London Museum, so forming the basis of what has become one of the most significant public collections of molluscs in South Africa now curated by Mary Bursey.

In support of this new museum department, Marge drew interested people together in 1963 and formed the Border Branch of the CSSA, now known as the Border Shell Club. To this day the two organizations work closely together in the field, in the laboratory and in the exhibition gallery where the Shell Club members have provided the majority of specimens for public display so saving collection specimens from deterioration from light.

Marge may not have collected scientifically but she had a life-long interest in shells and was a regular attendee at meetings of the Border Shell Club and encouraged us all with her interest and observations.

Her favourite shell was *Nerita albicilla*, the Lucky Shell that she told me was believed by the Xhosa-speaking people to attract good fortune. She advised me to keep one in my purse because then my purse would never be empty! When she went to the Comoros she was told that *Cypraea moneta* had the same powers so the Money Cowrie was added to the contents of her purse. We will never know whether Marge thought this was worth her while but we do know that we are the richer for having been touched by her enthusiasm for Shell collecting and for having known her. May she rest in peace.

Note: Further details of the life and achievements of Marjorie Courtenay-Latimer may be found in



*Strandloper* No. 243, 1995: p.11

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## A new *Favartia* (fam. Muricidae) from South Africa

By Johan and Alwyn Marais

The genus *Favartia* consists of a group of small, often confused and misidentified species. However, most of them are adorned with prominent, scaly cords, forming lacey patterns and are quite beautiful, like many other members of the family Muricidae. The genus is now represented in South Africa by eight species, ie. *Favartia cyclostoma* (Sowerby, 1841), *F. maculata* (Reeve, 1845), *Favartia crossei* (Lienard, 1873), *F. natalensis* (E.A. Smith, 1906), *F. alfredensis* (Bartsch, 1915), *F. maraisi* (Vokes, 1978), *F. rosamiae* (D'Attilio & Meyers, 1985) and *F. marianae* Houart, 2003, the latest addition to the list.



*Favartia marianae* is about 11 mm in size. It is white, salmon or light orange in colour, with paler ribs and siphonal canal. It has strong, scaly spiral cords and 5 axial ribs or varices on the last whorl, each with short, broad spines. The outer lip bears small denticles within. It has been dredged in northern KwaZulu-Natal off Jesser Point in 70m during the Natal Museum Dredging Programme in June 1987, but is also known from southern Mozambique in 75-145m. It somewhat resembles *F. maculata*, but differs in the sculpture of its protoconch and spiral cords. *F. marianae* has a less frilly appearance than *F. maculata*.

Unfortunately, due to its deep-water habitat, specimens are unlikely to become readily available to the average collector.

\* Alwyn Marais

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## Letters & Email

We had the wonderful experience of finding a Paper Nautilus on "our" beach - that is the beach directly in front of our house at Lower Glenashley Beach, Durban North on the 31<sup>st</sup> May 2004.

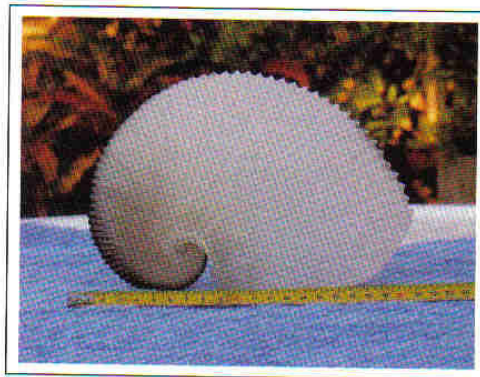
Needless to say that we were thrilled with this find and thought you may be interested to see a photo of it. It had obviously just died as the animal was still intact and found still partly inside the shell.

For your information I quote from R. Tucker Abbott and S. Peter Dance **Compendium of Sea Shells** "Paper Nautilus - Family Argonautidae. The thin, parchment like white shell of this relative of the octopus is actually a cradle secreted by two of the animals arm's for the purpose of protecting its tiny eggs. After the eggs hatch, the female dies and sheds the "cradle". Males have no shell."

We would like to mention that we have had some rough seas this autumn season and have found a number of near perfect specimen of various shells - which is really a treat for this part of the world - within the Durban Bay. These have included Cowries, Olives, Checkered Bonnets, Plough shells (common here) and many bivalves.

Hope this is on interest to the readers of *The Strandloper*.

Regards  
Jenni Louw  
jentony@xsinet.co.za



Dear Jenni,

Thanks a lot for sharing your treasure with us. For more information see *Strandloper 240 - History of Argonauta, the Paper Nautilus.* (Barbara Fouche)

Ed.

# Excitement at Shelly Beach KZN

by Jesse Felthuis\* & Dawn Brink\*\*

While on holiday at Shelly Beach during the latter part of September and early October 2003, several CSSA friends and I were surprised to find some interesting shells amongst the seaweed, black corals and various hydroids washed up onto the beach.

There must have been some considerable underwater upheaval for the strong N.E. winds to blow up such a lot of fairly deepwater material with many uncommon attachments. (Comment : Val van der Walt)

From this unexpected bonanza, we found quite a number of the following species:

***Rhizochilus antipathum*** Steenstrup, 1850 - On small sprays of black coral amongst the seaweed.



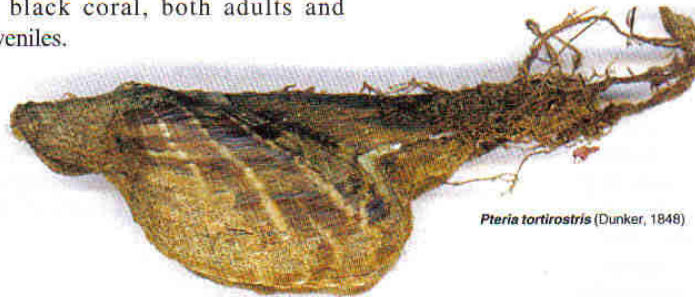
*Rhizochilus antipathum*  
Steenstrup, 1850

***Pteria avicular*** (Holten, 1802) - Attached to various types of hydroid



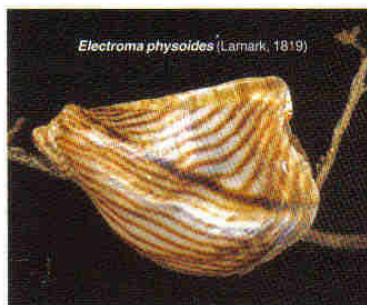
*Pteria avicular* (Holten, 1802)

or black coral, both adults and juveniles.



*Pteria tortirostris* (Dunker, 1848)

***Pteria tortirostris*** (Dunker, 1848) - This was found on black coral & a spray of hydroid containing a number of specimens of ***Electroma physoides*** (Lamarck, 1819). The latter was found on several different hydroids, and was the most prolific of all the species found.



*Electroma physoides* (Lamarck, 1819)

Jesse Felthuis also found a magnificent slightly sub-adult ***Phenacovolva poppei*** Fehse, 2000 on a piece of black coral, and an



*Phenacovolva poppei* Fehse, 2000

excellent specimen of ***Cypraea labrolineata*** Gaskoin, 1849 in grit from the skiboat slipway, which was probably ex-pisce from a deepwater fish that had been cleaned nearby. The ***Phenacovolva poppei*** had the animal still inside the shell, it must be most unusual for such a species to be washed ashore in live condition.



*Cypraea labrolineata* Gaskoin, 1849

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