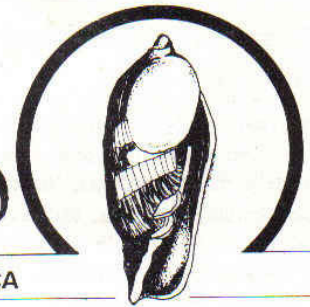


The Strandloper

BULLETIN OF THE CONCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA



No. 194

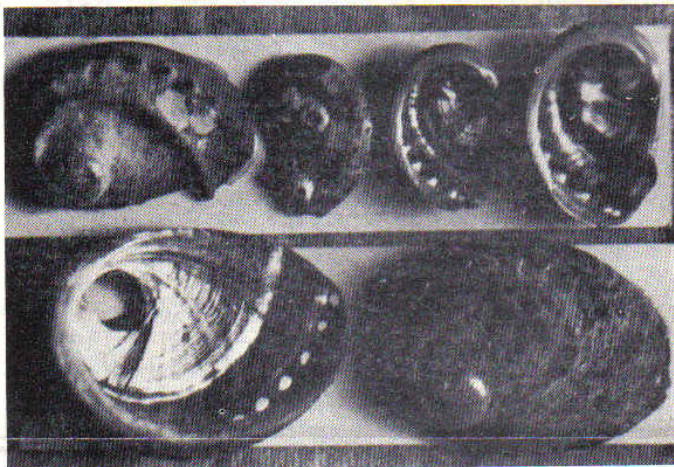
FEBRUARY/MARCH 1979

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VARIABLE SPECIES

Two specimens of *Haliotis* found at Sea Point looked so different from the usual forms of *H. midae*, *H. parvum* or *H. spadicea*, that the Editor thought he was onto something new. (Glorious visions of *Haliotis fremani* began to form in what he calls his mind!).

The photo shows the two large (40mm) shells next to the normal form of *Haliotis parvum* with its deeply ridged central rib which invariably projects beyond the growing edge of the shell. The outline of the large shells is more smoothly rounded and the central ridge is much shallower, so that it looks like a cross between *H. queketti* and *H. speciosa*, neither of which are on record from the Cape Peninsula.



It then occurred to me to look up the Annals of the S.A. Museum and see what Dr K.H. Barnard had to say about it (Vol. XLVII, 1963). As usual he disposed of the problem in two lines, where he says, under *Haliotis parvum*: "The midwhorl ridge . . . sometimes is not very conspicuous. In large shells it tends to become flatter and may sometimes be almost obsolete."

If one can examine a sufficient number of specimens, the variation in shape and colour and sculpture become a bit more clear, and one is reminded again of the importance of allowing for variability before jumping to conclusions about the identification of species. Names of shells are also not always quite accurate and the fact that this one's name means "small" i.e. *parvum*, is no guarantee that some specimens might be twice as big as average, in face "large small *Haliotis*".

STRANDLOPERS AND SUCH

By M.L. WILSON
of Cape Town

The term *Strandloper* was, it seems, first used in a South African context in the entry in Van Riebeeck's Journal for 8 April 1652. The term was used informally to describe a small group of perhaps not more than 70 people, later identified as the Goringhaicona. Their chief, Herry of Hadah, had been taken to Bantam by the British in 1629 or 1631 and after his return about a year later he acted as interpreter and middleman in the barter for livestock from the Hottentot herders. These *strandlopers* are described as fishers, without stock of their own, and living on mussels and wild plants. They appear to have been Hottentots (Khoikhoi) rather than Bushmen (Sonqua or San), and Herry was also well-connected through his children: a daughter, known as Eva, was taken into Van Riebeeck's house, became a Christian, and in 1664 married Pieter van Meerhof, the Company's surgeon. Another daughter was wife of Oedaso, senior chief of the Cochoqua, or Saldanhar.

In relatively recent times the term "Strandlo(o)per" has been formally applied to the people who raised the large shell middens that are so much a feature of our coast. It was believed, and still is by some, that these people lived permanently at the coast, subsisting principally on marine resources, supplemented by small terrestrial fauna and possibly plant foods. Archaeological research tends to indicate, however, that coastal cave sites containing shell middens were only seasonally occupied, during the winter months and possibly from late autumn through to late spring, and that the coast was only one of the environments exploited in the annual round.

While there is evidence for the exploitation of marine resources since the "Middle Stone Age" (largely undated, but in excess of 20 000 years ago), the last phase of intensive exploitation seems to have begun some 6-7 000 years ago and to have continued into the historic period.

These middens reveal a surprising amount of information and indicate a great deal of selectivity, possibly on a meal-to-meal basis, in the choice of the different types of shellfish collected: a choice not merely dictated by the availability of a particular resource. As well as providing important dietary information, midden deposits reveal a high degree of skill and artistry in the implements and orna-

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

ments they contain. Finely worked bone awls, points, spatulae and needles are found associated with a range of exquisitely made pendants, 'buttons', and beads, mostly of *Haliotis* and *Turbo*, as well as more simple, perforated shells, such as *Donax*, *Glycimeris*, and *Nassa*, which would have been used for necklaces and bracelets. In the later deposits, and often isolated in the dunes, are to be found the remains of the often finely-made and beautifully-shaped clay vessels associated with the Hottentot herders. These remains are a mute reminder of a people whose way of life was simpler, and perhaps happier, than our own.

Please help preserve these invaluable records of South Africa's past by remembering, and telling others, that it is a contravention of the National Monuments Act (No. 28 of 1969) to disturb these middens or other archaeological sites or to remove objects from them.

21st ANNIVERSARY SHELL SHOW – CAPE TOWN

Stuttafords Department Store in Adderley Street were approached many months in advance by Lynne Everitt, and co-operated magnificently by offering us glass-topped display counters and enough space to mount a beautiful exhibition right after New Year to the obvious pleasure of many scores of holiday visitors. We had 66 firm enquiries about membership of the Society and made many friends. Favourable reviews in two newspapers as well as the strategic location of the show near the store's restaurant helped to make it a success. The display of Cape shells and the section on Jeffreys Bay shells with their common names seemed to draw the liveliest response. Mrs Nan Watt's exhibit of minute shells fascinated everybody.

As space was very limited, no attempt was made to include many families, but we concentrated on showing a good range of species of the genera with popular appeal, as well as the most interesting local shells, and some shell books that we were prepared to recommend. Although we had to omit many families and genera, the result was a show that the general public could absorb and to which they kept coming back for another look.

The management of Stuttafords were also very pleased with the rub-off they received and it seems that we pressed all the right buttons this time. The choice of a stylish department store with a largely well-educated and cultivated clientele, during the busy summer holiday season, with a lot of visitors from up-country and overseas; the selection of shells to suit the expected visitors; and the neat, uncluttered layout and presentation of the exhibits; all this combined to guarantee our success.

Members on duty during the two-and-a-half weeks of the show found the public response stimulating and rewarding and we are sure it was all worth the effort. And make no mistake, a lot of hard work by exhibitors and helpers went into the exhibition. It didn't just happen.

INTERTIDAL TALK

MICHAEL CORTIE who, with co-author Ken Brown, has contributed articles to the Strandloper, has been called up for his two years of National Service and so will be out of circulation for a while. He has given us an article on fresh-water limpets to keep us occupied in the meanwhile. Vasbyt Mike, and we look forward to your safe return.

KEI MOUTH SHELL MUSEUM: Members will be pleased to know that the Hazel Jefferies Shell Museum at Kei Mouth has been refurbished. The shells have been remounted on orange coloured hessian, creating a surprisingly pleasing effect. The original labels were retained and, as they are somewhat the worse for wear, they do unfortunately detract from the appearance of the display. Nevertheless it is a big improvement on the previous layout and well worth a visit.

SHELL BOOKS: Further particulars of Alan Hinton's two new shell books have been received. They are GUIDE TO THE SHELLS OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA, and GUIDE TO AUSTRALIAN SHELLS, both published by Robert Brown & Associates (Pty) Ltd., P.O. Box 3395, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. I understand from an Australian that they are both very useful although they do overlap to some extent with his previous book, SHELLS OF NEW GUINEA & THE CENTRAL INDO-PACIFIC.

We hear that Dr C.M. Burgess is planning a second revised edition of his great book, THE LIVING COWRIES, to include new species recorded since the first edition appeared in 1970.

The monographs previously published under the title INDO-PACIFIC MOLLUSCA and edited by Dr R. Tucker Abbott, will henceforth appear as MONOGRAPHS OF MARINE MOLLUSCA and should be subscribed for by writing to American Malacologists Inc., P.O. Box 4208, Greenville, Delaware 19807 U.S.A.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS: Dr K.H. Barnard wrote in A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO S.A. SHELLS that shells should not be stored in sealed glass tubes because this tends to produce a damaging deposit of butyric acid crystals. Can anyone tell us what this is and where it comes from?

A reader asks what is the difference between STRIAE and LIRAE. Mr R.N. Kilburn explains that the difference is largely of degree, while Messrs Weaver & Du Pont in their book, THE LIVING VOLUTES define LIRAE as distinct ridges or threads on the surface of a shell while STRIAE are very fine incised lines or grooves barely visible to the naked eye.

INTERNATIONAL CODE OF ZOOLOGICAL NOMENCLATURE

This is the system of rules and recommendations authorised by the International Congress of Zoology.

The object of the Code is to promote stability and universality in the scientific names of animals and to ensure that each name is unique and distinct.

PRIORITY is the basic principle of zoological nomenclature, i.e. the name that is published first becomes the officially accepted one.

The word **NOMENCLATURE** (pronounced with the accent on the first syllable) means the systematic giving of names.

TAXONOMY is the law or principle of classification into groups, in our case, groups of animals. Taxis = arrangement; Nomos = law.

A **TAXON** is a group (plural *taxa*) and the word can be applied to a species-group, a genus-group or any other identifiable grouping of things being studied or classified.

Zoological nomenclature is independent of other systems, so that an animal taxon could have the same name as a taxon that does not belong in the animal kingdom, e.g. a plant.

The Code accepts that the binominal system of zoological names started with the tenth edition of Linnaeus's *SYSTEMA NATURAE* and the date 1 January 1758 has been arbitrarily specified as the date of publication of that work and the date of commencement of the whole system.

LATIN is used for several reasons: It was the language of scholars in the 18th century; it was internationally understood and is still internationally acceptable because it avoids disputes that could arise between national groups over "foreign" names. The fact that Latin is a "dead" language is in some ways an advantage because its words retain their meanings and do not suffer from the corruption we see in living languages.

THE CLASSIFICATION OF ANIMALS is based on the structure of their bodies, and in the more complex animals on the way in which the parts of their bodies are organised. In the molluscs, for instance, the arrangement of teeth in the radular ribbon provides the key to the separation of species in most cases. Assuming that the specimen belongs to the **ANIMAL KINGDOM**, the other divisions in order are:—

PHYLUM
CLASS
ORDER
(TRIBE IN CERTAIN CASES)
FAMILY
GENUS
SPECIES.

There are also possible sub-divisions of all the above, i.e. **SUB-KINGDOM**, **SUB-PHYLUM**, **SUB-CLASS** etc., all the way down to **SUB-SPECIES**, and these divisions are sometimes more troublesome than helpful. You will also sometimes see an additional grouping of **SUPERFAMILY**.

The further terms which overheated taxonomists tend to apply to one another are **SPLITTER** and **LUMPER**, and these will also be dealt with in due course.

There are three **SUB-KINGDOMS**:—

Protozoa (literally the "first" animals) which are single-celled animals like the amoeba;

Parazoa (literally the "next" animals). These are in the cellular level of construction, e.g. sponges;

Metazoa (literally the animals "beyond") consisting of all the rest.

The *Phylum Mollusca* is therefore a major division in the *Sub-Kingdom Metazoa*. We intend following these divisions through in a future issue, using a discussion of the newest *Murex* book as a practical example.

It is at least theoretically possible for a Phylum, and certainly for a Class, to contain only one or two species. Among the Mollusca, there are various examples of a Genus with only one species, e.g. *Afrivoluta pringlei*.

The International Code that we shall be looking at in these articles is concerned with names in the Family, Genus and Species groups.

HALIOTIS — WHAT GENDER?

The generic name *Haliotis* is latinised Greek and means "sea ear". The names of the species, where these are adjectives, are supposed to take the same gender as the genus, i.e., they should be either masculine, feminine or neuter. The names of the species of South African Haliotidae, however, are anything but consistent as the following examples will show. I quote synonyms as well, just to show how bad it is:

1. *Haliotis spadicea* Donovan (feminine)
synonyms: *sanguineum* Hanley (neuter)
sanguineus Hanley (masculine)
pertusa Bartsch (feminine)
nebulata Turton (feminine)
ficiformis Menke (masculine or feminine).
2. *Haliotis parvum* Linne (neuter)
3. *Haliotis speciosum* Reeve (neuter)
synonyms: *pertusa* Sowerby (feminine)
alfredensis Bartsch (masc. or fem.)
Barnard (Annals) also calls this *speciosa* (feminine).
4. *Haliotis bistrata* Gmelin (feminine).

These names are taken from the Annals of the S.A. Museum (K H Barnard 1963). Can someone who knows Greek please advise us what gender the compound genus name should take, so that we can use the correct endings for the specific names? If Barnard's quotations are accurate, the authors themselves were not sure.

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(Founded 1958)

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AROUND THE GROUPS

PRETORIA: The venue of the Pretoria meetings will change in 1980 to the new educational centre of the Pretoria Zoo. It was reported that the Johannesburg group had disbanded. Tom Duncan reported that he was disappointed at the shelling at Ballito Bay for which he had obtained a shelling permit while on holiday. Fundraising and plans for the shell show in May were discussed.

PORT ELIZABETH: A shell show at Easter has been considered and a decision must still be taken. Mrs Williams reported that the municipality of Jeffreys Bay plans to renovate the shell museum. Unusual finds in Algoa Bay were live *Epitonium coronatum*, *Epitonium kraussi*; dead *Polinices simiae* which confirmed Sowerby's record of 1892; and dead *Coralliophila squamosissima*.

EAST LONDON: Judging of the final competition of 1978 produced the winner, Stephen Olivier, who is the group's youngest member. (Congratulations! — Ed.), Joan Tasker was second and Natalie Russell third, Prizes were awarded at the December meeting. For a change the group held a January meeting at which the monthly competitions were resumed. This time the object was to identify the parts of a typical gastropod shell.

NATAL: Mr R.N. Kilburn and members of the Maritzburg group attended the meeting in Durban in October. Mr Kilburn gave a talk illustrated with slides on the CYMATIIDAE of which some 40 species are to be found on our coast. At the November meeting Luis Pereira reported finding live *Phenacovolva (Cymbovula) segaliana* Cate 1976 off Salt Rock. Another shell exhibiton in 1979 is being considered.

CAPE TOWN: The main topic of the November meeting was the planning for the shell show at Stuttafords. In December the details were finalised and an excellent display of Cowries was shown by various members. Lynne Everitt, recently returned from a holiday in Queensland, Fiji and Mauritius, spoke briefly on her trip and Victor Millard shows slides of live Cypraea, a novelty to most Cape shellers. See elsewhere in this issue for the report on the Cape shell show. An enjoyable field day was held at Kommetjie on Jan. 28th attended by some two dozen people, including a number of new members who joined after our shell show. The Cape Town group will also be helping the newly established museum at Hout Bay to organise their shell exhibit.

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