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X THE CONCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA X  
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CIRCULAR NO. 26

OCTOBER, 1961

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MEETING:

The next meeting will be the Annual General Meeting and will be held in the Lecture Room of the S.A. Museum on Tuesday, 24th October at 8 p.m. sharp, as we have a long Agenda. Please bring this Agenda with you, also Circ. No.1 with Constitution. Will all members please make a special effort to attend.

A G E N D A.

1. Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting.
2. Matters arising from the minutes.
3. Election of new members.
4. Proposal " " "
5. Brief reports by the Secretary, Treasurer and Librarian.
6. Proposed amendments to the Constitution:-
  - a. In item 6 for ----"Union of South Africa"---- read---"Republic of South Africa"----
  - b. In item 7 add, "and should not be less than ten years old".
  - c. In items 8 & 9 for 5/-, 7/6 & 10/- read 50c, 75c & R1.
  - d. Item 11 to read 11a and for "15 annual subscriptions" read "20 annual subscriptions."  
Add item 11b "A member who has been an ordinary member for 25 consecutive years and who has attained the age of 50 years, will automatically become a life member."
  - e. In item 17 add ---- "which shall be audited by two ordinary members appointed by the Council."
  - f. Add item 21. Library. The Society shall maintain a library and the Council shall be entitled to make and enforce rules for its management.
7. Proposal of Mr. D.H. Kennelly of Uitenhage as an Honorary Member. At the Council meeting held on 23rd. May, 1961, the full committee unanimously decided to propose Mr. D.H. Kennelly as an Honorary Member in recognition of his services to the Society and his contribution to conchology in South Africa. Mr. Kennelly is well known to members through his many interesting articles in our circulars. This proposal must be confirmed by a two-thirds majority of members present at the Annual General Meeting.
8. Any other business.
9. Nominations to new Council.
10. Election/...

10. Election of Council Members.
11. Tea Interval (10 cents.)
12. Talk by Mr. Jack Dichmont on his recent trip to Bazaruto, an island off the Portuguese East African coast. This will be illustrated with coloured slides of shells and fish and should not be missed.

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NOMINATIONS.

According to the Constitution, the President, Treasurer and the three Ordinary Members of the Council are due to retire but are eligible for re-election. Nominations are therefore called for to fill these vacancies, and the names should reach the Secretary by Saturday 21st. October. The consent of the nominee should be obtained.

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JUNIOR FIELD DAY.

A record number of Juniors and some Seniors turned out for the Field Day on 25th. September at Kommetjie. Many shells were found including some fine Cones and Marginellas. A good time was had by all, and the new members were able to learn the rudiments of shelling and some of the names.

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MEETING AT THE S.A. MUSEUM - 26.9.1961.

The following new members were proposed:-

<u>Name</u>	<u>Proposed by:-</u>	<u>Seconded by:-</u>
Miss A. Pieser	L. Kerr	C. Swaneveld
Miss P. Smith	"	"
Mrs. B. Bloom	D. Ackermann	L. Kerr
Master J. Lighton	L. Kerr	J. Walker
Mrs. Martin	"	"

Mrs. Connolly and Mrs. Kerr had two very successful collecting trips to the Cape Point area and are busy compiling the list of shells found in the Reserve.

Venues for future field days were discussed, and Oudekraal was suggested. (More about this later).

Dr. Cohen has presented our library with some valuable books. He was thanked most gratefully for his very generous gift. The list appears elsewhere in this circular. The President hoped that this would be an incentive to others to do likewise.

Dr. Morris J. Cohen of Durban then gave a most interesting and amusing talk on his shell figurines and how he makes them. Dr. Cohen had brought along some of those that he was exhibiting at the Hobbies Section of the Medical Congress. They were an eye-opener to many members, who think of shell figurines in terms of the ubiquitous crinoline lady. Dr. Cohen's models are anatomically correct and his titles most apt. He uses

only/...

only shells and adhesive, no paint. We are indeed grateful to him and hope that he will talk to us again one day.

After tea, a film was shown.

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LIBRARY LIST. - Presented by Dr. Cohen.

- Glaucus, or Wonders of the Shore - Charles Kingsley, 1873.
- Poems on Conchology and Botany - Sarah Hoare, 1831.
- Rudiments of Conchology - M.A. 1826.
- Conversations on Conchology - M.A. 1826.
- British Shells - F. Martin Duncan, 1943.
- British Land and Fresh-Water Shells - Dixon & Watson, 1858.
- Animals Without Backbones - Ralph Buchsbaum. Two Volumes (Pelican Books).
- Descriptions of a New Family and of a New Genera of Shells - Giuseppe Gioeni, 1783 (In Italian).
- A Conchological Manual - G.B. Sowerby, 1846.
- The Saturday Book, 1954, containing Shell Craft by Dr. M. Cohen.
- Catalogue of Exhibits, Hobbies Exhibition, 41st. Medical Congress, 1957.
- Ditto, 43rd. Congress, 1961.

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1962 DIRECTORY OF CONCHOLOGISTS.

Mr. John Q. Burch, 4206 Halldale Ave., Los Angeles 62, California has sent us the following letter. Will members wishing to do so, please contact him.

"We wish to include all persons and institutions interested in the study or collection of mollusks in our 1962 Directory. This will be published in January, 1962. It is not necessary to purchase a copy, but those who remit now will receive the first copies printed. The price will be \$2.50. When known, the names will be followed by numbers indicating interests from the following key, or other special interests will be listed when mentioned."

- 1. World Wide Shells
- 2. Land Shells
- 3. Fresh Water Shells
- 4. Fossil Shells
- 5. Exchange Shells.

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EXCHANGE

? Thelma Crow, 1133-W-109th. Place, Los Angeles 44, California, U.S.A. (Mostly small shells from Mexico).

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GENERAL NOTES: ARTICLE NO. 2. by J. and C. Walker

THE CONSTRUCTION OF A SHELL

Perhaps the most amazing thing about a sea shell is that it is made up entirely of lime which has been taken from the sea water. It is wonderful how an animal can make a delicate shell and give it colour, keeping always to the same pattern. The shell is formed by a single tool, the mantle.

If you examine this under a microscope, you will find that it is covered by many very small cells which secrete lime. The inner mother of pearl or nacreous layer is formed by the surface of the entire mantle, while the main layers and the horny outer surface are formed by the mantle edge alone. If the shell is cracked or injured, such a fault is covered by a new coat of lime in a few days, the rebuilt part being thicker and stronger.

All types do not build in the same way. In some species the lime is laid on in a very regular manner, and so steadily that its surface is unbroken. Others again, build at intervals, resting in between, thus producing annual or seasonal growth lines. The characteristic surface sculpturing of the shell is also laid down as it grows.

Whereas the majority of shells build from the inside to the edge, others, such as the Cowry (Cypraea) build from the outside as well, working with the overlapping mantle, which completely covers the shell, thus giving the Cowries and Olives a high gloss.

Most univalves extend the existing pattern of their shell by building on to the original core making it continually larger to accommodate their steadily growing body. Others, again, dissolve the outer lip when building, so as to leave as much space in the interior as possible in which to live.

Now perhaps you have wondered how the colour pattern is produced. The mantle secretes both lime and colour pigments. The latter produces the colour pattern as the former builds up the shell. If these colour secreting cells are arranged in a certain manner, a fixed pattern will always appear. The colour secreting cells are controlled by the animal itself however and it may change the colour pattern as it wishes. As a result, two shells of such a species are seldom alike. A shell well known for this is the Olive. (Olive)

In the case of the Perlemoen, (Haliotis) the oyster, (Ostrea) and several others, the rainbow colours of the mother-of-pearl are not produced by colour pigments, but by light shining through the surface layers of lime which break the light up into various colours.

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ADDITIONS TO THE CHECK LIST OF FALSE BAY SHELLS-FOUND BY CHRIS WALKER

- Argonauta nebulosa: Found at Muizenberg. A juvenile specimen about 1½ ins. in length but a perfect specimen.
- Psammobia maculosa: Found on sand, mud and shale at 8-12 metres. Only parts of live specimens taken because they evidently stick up out of the mud, but very good dead pairs have been found, the only large one being 2½ inches.
- Tellina crassa: A slightly rosy shell, found at 8-12 metres on mud and shale, was found alive.
- Barnesia alfredensis: A rock borer about 1" long can be found at Muizenberg with Pholas jordani, although the former is much scarcer.
- Eugyrina gemmifera: Found as far South as Stilbaai, then a gap, and again appearing/...

appearing in False Bay at 4-26 metres. Two specimens have been taken, the one being eroded but distinguishable, the other a fine specimen more colourful than those obtained further up the coast.

Aplysia parvula:

A slug surrounding a fragile, light brown shell. This species lives in weed at a depth of 8-26 metres.

Macoma litoralis:

One of the commonest bivalves in halves but rather scarce in pairs, is at the maximum about  $\frac{2}{8}$  inches. The colour is white, with a yellow patch around the close umbos. Found at 20 metres.

Marginella piperata and M. punctilineata: Both, found at 30-40 metres, were mentioned in the last circular under Marginellidae.

Phaxas pellucidus:

Being a type of pencil-bait it is difficult to obtain because like all the other members of that family it burrows into the mud, and lives at a depth of approximately 44 metres. Two specimens were found, both being alive. In the same area two juvenile Pectin sulcicostaus were found, also one specimen of Phacoides capensis.

Turritella kowiensis: A very unusual species with the outer lip in a V-shape. It has two spiral ridges, one being fairly clear while the other, the higher one, is not so clear, therefore giving the appearance of a single spiral ridge.

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IDENTIFY YOUR OWN ARGONAUTS. by A.C. van Bruggen.

Having repeatedly received shells of Argonauts for identification, I think it wise to publish a simple key to the shells of the Cephalopod genus Argonauta Linnaeus, 1758.

The Argonauts belong to the Octopod Cephalopoda or to be more precise to the suborder Incirrata. Only the female is known to secrete a shell as an incubator for the eggs; the females are as a rule from 20-25 times as large as the males, which in fact would hardly be recognised as belonging to the same group of Cephalopods.

The thin horny shells are much sought after by collectors. Fortunately at certain places along our coast they are not uncommonly cast upon the beach. Notwithstanding the large number of names available the modern trend is to recognise only six more or less well-defined species.

The following key to the shells has been partly adapted from that given by Robson (1932) in the second part of his monograph:

- 1. a. Ribs on shell smooth . . . . . 2
- b. Ribs on shell tuberculate . . . A. nodosa Solander, 1786  
        (Shell large: Indo-Pacific, Western Atlantic)
- 2. a. Shell compressed, keel very narrow . . . . .  
    . . . . . A. argo Linnaeus, 1758  
    (Shell large, ribs numerous and bifurcating, close:  
    Mediterranean, Indo-Pacific, Atlantic, thus practically  
    world-wide from temperate to tropical waters)
- b. Shell/...

- b. Shell not very compressed, keel wide to very wide . . . . . 3
3. a. Body whorl long and shallow, giving the shell a long and slender appearance: maximum length of shell almost twice maximum depth . . . . .  
 . . . . . A. nouryi Lorois, 1852  
 (Shell small, max. 58 mm. =  $2\frac{1}{4}$  inches long: Pacific)
- b. Body whorl shorter and deeper: maximum length of shell always considerably less than twice maximum depth . . . . . 4
4. a. Adult shell small (up to 58 mm. =  $2\frac{1}{4}$  inches long), keel very wide (from  $\frac{1}{6}$  to  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the maximum length of the shell) . . . . .  
 . . . . . A. böttgeri Maltzan, 1881  
 (Ribs 30-45, carinal knobs 14-22, rarely more (33!): Indo-Pacific)
- b. Adult shell large (always longer than 58 mm.), keel moderately wide (never reaching  $\frac{1}{6}$  to  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the maximum length of the shell) . . . 5
5. a. About 32 ribs, 15-23 very prominent carinal knobs . . . . .  
 . . . . . A. hians Solander, 1786  
 (Indo-Pacific, Atlantic)
- b. About 45 ribs, about 30 not very prominent carinal knobs . . . . .  
 . . . . . A. cornuta Conrad, 1854  
 (Keel narrower than in A. hians: Eastern Pacific)

When using this key it must be kept in mind that allowances have to be made for individual variation. Some characters have not been used in the key at all, e.g. whether the aperture is auriculate or not. Auriculate and inauriculate apertures are known to occur in shells of one and the same species. It seems, however, that so far no auriculate specimens of A. böttgeri have been reported.

Our knowledge of the South African representatives of the genus Argonauta is rather incomplete, but as far as the author knows all species except A. nouryi and A. cornuta may be found on our coast.

The Port Elizabeth Museum has in its collection many shells of A. argo (from Cape Recife and St. George's Strand, up to 290 mm. long), two of A. nodosa (from Algoa Bay, up to 170 mm. long) and five of A. böttgeri (from Algoa Bay). Occasionally live specimens of A. argo have been recorded from Algoa Bay, the most recent in the second half of 1960.

One of the popular names of Argonaut shells is Paper Nautilus. The true Nautilus, however, has a thick chambered shell and belongs to an entirely different group of Cephalopoda. No official record of Nautilus from the South African coast have come to my knowledge, but the Port Elizabeth Museum has two shells of Nautilus spec. labelled "Algoa Bay". All known species are confined to the seas around SE. and E. Asia; this gives us plenty of reason to regard the Port Elizabeth specimens with the utmost suspicion.

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ELSTERN PROVINCE NOTES & NEWS by D.H. Kennelly.

During September members at this end of the country, had the pleasure of meeting Mrs. A.G. Richards, and her husband, from Mossel Bay. They were on a collecting trip to Jeffreys Bay and nearby localities.

Mrs. Richards is busy establishing a shell collection, which will, in due course, become available for reference by Collectors visiting

Mossel/.....

Mossel Bay. The collection will also constitute an additional attraction for all visitors to this locality.

In addition this good lady is very fortunate in having the co-operation of trawlers operating off Mossel Bay, and already possesses very fine examples of deep water species taken alive.

We hope in time to learn of the taking of some shell, or shells, which will be new to science.

Another pleasure was meeting Mr. D.W.J. Ackermann of Camps Bay, after a lapse of some years. Mr. Ackermann's well known Shell Museum now holds a total of about 5000 species and varieties, a notable achievement after years of collecting and exchanging.

This enthusiastic member was fortunate in obtaining specimens of *Conus bairstowi* and *Conus pictus* during this year's visit to Jeffreys Bay. Both species have been very scarce for some time.

Eastern Province members are also looking forward to the forthcoming visit of Mrs. Helene Boswell, when the usual annual "Unofficial Meeting" of Shell collectors will be held. These meetings are very interesting, for our Helen always has a variety of items to impart, concerning Molluscan matters in general. A report in this connection will be published in a later issue of the Circular.

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#### OVERSEA CONTACTS FOR COLLECTORS.

In a letter just received from Mr. M. Goodchild, he mentions that Collectors in England would welcome "exchange or wanted" contacts from our members. Mr. Goodchild is the Compiler of the "Conchologists Newsletter", sponsored by the Conchological Society of Great Britain and Ireland, and any of our members desirous of making contacts with English Collectors may write to:- Mr. M. Goodchild, 17 Elm Road, Redhill, Surrey, England.

D.H.K.

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#### SOME NOTES ON CYPRAEA FUSCORUBRA SHAW, 1909. by D.H. Kennelly.

It would appear that although this species is one of the larger examples of the genus, occurring on our coast, it is more or less unknown to a number of our members.

Specimens in really good condition are seldom found on the beach, which indicates that *fuscorubra* probably inhabits fairly deep water.

To avoid possible further confusion, it may be mentioned that the names *C. similis* Gray, 1931, and *C. castanea* Higgins, 1860, are synonyms of *C. fuscorubra* Shaw. Turton erred in listing *similis* and *fuscorubra* as separate species occurring at Port Alfred.

Joyce Allan states the colour of this shell to be yellowish, with sometimes a chestnut brown shade, and occasional patches of a deeper shade. Length of the shell is quoted as between  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 inches.

The same author, referring to a specimen of 37 m.m., in the British Museum, states it has 15 teeth on the outer lip, and 18 on the INNER lip.

Examination of specimens in the writer's collection, reveals 18 teeth on the OUTER lip, for shells of 37 m.m.

It seems the measurements have been accidentally transposed in the text of Joyce Allan's book.

The writer's examples range in size from 37 m.m. to 50 m.m. (2 inches), and the largest shells have about 22 teeth on the outer lip.

Seven of our members, who have sent in reports on their collecting at

East/.....

